

Forum for World Literature Studies

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World Literature Studies**

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Literary Texture Studies

Edited by Yang Gexin

**Ethical Power in Chinese and English
Romantic Poetry**

Edited by Sui Gang



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文学文本研究

杨革新（栏目主持）

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隋 刚（栏目主持）



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Understanding of Cosmopolitanism in Georgian Literary Thinking: From Goethe to Vazha-Pshavela

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Abstract A very important publicist work by Georgian classic writer of 19th-20th centuries Vazha-Pshavela — “Cosmopolitanism and Patriotism” was published in 1905 and became one of the most discussed topics among the intellectual society of Georgia. The publication of the essay with this kind of content was a considerable fact in the beginning of 20th century when the controversy between the different countries and people revealed other types of essential controversies like: National and Colonialist determinations, Free thinking and Ideology, Spirituality and Scientific-Technical progress. Due to all these circumstances Vazha-Pshavela’s idea was assessed as a declaration of writer’s strong position, expressed in his fictional works as well. But, was it just a declaration? Maybe it was a prophetic warning of the danger which was going to threaten regularly not only Georgia, but some other small countries throughout the world? What was the attitude of Georgian society towards the writer’s position and are there any analogies in the western thinking?

Key words Cosmopolitanism; Patriotism; Values; Intercultural communications; Identity

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2012 was awarded the Grigol Kiknadze Scientific Award for the monograph — “The Text and the Chronotop.” Her last book is — “Georgian Literature and the World Literary Process” (2015).

Literary heritage of Georgian classic writer Vazha-Pshavela (1861-1915) with the problems raised in it and its objectives is a valuable Georgian reflection of a late European Realism, however, due to the tradition established on different stages of the development of Georgian literature this model of reflection is as well characterised by usual corrections and references: The new trends elaborated within the frames of Georgian late Realism merged not only with the tradition that took shape in the depth of European Realism of 19th century, but also the realistic context of Georgia, highlighting a very interesting spectrum of problems, such as:

Humans and their mission in the world;
The individual will of a person and a society;
“One’s own space” as a marker of national identity.

If we approach from this angle some central texts in Vazha-Pshavela’s oeuvre — *Aluda Ketelauri*, *Host and Guest*, *Gogotur and Apshina*, *Snake-Eater* — we will have to admit that despite different storylines, the untameable aspiration of humans locked up in an immense universe to find their mission, the unabated desire to struggle for personal dignity, and the undeserved pain from the fatal identification with “one’s own space” connects and cements those texts with each other. There are numerous reasons that make the author respect the main characters of those texts: They are people embellished with rare qualities — notions that seem to be worn out, but are absolutely indispensable are important for them; notions like: “belief,” “freedom,” “love,” “devotion,” “spiritual firmness,” and “the sense of native soil” (Kiknadze 149-150). They are convinced that: A person must be true first to his own personality and then to others; he should be honourable first to his own conscience and then to the public; he should be loyal first to his own land and then to the land of others. All those characters are given shape within the real Georgian context. However, they are not “one of many,” but “one among many.” Spiritual projection becomes outlined as the only projection of personal freedom and the sense of homeland is based not on the vision of masses, but the moral criteria of individuals:

I am the Home with my Dignity;

My Dignity defines my Home;

I move around the world with my Dignity, and therefore, with my Home.

As Vazha-Pshavela would say, the main thing is that the deeds of such characters (people) are as useful for humankind (world) as they are useful and reasonable for their homeland (home).

So who is Vazha-Pshavela: The greatest cosmopolitan or a man of genius motivated by national self-consciousness?

Let us recall Marko Juvan's interpretation of the introduction of one of the most cosmopolitan term *Weltliteratur* (World literature), mentioned and established by Goethe in 1827:

In Goethe's case, the historical consciousness of literature's worldwide scope thus had rather peripheral, partly nationally biased origin, notwithstanding its cosmopolitan pedigree and claims to universalism. The intellectual background of the idea was definitely established by post-Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, a belief that in "their essence" people are equal, regardless of affiliations to various states, languages, religions, classes, or cultures. Since the eighteenth century, cosmopolitanism has informed the lifestyle of urban intellectual elites as well as conceptually inspired ethics and international law, economic theories of the free market, political science, the arts, and the humanities (Juvan 2010a). Coining the phrase *Weltliteratur*, Goethe — as Marx and Engels later would — expected "world literature" to transcend national parochialism through cosmopolitan cultural exchange. Pursuing much the same cosmopolitan goals as Immanuel Kant did in his *Perpetual Peace* (1795), but following a different path, Goethe also thought that knowledge of other languages and literatures, their deeper understanding, and openness to their influence would lead people from different countries to mutual understanding and peace. The ideogeme of world literature was invented to buffer the dangers of imperialism, culture wars, and economic competition between national entities in post-Napoleonic Europe. However, even Goethe fuelled his cosmopolitan idea with nationalist anxieties and goals; after all, his *Weltliteratur* aimed at the transnational promotion of German literature, which was facing strong international competitions and British or French cultural hegemony (Damrosch 2003: 8; Pizer 2000: 216; Casanova 1999: 63-64). Encouraged by the considerable foreign success of his works and enjoying an influential position in culturally prosperous Weimar, Goethe believed:

“There is being formed a universal world literature, in which an honorable role is reserved for us Germans. All the nations review our work; they praise, censure, accept, and reject, imitate, and mispresent us, open or close their hearts to us. (73-74)¹

It seems that even one of the most cosmopolitan thinkers of the world and the author of the cosmopolitan and currently global term — *Weltliteratur*, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, shaped the foundations of his cosmopolitanism on the basis of the layers of his national conscience and refused to forget even for a minute the mission of the national literature (in his case, German literature) in this large-scale literary model: Communications between literatures as a circulation of different linguistic and perceptive models are the main targets of Goethe’s cosmopolitan experiment.

Vazha-Pshavela is a thinker of the post-Goethe era. Unlike Goethe, who could only presuppose at the level of intuition prospects for the development of the term he had invented, Vazha-Pshavela could precisely see what results the voluntary interpretation of the cosmopolitan approach could produce. Despite the fact that he, together with his family and animals that sustained the family, lived in a half-ruined hut in a remote mountain area of turned into a province of the Russian Empire Georgia, rarely visited the city and was fully aware of the painful cultural weakness of his dishonoured country against the background of the global cultural and literary processes, he was strongly full of confidence in the potential of the Georgian culture and respected the country’s stubborn vital energy frequently kicked down due to historic ill fate.

Georgia in the 19th century was not indeed Germany. Promotion of the Georgian culture depended on the sentiments and moods at the imperial court in St Petersburg. Georgian writers were neither known nor translated. They were neither imitated nor condemned. They were just stewing in their own juice, which was quite bitter and unpalatable. However, this was happening not only in order to shout at each other and wake up the Georgian public that was slackened due to temporary liberal policy pursued by Russia in the second half of 19th century, but also in order not to lose contacts with the international literary process and to create its distinctive Georgian wing, which was to find itself in the spotlight of the world sooner or later as something ancient, valuable, and important.

Time and history have shown that Goethe’s idea tended to be directed on geographic expansion, but in Goethe’s times, it was unambiguously equal to Europacentrism and implied first and foremost European literature and, of course,

German literature as one of its major components. From the 19th century, the Goethean term indeed started to broaden its own historic and geographic scope and step by step reached out to all continents and cultures of the world (Marino 31)². The rise of capitalism accelerated the opening of national borders, which gradually increased chances of interaction between national literatures through translations and various types of cultural dialogue. Goethe's idea was that all these developments were to make all valuable cultural models equal irrespective of their linguistic and national origin instead of oppressing them. However, it was the threat of the disappearance of this important function of conscience that never left Vazha-Pshavela, a Georgian writer and thinker, in peace, because:

Georgia was isolated with double borders from the global cultural space - national border and border of Russian Empire;

He lived in the pragmatic era of rising capitalism and speedy scientific and technical progress;

He witnessed the speedy devaluation of spiritual and moral values of society of his time;

He encountered nihilism and the lack of faith;

He worried about the weakened patriotic spirit of Georgians.

And there were indeed grounds for fears. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were the first in the 19th century to respond to Goethe's theory with their "common property theory." They skilfully used the ideas of the great German author to introduce the main principle of the Marxist ideology. Marx and Engels transformed the principle of overcoming the short-sightedness characteristic of national cultures, which was part of Goethe's cosmopolitanism, into the theory of eliminating class differentiation, which posed a real threat of a utopia that was to come true. No one recalled that the Goethean idea of cosmopolitanism was based on national self-conscience and implied the latter's rise to the level of "overall humanism."

Only dozens of years later, René Wellek and Austin Warren reverted to national conscience and the Goethean theory of cosmopolitanism linked to the cultural and literary values. However, before that happened, the threat emanating from a distorted interpretation of the cosmopolitan idea was quite tangible and it is no surprise that it runs like a scarlet thread through the work by the Georgian humanist Vazha-Pshavela, *Cosmopolitanism and Patriotism*, published in 1905.

It is noteworthy that this essay meant for Georgian readers could successfully be referred to the whole of the contemporary world that was on the threshold

of great disappointments and the citizens who lived in the times of “dead God” (Nietzsche), revolutions, wars, and great disappointments. Vazha-Pshavela addressed everyone, absolutely everyone and not only Georgia that had become a province of Russia with its head bowed:

Some believe that genuine patriotism is contrary to cosmopolitanism, but this is a mistake. Every genuine patriot is a cosmopolitan just like every reasonable cosmopolitan (not those in our country) is a patriot. How? It is as follows: The person, who reasonably serves his own nation, trying to enhance his own homeland intellectually, materially, and morally, thus producing best members and friends of the whole humankind, promotes the development and well-being of the whole humankind. (104)

National energy is the support point of the essay by Vazha-Pshavela and all other values are based on it. Pascale Casanova wrote almost 150 years later: “Each writer’s position must necessarily be a double one, twice defined: each writer is situated once according to the position he or she occupies in a national space, and then once again according to the place that this occupies within the world space” (81). Vazha-Pshavela knew precisely back in 1905 that “all geniuses emerged and were raised on the national soil and grew to such a scale that even other nations accepted them as their own children. Correspondingly, geniuses found homelands outside their own homelands” (104).

Everything is in order up to this point: The projection of Vazha-Pshavel’s idea is in line with Goethe’s vision and his understanding of cosmopolitanism, but further on, the stream of the Georgian author’s thinking switches to some other route:

However, in spite of this, works by geniuses are more useful and appropriate on the national soil. Sons of no other country will be able to get as much pleasure from *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, particularly if they are translated, as the English. Why should we go on too long? Will sons of another country be able to get so much pleasure from *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* and understand it so well, no matter how good a translation they may read or how well they may speak Georgian, as Georgians themselves? Never. A genius as a personality and individual has his own homeland, which he loves and adores, but his work does not, because it belongs to the whole of humankind like science. (105)

On the one hand, Vazha-Pshavela refuses to recognise the omnipotence of translations, but on the other, he admits that they are necessary to make texts accessible to the world. The rhythm of Goethe's everyday life was defined by linguistic activities — reading in various languages, translations, studies in cultural distances, monitoring of the international receptions of his own works, and intellectual research, where translations played a major role in the creation of a universal literary space. Vazha-Pshavela was not so interested in such endeavours. He regarded translations as a means of communication rather than a means for the creation of a universal literary space, as he believed that translations provided an opportunity to any national literature to become available to readers in other countries and various national literatures were able to establish close contacts with each other precisely through translations. However, at the same time, he believed that high-quality reading was possible only in a national language.

If we recall one phrase by the founder of Dialogic Criticism, Mikhail Bakhtin, the depth of Vazha-Pshavela's idea will become more amazing:

It is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly. ... A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closeness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures. ... Such a dialogic encounter of two cultures does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and open totality, but they are mutually enriched. (334-335)

Boundaries do exist and they are observed in conditions of valuable dialogue. It is quite clear that according to Bakhtin, a cultural product does not belong only to the culture, within the boundaries of which it was created. It is part of an open intercultural space that is equal to the “great time” of history and enables any cultural item to undergo multiple reconstructions and renovations (both in content and perception) at every stage of the history of culture. Vazha-Pshavela's position is permeated with precisely these ideas: On the one hand, it is necessary to be engaged in dialogue between cultures and on the other, it is necessary to admit the threat of possible losses, which is, of course, due to the imperfection of translation or, to be more precise, due to the fact that it is impossible for one type of mentality to precisely reflect another type of mentality.

Patriotism is for Vazha-Pshavela a notion bearing very sharp markers: The

native tongue, historic past, and childhood. In other words, it is all that the “most global author,” Vladimir Nabokov, described as “inherited memory” years after (Nabokov 40).

Patriotism is a sentiment and cosmopolitanism is a result of thinking and it is very important to direct the thinking in a correct direction:

God save us from understanding cosmopolitanism as if everyone should renounce their nationality. In that case, the whole humankind will have to renounce their own selves. Every nation seeks to be free in order to be masters of their own fate, take care of themselves, and develop relying on their own force. Separated development of nations is an indispensable precondition for the development of humankind. (106)

Vazha-Pshavela’s *Cosmopolitanism and Patriotism* was assertion and warning at the same time. It was moved not only by the pains of the country, but also a tragic perception of the overall crisis of values.

Notes

1. In this quotation Marko Juvan refers to the following works: Juvan, Marko “‘Peripericentricism’: Geopolitics of Comparatist Literatures between Ethocentrism and Cosmopolitanism.” In: *Bessiere, Jean and Judit Maar, Histoire de la littérature et jeux d’échange entre centres et périphéries: Les indentités relatives des littératures*. Paris: Harmattan. 53-63, 2010; Damrosch, David “*What is World Literature?*” Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP. 2003; Pizer, John “Goethe’s ‘World Literature’ Paradigm and Contemporary Cultural Globalization.” In: *Comparative Literature* 52.3:213-227. 2000; Casanova, Pascale “La République mondiale des Lettres.” Paris: Seuil. 1999.
2. We rely upon the Georgian translation of Adrian Marino’s book - *Comparatism si teoria literaturii*, translated and published in Georgia in 2010.

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Kiknadze, Grigol. "Vazha-Pshavelas xuti poema" in *Liteaturis teoriisa da istoriis sakitxebi* ["The Five Poems by Vazha-Pshavela" in *Issues of Literary Theory and History* (in Georgian)]. Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University Press, 1978: 144-182.

Marino, Adrian. *Comparatism si teoria literaturii* [*Comparative Studies and Literary Theory* (in Georgian)]. Tbilisi: Institute of Literature Press, 2010.

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Speak Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*. McGraw Hill, 1966. Vazha-Pshavela. *Rcheuli txzulebani xut tomad* [*Selected Works in Three Volumes* (in Georgian)]. Vol. III. Tbilisi: Institute of Literature Press, 2011.

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Rainer Maria Rilke and the English-Speaking World: Celebrating and Honouring 140th Anniversary of the Poet

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Abstract In 2015 researchers, philologists and readers of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), a famous poet and novelist, are celebrating his 140 anniversary. His works have been discussed and studied in many countries and translated into many languages, including English, Spanish, French, and Russian, to name a few. Books, hundreds of articles, manuscripts, various commentaries, and essays in different journals, magazines, and reviews have explored background, life, and art. To honor this anniversary, in this essay we discuss a paradox around his popularity: Rilke, a German-language poet, has become one of the most popular poets in the English-speaking world. First, we provide a short overview of Rilke’s literary heritage in his native language. Then, we discuss his popularity in the English-speaking world by looking at the main biographies and books around Rilke’s life and his art, and translators of his works into English, and pondering on the reasons of his popularity.

Key words Poetry; translation; English-speaking world; popularity; Rilke

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Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel Ordnungen?
— RM Rilke

The works of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), a famous poet and novelist, have been read, discussed, and studied around the world. The steady international degree of interest in Rilke amazes. His writings have been translated into many languages, including English, Spanish, French, and Russian, to name a few, by professional researchers and simply Rilke’s enthusiasts. His personal and professional life and art have been discussed in dozens of books and hundreds of articles, manuscripts, commentaries, and essays in different journals, magazines, and reviews.

In 2015 researchers and readers of Rilke are celebrating his 140 anniversary. To honor this event and the poet’s art, we decided to discuss a paradox around his popularity: Rilke, a German-language poet, has become one of the most popular poets in the English-speaking world. We did not aim to collect and compile a complete biography of Rilke in English (the amount of written works on the topic is simply immense). Rather, we would like to highlight the ever increasing interest to the works of Rilke among the English speaking audience. First, we provide a short overview of Rilke’s literary heritage in his native language. Then, we discuss his popularity in the English-speaking world by looking at the main biographies and books around Rilke’s life and his art, and translators of his works into English, and pondering on the reasons of his popularity.

1. Rilke’s Literary Heritage in German

Rilke’s heritage gives us the right to call him one of the greatest and lyrically strong German-language writers with the unique ability to modernize his poetry through creating his own language and syntax. Earlier works of Rilke are considered to be lyrical poetry in which he touched upon the topics of love, nature and God. Later

Rilke is characterized as a very complex writer. His major works of this period are *Duineser Elegien* and *Die Sonnette an Orpheus* — the poetry of philosophical character in which Rilke reached an unusual depth of his mastership. However, as many researchers believe, they have a strong connection to Rilke's early works (*Neue Gedichte*, *Das Buch der Bilder*, *Das Stundenbuch*) and his later writings should be viewed from the perspective of his earlier works.

In 1894 Rilke published his first lyrical collection of poems called *Leben und Lieder* (*Life and Songs*) and a year later appeared *Larenopfer* (*Lares' Sacrifice*), which revealed a rapid development of Rilke's talent. The poems were simple but they showed the combination of musicality and imagery of the poet.

In 1897 Rilke showed the audience *Traumgekrönt* (*Dream Crowned*) and in 1898 *Advent. Das Stunden-Buch* (*The Book of Hours*) of 1905 was written in the form a monk's diary, and many poems of the book remind of prayers. The poet set a task of philosophic perception of God, world, and other questions of religion; all these topics were continued in his later writings.

The novel *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (*The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*) was published in 1910. It took Rilke six years to complete the novel. A. Stephens suggested a deep connection of the novel with the elegies and sonnets. He wrote that Rilke's later works saw the light only due to the poet's earlier poetic search and experience (Stephens 365). One more important work in the literary heritage of Rilke is *Neue Gedichte* (*New Poems*) of 1907. With this work Rilke created a new genre of thing poems (*Ding-Gedichte*). It is more of an eastern contemplative poetry where Rilke planted the seeds of his later works. Among Rilke's well-known prose are also *Geschichten vom Lieben Gott* (*Stories of God*), *Die Weise von Liebe und Tod Cornets Christoph Rilke* (*The Lay of the Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke*).

A number of works have been devoted to the study of Rilke and his creativity in German. They give a very detailed analysis of Rilke's life and the genius development in poet's major creations. The vast majority of the written biographies include facts from Rilke's life (childhood through his older years), in-depth analysis of the poet's works, or insights into the darkest corners of his poetry and prose. Among those who devoted their books to examining Rilke's literature are H.R. Müller (1935), K. Kippenberg (1938), and W. Leppmann (1984), G. Martens and A. Post-Martens (2008). In a recent work, M. Engel and D. Lauterbach (2004, reprint in 2013) presented a detailed look onto the development of Rilke's mastership throughout his literary career.

The exemplary writings for scholarly audience could be considered books by

D. Bassermann (1946, 1947, 1948, 2000) and U. Fuellerborn (1960) devoted to later poetry of Rilke. E. Mason called D. Bassermann one of the best and significant interpreters of Rilke (Mason 38). D. Bassermann did not only provide his overview of Rilke's poetry and prose, and biographical data. Bassermann presented much of the documentary materials that gave a broader understanding of what the poet wrote. Another classic book for scholarly audience is the work of H.E. Holthusen (1994). He also focused not only on giving the chronology of the literary formation of Rilke as a poet, but also on presenting official documents and letters, and unpublished quotations from Rilke's letters. Rilke's life in documents and letters was also viewed at different time periods by W. Herwig and I. Junghanns (1959), T. Fiedler und E. Key(1993), R. Scharffenberg and A. Stahl (2003), K.E. Bohnenkamp (2008), R. Stamm and P. Modersohn-Becker (2008), R. Scharffenberg und I. Schnack (2009). A special interest among researchers is the relationship between Rilke and his mother, which were quite difficult — H. Sieber-Rilke in her book in 2009 gives a very detailed overview of their correspondence.

U. Baer conducted a very thorough study of the poet's heritage that resulted in over a dozen of books highlighting the mastership of Rilke. All Baer's works on Rilke have been translated into English compiling the list of the most studied and cited books in the English-speaking countries.

Rilke's attitude towards God, death, and religion are the most discussed topics among researchers. His understanding of religion was examined by G. Schiwy (2006) and K.-J. Kuschel (2010). The questions of Being of the poet and of his works are analyzed by H. Kunisch (1994), R. Guardini (1996), B. Hellinger and A. Moderegger (2010). Women in the life of the poet is another area of study and interest by G. Decker (2006) and H. Schwick (2015), to name a few. These and other biographies and books of German-language authors are a great source for perceiving the untranslated and deeper understanding of the works of Rilke for English-speaking scholars and poetry enthusiasts.

2. Popularity in the English-Speaking World

Although Rilke is a German-language poet, many researchers believe that he attained the utmost popularity in the English-speaking world because no other language produced such a great variety of works studying the beauty and complexity of Rilke's writing. English-speaking, mostly British and American, translators and interpreters made Rilke's works available in English, popularizing them among new vast audiences, "American collectors, mostly with a European background, have formed some truly outstanding Rilke Archives in the new world

which, to a large extent, are open to researchers” (I.B. Jonas and K.W.Jonas 129). Here the researchers spoke of the Rilke Archive opened in April of 1952 which is now located in Berne in the Swiss National Library and which started collecting Rilke’s works only after 1919 as it had been forbidden to gather any books by foreign writers if they didn’t possess citizenship of the country or wrote much about the country. Now the Rilke Archive is considered to be the biggest on possessing the authentic manuscripts and letters of Rilke’s works which are purchased or donated to the library.

If not to speak about publicly and privately owned collections of Rilke’s works in German-speaking countries, I.B. Jonas and K.W. Jonas mentioned that America and Canada obtained a dominant position in having admirers of the German poet’s works. They name such Rilke Archives at Harvard University Library, Yale University Library, University of Illinois Library, University of Kentucky, Columbia University Library in New York, McGill University in Montreal. The authors also mentioned that England possessed fewer materials on Rilke in contrast to the USA and Canada. Anyway some original manuscripts and letters are kept at British Museum Treasures, Oxford University, University of Edinburgh, and University of Bristol (135–144).

The name of Rilke is mentioned in the journals and magazines of different focus — astronomy, surf life, sexual life, cinematography, poetry readings, and articles and books on religion, etc. (Mood 288–304). Not surprisingly, some American and British scholars and researchers, for example, J. Boening (1994), E.C. Mason (1961), J. Adler (1978), and Ch. Benfey (1995) claim that Rilke is known more in the US and Britain. Ch Benfey (1995) believed that there was no foreign poet who would be as popular in America as Rilke.

One of the most notable Rilke’s researchers J. Mood wrote that he was always amazed by how much and often Rilke “does pop up, as it were. There is what might be called the periphery of pop from where, over the years, I have noticed Rilke peeking around the occasional corner. His poetry is quoted here and there in publications for various specific interests and avocations, of lesser or greater popularity” (292).

E. Exner (2004) was among those who also spoke of the notion of “pop” Rilke calling him the most readable author of all times and the most famous and cited German author world-wide. References to Rilke could be found in literature written for a variety of purposes and genres: “Just take the United States and, to a lesser degree, Germany: there is a ‘pop’ Rilke, an esoteric Rilke, a Rilke for the stressed, the sleepless, for those in love, and an incipient artists” (141). It is absolutely

astounding, says Exner, as the United States of America looks at him and listens to him as to a “guru”, a “prophet”, a “helper” for the poor and an inspiration to managers from big corporations (142).

Rilke’s contribution to the development of English-speaking literature cannot be measured. E.M. Puknat and S.B. Puknat believe that Rilke’s influence onto American writers exposes “the aesthetic codes and techniques of the Americans themselves as of Rilke’s own achievement” (245).

R. Fowler believes that a famous American poet Randall Jarell was strongly impacted by German literature and culture and Rilke in particular. Rilke became the second most cited author, along with Goethe, after Auden, among all American or British writers in Jarell’s work (100).

Fascinating enough, but Rilke did not care for his popularity in the English literary world. He had absolutely no interest in English speaking countries, and his attitude towards these countries may be characterized more like a negative one. E.C. Mason claims that Rilke viewed American and Brits “as a vague, indiscriminate mass, apparently recognizing hardly any distinction, for example, between Great Britain and the United States of America” (1–2). Rilke never travelled to the States and Great Britain and never intended to travel there, and hence, had no direct knowledge of the countries, their people and cultures (I.B. Jonas and K.W. Jonas 129). His ideas of the two countries were informed and shaped by the media and experiences and ideas of others who visited or did not visit the countries themselves. As Benfey writes, Rilke saw America as ‘a futuristic nightmare of rampant technology and soullessness. “Over there,” he claimed in a letter of 1925, even a house, an apple, a grapevine have “nothing in common with the house, the fruit, the grape into which went the hopes and reflections of our forefathers” (31). Rilke did not have much respect for America in terms of its intellectual depth and spirit (Exner 142). Such attitude towards the Great Britain and American certainly explains why Rilke was not interested in his popularity in those countries.

Regardless of such indifference from Rilke to the US and Britain, it is the English-speaking world that pays the unlimited attention to what Rilke had to say. For the last eighty years hundreds of articles, monographs and books have focused on the mastership of the poet.

For instance, A.E. Schroeder’s bibliography of Rilke’s works for the period of 1926–1951 includes 239 items of bibliographic references, Rilke’s works and correspondence, translations, biographic and critical treatment, book reviews, and unpublished dissertations. Among others very distinguished English bibliographies

of Rilke's works are: Rilke in English by R. von Mises (1947); Rilke Bibliography by W. Ritzer (1951); Rainer Maria Rilke in America. A Bibliography, 1926–1951 by A.E. Schröder (1952) or Rilke in English: 1946 to 1966 by M.J. Comerford (1967).

Conducting research on the popularity of Rilke in the English-speaking world, one cannot but notice that almost every year one or more books on Rilke's art appear in English and it does not stop. A list of works with the biggest citation index among the works on Rilke is given in the Appendix 1. This list of books and biographies shows the love and interest of the English-speaking world to the poet's works. The first bibliography (1941) devoted to life and poetry of Rilke belongs to E Butler, a British scholar who offered the English-speaking audience one of the best descriptions and analysis of the poet's life and works.

We observed a rather large gap between E. Butler's book and the next bibliography which was published in 1952 by Heller and by H.W. Belmore in 1954. Probably such breach could be explained by the consequences of the World War II and post war world situation. Two more books appeared in 1958 by N. Fuerst and F. Wood.

For the period of 1960s four monographs (H.F. Peters, E.C. Mason, G.C. Schoolfield) were printed in English. Two of them belong to E.C. Mason in which he explored the role of Rilke for the English-speaking world and the evolution of Rilke in his later volumes.

The biggest interest to Rilke in the English-speaking world is noticed in the 1980s. This decade presented the audience at least nine books. We believe that such increase was marked by the 100th anniversary of the poet in 1975, which revived interest in Rilke. Birkets suggested that such peak in popularity was due to several new translators' desire for "re-translating of the *oeuvre*" (17). He presumed that A. Poulin, Jr., S. Mitchell and E. Snow and some other translators provided new, fresh, exciting and more readable translations of Rilke's works which attracted wider audiences (17).

The following years up until the present day were not less productive: more than five or more books appear annually.

Today more than a hundred years after Rilke's reception in the English-speaking world, more than a hundred professional and non-professional translators have been competing in creating a better or their own versions of Rilke in English. A list of the most well-known and respected translators of Rilke's works is provided in Appendix 2.

All of the translators made a great contribution for bringing Rilke closer to the English-speaking world. For example, E. Feise, called J.B. Leishman and S.

Spender's work on the English interpretation of "Duino Elegies" "the tremendous task" (156). Their work also includes commentaries and notes, which help the reader understand the Rilke's unreadable. These two translators are still considered the best in conveying Rilke into English. E.C. Mason called J.B. Leishman "the official translator of Rilke in English" (xv).

The translation of *Duino Elegies* and *Sonnets of Orpheus* performed by D. Young into English was highly evaluated for the quality by R. Exner who believed that Young provided the best opportunity for American readers, a "true access to these difficult poems" (158).

E. Snow was named "Rilke the best contemporary ambassador to the English-speaking world" Snow translated both volumes of *New Poems*, *The Book of Images*, *Duino Elegies* and the *Uncollected Poems*, to name a few. These translations "are beautiful works in their own right and bring across all of Rilke's intensity and focus".¹

S. Birkets highly appreciated the work of the English-speaking translators: "Romantics of every stripe found the singing-master of their soul in their difficult, breathless cadences out by MD Herter-Norton and J.B. Leishman, his most prolific early translators. Generations of British and American readers came to know *Duino Elegies* through the peculiar Germanized English of the Leishman — Stephen Spender version" (17).

All translators listed above and those who were not included for the reasons of the article size limitation have done and continue to do their best to bringing Rilke closer to the English-speaking world.

3. Rilke's Popularity Outside the Academe

However, Rilke does not excite only English scholarly audience. His literature is very popular among poetry enthusiasts — Internet is filled with English versions of Rilke's works by people of different professions and no direct relation to literature. Various groups and associations all over the world, for example Rilke-Gesellschaft in Switzerland or International Rilke Society, USA, hold annual conferences and other literary events — a number of schools and organizations inspired by Rilke's heritage have emerged globally. For example, Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Science in Anchorage (USA) was established in 2007 by some enthusiastic parents and German teachers who made the creation of a tuition-free German immersion school come true.² Pennsylvania Linglestown Middle School and The Rilke Alliance: Art and Writing Club offer teenagers with literary and artistic talent an opportunity to get prepared for the best in the USA competition of young

talented artists Scholastic Art & Writing Awards — that is held annually. The mission of the Alliance is to contribute to the lives of young poets and writers by developing their creative expression skills.³

Rilke can become an inspiration for any undertaking. In North West of London an independent creative studio named after Rilke was created by D. Davidopoulos and K. Smith in 2009. The creators say that Rilke has set them out with a clear mandate that brought them the reputation of an intelligent and inventive art studio. They work on both British and overseas markets providing a range of creative solutions to organizations: from developing concepts and identities to creative adverts and campaigns.⁴ Even one of the most popular music icons of our time Lady Gaga has an arm tattoo with a quotation from Rilke whom she calls her favorite philosopher. The tattoo is her tribute to the talented writer:

*Prüfen Sie, ob er in der tiefsten Stelle Ihres
Herzens seine Wurzeln ausstreckt, gestehen
Sie sich ein, ob Sie sterben müßten, wenn es Ihnen
versagt würde zu schreiben. Muss ich schreiben?(Rilke)*

4. Possible Reasons of Rilke's Popularity

The paradox of Rilke's popularity has been intriguing a number of researchers for a long time. Nobody can say for sure why a German-speaking poet attained such fame among English-speaking audience. For example, D.E. Prichard believes that Rilke has become so popular because American poets, translators, and critics like his work. They find a certain 'oddly American flavor — a set of themes that seem to echo in the American character...'.⁵ J.M. Paine sees Rilke's appeal to others in his amazing ability to build up "that new stage — a stage. A way of life, in which the 'poetic' would materialize almost automatically" (150). H. Salinger suggested that future generations of critics will continue challenge themselves by choosing Rilke's works (376).

The author of Duino Elegies and Sonnets to Orpheus possesses an absolutely unique lyrical talent, but, as we think, he was also lucky enough to mingle in quite a Bohemian society, among people who had much influence in different areas in Europe. Besides he had a few acquaintances that played a crucial role in his popularization in English-speaking countries, in particular.

One of such people was Princess Marie of Thurn und Taxis, the owner of the Duino Castle in Italy which Rilke visited not once, lived there, and started his

one of the most translated poems into English — Duino Elegies. Rilke also was a frequent visitor of her husband's castle Lautschin near Nymburk in Czech and in Venice. For many years she was his patroness and also wrote a book of memoirs about Rilke. Her connections, as we think, could contribute a lot to Rilke's promotion outside the German-speaking world.

His wife — Clara Westhoff — a talented sculptor, who learned from Fritz Mackensen, Carl Seffner, Max Klinger, and August Rodin; was also connected to art circles and could also be the one who invested in spreading Rilke's word farther into other countries.

Prince Emil von Schoenaich-Carolath-Schilden, who was a talented poet himself, also became one of the patrons of Rilke. Rilke was flattered to have him among his friends, and never rejected the invitation of the prince to visit the family castle in Holstein or any other financial help. Hertha König — his friend and poetess — offered Rilke her help by letting him stay in their family mansion Gut Bockel in the years of need so the poet could concentrate on writing. Their home was always full of respected in higher society guests who appreciated the talent and work of Rilke.

Castle Muzot in Switzerland — the home of Rilke in his final years — was bought and presented him for life rent absolutely free by Werner Reinhart. Reinhart is known for supporting a number of composers and writers, notably Rilke and Igor Stravinsky.

Such connections in famous literary and art Bohemian circles and the great families is one of the reasons why Rilke's popularity overcame the German boundaries.

We also believe that Rilke's translators in English have contributed much to the popularization of Rilke's works in the USA, Great Britain, Australia and other English-speaking countries. Their collaboration with the most respected publishing houses and continuous publications of Rilke's works in English gave people more opportunities to get to know Rilke's works better. M.D. Herter Norton, one of well-known Rilke's devotees and promoters in the English-speaking society together with her husband William Warder Norton established a publishing company W.W. Norton & Company. The company has printed a number of translations of Rilke completed by different English translators, including those by M.D. Herter Norton. Hogarth Press (London), Camden House (USA), Amandus Edition (Austria), Diamon Verlag (Germany), Ronsdale Press (Canada), Oxford University Press (GB) and many others are eminent establishments noted for publishing highly professional literature.

5. Final Thoughts

Rainer Maria Rilke has obtained a great popularity in the English-speaking world. The fact that he is interesting to different people — from scholars to ordinary readers, a great variety of books and reviews devoted to all the aspects of Rilke's life and art, a number of different organizations, schools, and clubs only prove the fact that Rilke is one of the most popular German-language poets in the English-speaking world.

H. Wells wrote that Rilke “must surely be acknowledged one of the world's great masters in the interpretation of man's highest spirituality” (xi–1).

We hope to continue the study of Rilke's popularity in different languages. We look forward to reading new translation analyses and discussions of Rilke's life and work.

Appendix 1

The list of the most often cited books on Rilke in English (by the year of publication)

Butler E.M. *Rainer Maria Rilke*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1941.

Heller E. *Rilke and Nietzsche in The Disinherited Mind*. Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1952.

Belmore H.W. *Rilke's Craftsmanship. An Analysis of His Poetic Style*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954.

Fuerst N. *Phases of Rilke*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1958.

Wood F. *Rainer Maria Rilke: The Ring of Forms*. Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis P, 1958.

Peters H.F. *Rainer Maria Rilke: Masks and the Man*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1960.

Mason E.C. *Rilke, Europe, and the English-Speaking World*. Glasgow: UP, 1961.

Mason E.C. *Rilke*. Edinburgh; London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963.

Schoolfield G.C. *Rilke's Last Year*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1969.

Rolleston J. *Rilke in Transition: An Exploration of His Earliest Poetry*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1970.

Bauer A. *Rilke*. New York: Ungar, 1972.

Jayne R. *The Symbolism of Space and Motion in the Works of Rilke*. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1972.

Casey T.J. *Rainer Marie Rilke: A Centenary Essay*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976.

Latimer D. *The Elegaic Mode in Milton and Rilke: Reflections of Death*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1977.

Baron F., D. E. Siegfried, and W.R. Maurer. *Rilke: The Alchemy of Alienation*. Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1980.

- Sanford J. *Landscape and Landscape Imagery in Rilke*. London: University of London Institute of Germanic Studies, 1980.
- Goldsmith U. *Rainer Maria Rilke, a Verse Concordance to His Complete Lyrical Poetry*. Leeds, England: W.S. Manye and Sons, 1980. Print.
- Schwarz E. *Poetry and Politics in the Works of Rainer Maria Rilke*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1981.
- Hendry J.F. *The Sacred Threshold: A Life of Rainer Marie Rilke*. Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983.
- Komar K.L. *Transcending Angels. Rainer Maria Rilke's Duino Elegies*. Lincoln, London: U of Nebraska P, 1987.
- Pollock Brodsky P. *Russia in the Works of Rainer Marie Rilke*. Detroit, Mich: Wayne State UP, 1984.
- Pollock Brodsky P. *Rainer Marie Rilke*. Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1988.
- Arndt W. *The best of Rilke*. Hanover and London: New England UP, 1989.
- Frail D.R. *Lost in Translation: Reading Rilke in English*. Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1993.
- Prater D. *A Ringing Glass: The Life of Rainer Maria Rilke*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. Print.
- Freedman R. *Life of a Poet: Rainer Maria Rilke*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.
- Woods R. *Rilke through a Glass Darkly: Poetry of R.M. Rilke and Its English Translations: A Critical Comparison*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1996.
- Ryan J. *Rilke, Modernism and Poetic Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Gass W.H. *Reading Rilke: Reflections on the Problems of Translation*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Metzger E.A., and M.A. Metzger. *A Companion to the Works of Rainer Maria Rilke*. Rochester: Camden House, 2001.
- Hutchinson B. *Rilke's Poetics of Becoming*. Legenda: Oxford, 2006.
- Sutherland M. *Images of Absence: Death and the Language of Concealment in the Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*. Berlin: WEIDLER Buchverlag, 2006.
- Mood J. *Rilke on Death and Other Oddities*. Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2007.
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Appendix 2

A list of the most well-known and respected translators of Rilke's works (in alphabetic order)

S. Applebaum, W. Arndt, W. Barnstone, A. Barrows, H. Behn, J. Bithell, R. Bly, E.E.Boney, C. Bridgewater, S. Cohn, C. Crego, M. Crichton, W. Crichton, A. Croggon, M. Crucifix, R. Exner, E. Flemming, R. Freedman, R.A. Furtak, S. Garney, L. Gartner, W. Gass, G. Good, L. Hammer, Ch. Haseloff, M.D. Herter Norton, D. Hills, R.C. Hull, R. Hunter, C. Hutchinson, S.A. Jaeger, A. Keele, G. Kinnell, A.S. Kline, H. Landmann, J.B. Leishman, J. Lemont, L. Lewisohn, H. Liebmann, J. Linton, C.F. MacIntyre, N. Mardas Billias, St. Mason, J. Macy, K.W. Maurer, G. Miranda, S. Mitchell, R. Nicholson Pierce, L. Norris, D. Oswald, R. Paulin, B. Pike, K. Pitchford, A. Poulin, Jr., D. Prater, S. Ranson, J. Ryan, D. Sackville-West, V. Sackville-West, D. Snodgrass, E. Snow, S. Spender, R. Speirs, M. Sutherland, D. Van Vranken, G. Ward, J. Waterfield, S-M. Weineck, J. Wilson, N. Wydenbruck, D. Young.

Notes

1. The Poetry of Rilke. <http://www.publishersweekly.com>
2. <http://www.rilkeschule.org>
3. <http://www.cdschools.org>
4. <http://www.rilke.com/index.html#home>
5. D.E. Prichard. The Transformation of Roses. http://www.criticalflame.org/verse/1109_prichard.htm

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An Islamic Reading of Rudyard Kipling's Poetry

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Abstract There is a strong affinity between Kipling and Islam. Kipling's preoccupation with Islam has been the focus of few studies. In building on those studies and in being inspired by Post-structural assumptions concerning the possibility of creating a multi-faceted interpretation of a text by utilizing a variety of perspectives, and the rejection of a single meaning of a text, this paper analyzes Kipling's (to say open) poetry from an Islamic perspective. This paper argues that Kipling's treatment of those expressions results in a metonymic gap, polysemy, and undecidability. In so doing, the paper aims at bridging "the metonymic gap" in Kipling's poetry and exploring his attitudes towards some Islamic precepts such as *Asma' Allah Al-Husna* (English: Allah's Beautiful Names), *Al-Shahadah* (English: the Testimony), *Al-Sirat* (English: the Path), and Jinn.

Key words Allah; *Al-Shahadah*; *Al-Sirat*; Eblis; Mount *Qaf*

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2. His research interests include Chaucer, the Renaissance, American Orientalism, Comparative Literature, Literary Translation, Literary Stylistics, among some others.

Introduction

There is a strong affinity between Kipling and Islam. In particular, he frequently quotes from *The Quran* according to Jaffa (90). In a letter sent to Captain Huth, Kipling says, "It is a most priceless gift you have sent me — the finest Koran I have ever laid eyes — much less hands-upon [...] and I thank you most heartily for your Hatim-Tai-like spirit in giving it to me" (Pinney 294). It is possible to suggest that Kipling means Rodwell's translation because Kipling's quoted Quranic verses are excerpted from Rodwell's. Kipling quotes from *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2: 47), "High above mankind have I raised you;" and from *Surah Al-Ma'idah* (5: 65), "oft as they kindle a beacon-fire for war, shall God quench it. And their aim will be to abet disorder on the earth: but God loveth not the abettors of disorder" (Pinney 130).¹

Kipling's preoccupation with Islam, though not thoroughly explored by Said and Moore-Gilbert, has been the focus of few studies. For instance, Awan examines mystical concepts and doctrines such as *Wahdat-ul-Wajud* and *Wahdaht-ul-Shahud* in Kipling's *Kim* and Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*. As regards Kipling, Awan explains that the Islamic concern with *'amal* (English: action) and *khidmat* (English: service) for the benefit of humanity is what Kipling has been interested in. Moreover, Awan argues that Kipling has been fascinated by the Islamic social and mystical doctrines based on pragmatism. From an almost similar perspective, Salesses examines Kipling's representations of God and Allah in "The Enemies to Each Other," and *Kim*. Kipling's stories and poems published in the "Civil and Military Gazette, 1882-1889" show Kipling's admiration of some Islamic teachings. He argues that "The Enemies to Each Other" offers deep insights into Kipling's Deism and his representation of God, Who creates and controls the whole universe. Salesses, moreover, argues that "The Enemies to Each Other" appropriates the Islamic narratives of Creation and the Fall of Adam and Eve by using some Islamic images and names. Kipling's other works, according to Salesses, describe his reverence for Al-Mighty and Compassionate God. Salesses, for instance, mentions that "The Two-Sided Man" displays Kipling's "co-equal admiration and respect of God and Allah" (7). It seems apparent that Islam's "Kipling and Islam and Other World Religions" has drawn on Salesses' article without even acknowledging that Islam examines the influence of Islam and other religions on Kipling and how Islam contributes to the development of his philosophy of life. He emphasizes

that Kipling's works are replete with references to Allah, Islam, *The Quran*, Prophet Mohammed, Islamic ethics, and Arabic literature. He argues that Kipling's admiration of Islam surfaces in his writings, which are influenced by the Islamic doctrine of action.

In building on those studies and in being inspired by Post-structural assumptions concerning the possibility of creating a multi-faceted interpretation of a text by utilizing a variety of perspectives, and the rejection of a single meaning of a text, this paper analyzes Kipling's (to say open) poetry from an Islamic perspective.² In so doing, this paper aims at bridging "the metonymic gap" in Kipling's poetry and exploring his attitudes towards some Islamic precepts such as *Asma' Allah Al-Husna* (English: Allah's Beautiful Names), *Al-Shahadah* (English: the Testimony), *Al-Sirat* (English: the Path), and Jinn.

Asma' Allah Al-Husna

Kipling's translations of Quranic phrases and his twenty-five allusions to Allah imply an affinity with *The Quran*. Before turning to Kipling's references to *Asma' Allah Al-Husna*, it is important to examine those names in Islam. Interpreters of *The Quran* and narrators of *Hadiths* (English: Sayings by Mohammed, the Prophet) suggest that God has ninety-nine Names. Abu Huraira (Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan 264) narrated, "Allah has ninety-nine Names, i.e. one-hundred minus one, and whoever believes in their meanings and acts accordingly, will enter Paradise; and Allah is *Witr* (one), and loves the *Witr*." However, Ibn Kathir argues that Allah's names and attributes are uncountable (1:30). The phrase, Names of Allah, recur four times in four Quranic chapters (*Surah Al-A'araf* [7:180]; *Surah Al-Isra'* [17: 110-111]; *Surah Taha* [20: 1-8]; *Surah Al-Hashr* [59: 22-24]). In *Surah Al-A'araf* (7:180), Allah, for instance, says, "And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do so."³ In *Surah Al-Isra'* (17: 110-111), Allah, similarly, says,

"Invoke Allah or invoke the Most Beneficent (Allah), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names [...] And say: "All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has not begotten a son (or offspring), and Who has no partner in (His) Dominion, nor He is low to have a *Wali* (helper, protector or supporter), And magnify Him with all the magnificence."

Notable among the *leitworts* in the verses quoted above is the name, Allah, which encompasses all the attributes of God. In emphasizing the significance of the name, Allah, Al-Ghazali emphasizes that Allah “is the greatest of the ninety-nine names because it indicates the essence that brings together all the divine attributes in such a way that no part of them is lacking” (xxx). Those verses, for instance, emphasize that Allah is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful, the One free from all defects, the One who has no son, no partner, and no protector, the Great, the All-Knower, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise, the Creator, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Giver of security, the Watcher, the Compeller, the Supreme, the High, the Inventor, and the Bestower. Therefore, He must be praised, thanked and glorified.

In explaining Kipling's reference to the Names of Allah, Durand points out that the ninety-nine names recur in the seventh *Surah* of *The Quran* (51). This is not true. It is not in that *Surah* but elsewhere that the names of Allah recur as shown above. Kipling translates *Asma' Allah Al-Husna* (a Quranic expression) to “the Wondrous Names of God” in “The Ballad of East and West,” which represents a cross-cultural harmony between Kamal, the Afghani warrior, and the English Colonel's son. That harmony is cemented by the oath of brotherhood they have *inter alia* taken on “the Wondrous Names of God.” This Islamic expression, in this poem, acts as the bridge that links the two warring cultures and territories and promotes peace between the West and the East. Consider the following verses excerpted from the same poem:

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.

This peaceful state between Kamal and the English Colonel's son is, in one way or another, similar to what the following Quranic verse stresses. In *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2: 224), Allah says, “And make not *Allah's (Name)* an excuse in your oaths against your doing good and acting piously, and *making peace among mankind*. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower” (Italics mine). The oath, which should foster goodness, is what promotes peace between Kamal and the English Colonel's son.

In the Quranic verses excerpted above, people are advised to call upon any of Allah's names, since they are the same. However, Kipling, in deviating from those Quranic verses, argues that every alphabet in every name has a specific value. According to Kipling, in being aware of the values of letters, one can call on the

most appropriate name. Kipling, in this sense, explains,

The Koran discourages magic, but it is lawful to consult *the Names of Allah* according to a system called the Abjad, in which each letter of the Arabic alphabet carries one of the Nine-and-ninety Names of God beginning with that letter. Each Name has its arbitrary Number, Quality, Element, Zodiacal sign, Planet, and so forth. These tables are often written out and used as amulets (*italics mine*). (*The Collected Works of Rudyard Kipling: Limits and Renewals* "They Servant a Dog." 183)

This system, in Arabic, is called *Hisab Al-Jummal* (English: Abjad Numerals). Every Arabic alphabet is assigned a numerical value. According to this system, the name, Allah, consists of four Arabic letters: *alif*, *lam*, *lam*, and *ha*. These letters have the numeric value of sixty-six. Based on Kipling's argument, one has to call upon Allah sixty-six times.

One might, furthermore, emphasize that the Only Islamic Name of God that figures prominently in Kipling's poetry is undoubtedly Allah. There are twenty-five references to Allah in seventeen poems: "The City of Brass," "The Jester," "The Legend of Mirth," "The Rupaiyat of Omar Cal'vin," "Certain Maxims of Hafiz," "The Light That Failed," "Hadramauti," "Kitchener's School," "The Answer," "The Ballad of Ahmed Shah," "*From the Masjid-al-aqsa of Sayyid Ahmed (Wahabi)*," "The Two-Sided Man," "Akbar's Bridge," "The Ballad of the King's Jest," "O Hassan, Saving Allah there is no one Stronger than Eblis," "A Song in the Desert," and "Verses on Games." It is surprising that Kipling uses Allah with specific words which highlight His attributes. There are four references to Allah's omniscience, five references to praising Him, three references to swearing by Him, three references to Him as the Creator, and finally a reference to each of His throne, His will, His wrath, His might, His oneness, His blessing, His forgiveness, and His ability to bring out.⁴ In explaining Kipling's references to Allah, Durand argues that the only real name of God according to Islam has been revealed only to prophets and apostles (51). Durand here seems to intend *Ism Allah Al-Aa'dham* (English: Allah's Greatest Name). Durand mentions that whoever knows it is able to "raise the dead and perform some miracles" (51). The camel, though Durand argues that the name remains a secret, has been told that name "as a compensation for the hardships of his life on earth" (51). Durand's thesis is problematic for he does not identify its source. There is neither Quranic verse nor a saying by the Prophet (pbuh) which mentions that a camel knows Allah's greatest name.

At this stage, it is important to examine two important attributes of Allah, which Kipling alludes to. To portray Allah as the Creator and the Omniscient, Kipling uses the verb, "create," with Allah three times in "The Legend of Mirth," "Hadramauti," and "Kitchener's School" and the verb, "know," four times in "The City of Brass," "Akbar's Bridge," and "The Legend of Mirth." These verbs establish a reasonable relationship between the verses quoted above and Kipling's references to Allah in that they highlight how creation brings out omniscience. Whoever creates is able to be All-Knower of all creatures. Because Allah is *Al-Khaliq* (English: the Creator), He is *Al-Aleem* (English: the Omniscient). In *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2: 29), Allah says, "He it is Who created for you all that is on earth. Then He *Istawa* (rose over) the heaven and made them seven heavens and He is the All-Knower of everything." Similarly, in *Surah Al-Mulk* (67: 13, 14), Allah says, "And whether you keep your talk secret or disclose it, verily, He is the All-Knower of what is in the breasts (of men). Should not He Who has created know? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous (to His slaves-All-Aware (of everything))." Kipling, in "The Legend of Mirth," says, "Allah, Who created Zeal and Pride,/Knows how the twain are perilous-near allied." It is noted that Kipling uses the verb "created" in the past, and "Knows" in the present to emphasize that Allah is the Omniscient and Omnipresent because he has created. Allah is the Creator, the All-Knower, and the Omnipresent. Kipling appreciates the attributes and favors of Allah. In "The City of Brass," Kipling's "And of these is a story written: but Allah Alone knoweth all" emphasizes that Allah is the only One Who knows all (especially hidden) things. Similarly, in "The Two-Sided Man," Kipling realizes the great significance of "the Lands" and "the Lives" created by Allah, and the significance of the mind which enables him to think deeply of "the Good and the True" and "the Faiths."

Al-Shahadah

Another relationship between the Quranic verses quoted above and Kipling's explicit allusion to Allah is found in the Heading to Chapter XIV of *The Light That Failed*. Those verses, attributed to Kizilbashi as Kipling acknowledges in the same novel (267), were republished in *Songs from Books* under the title "The Light That Failed" (113-118).⁵ One might add that this poem does not include the last cinquain of Longfellow's "A Dutch Picture," used as the Heading to Chapter III (35). The answer to why Kipling includes Kizilbashi's verses and excludes Longfellow's casts doubt on Kipling's authorship of the verses republished in *Songs from Books* without any reference to Kizilbashi. Therefore, it is not surprising to suggest that Kipling has translated those verses into English. Those verses deal solely with the

captivity and death of a nameless believer. As the poem approaches its enclosure, Kipling describes the last moments of that believer as follows: “He called upon Allah, and died a Believer.” Before interpreting the possible meanings of the phrase, calling upon Allah, it is important to suggest that a believer is a possible translation of a *mu'min*, who believes in Allah for the following reasons. As mentioned above, those verses are attributed to Kizilbashi.⁶ This might be a name, or a nickname of the author of those verses, about whom the researcher cannot find any information. Moreover, Kizilbashi is a Turkish word, meaning red heads covered with red turbans (Frazee 2: 126-9; Williams 42). It refers to Shiite militant groups recruited from the Turcoman tribes in Eastern Anatolia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Syria, and who were adherents to the Twelve Imams and safavi dynasty. It is acknowledged that they were the descendents of Persian Turkmen soldiers who settled in Kabul during the time of Nadir Shah, and also the descendents of the Turkmen who later came from Persia to assist the founder of Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Durani (Williams 42). During the reign of Amir Abder Rahman, they were persecuted for their Shiite beliefs (Williams 42). This Islamic background and Kipling’s references to Allah and Kafirs (antonym of *mu'minoon*) may reveal that these verses are originally Islamic.

As regards the phrases (calling upon Allah and then dying a believer), one might suggest that they are polysemous from an Islamic perspective. A Muslim and a native speaker of Arabic can interpret calling on Allah as follows. First, Kipling might mean that the believer, tormented cruelly, supplicates to Allah before his death. Allah reveals to Mohammed that He responds to any slave, who calls on Him. In *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2: 186), Allah says, “And when My slaves ask you [...] concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near [...] I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me [...]. So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.” Such a Quranic verse is similar to Kipling’s portrayal of the believer who suffers at the hands of kafirs.

Second, it is more reasonable to suggest that calling on Allah in Islam refers furthermore to, what might be phrased, *al-tahlilah* or *al-shahadah*. In being aware of these Islamic phrases, Kipling explicitly refers to them in “A King’s Ashes”: “In the silence a voice thundered far above their heads: “*I bear witness that there is no God but God.*” “It was the mullah, proclaiming the Oneness of God” (*From Sea to Sea* 2: 378). In Arabic, *al-tahlilah* refers to reciting *la ilaha illa Allah*. In so doing, the *muhallil* (English: the one who recites *al-tahlilah*) admits the Oneness of Allah Who must be worshipped. For instance, *hallala al-rajulu* means that the man said *la ilaha illa Allah* (Al-zabidi 31: 149). Similarly, *al-shahadah* (English:

testimony), derived from *shahida*, refers to knowing and making this knowledge of Allah clear (Al-zabidi 8: 252). Similarly, *al-shahadah* means reciting *ashhadu anna la ilaha illa Allah*, whereas *al-shahadatan* (English: the two testimonies) means reciting *ashhadu anna la ilaha illa Allah, wa ashhadu anna Mohammadan rasulu Allah*: I testify that there is no God but Allah, and I testify that Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah. Abu Bakr Ibn Al-anbari (Al-zabidi 8: 259) explains that *ashhadu anna la ilaha illa Allah* means that I know that there is no god save Allah, and I make it clear that there is no god but Allah. This is the first pillar of Islam which stipulates that a Muslim must believe and admit that there is only one God, Who must be worshipped, and Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah. Other pillars include prayer, *zakat* (English: almsgiving), *sawm* Ramadan (English: fasting Ramadan), and *Haji* (English: the Pilgrimage to Mecca).

One might wonder why this believer *hallala* or *shahhada* before death although he is a *mu'min*. To answer such a question, one must refer to the Islamic significance of reciting *al-shahadah* before death. Reciting *la ilaha illa Allah* on such an occasion denotes inevitable death. The Prophet (pbuh) emphasizes the significance of *al-tahlil* before death. Abu Thar and Mu'ath Ibn Jabal narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said that if a believer dies immediately after reciting *la ilaha illa Allah*, he will be admitted to Paradise (Al-Munjid, "Al-Islam *Su'al wa Jawab*"). One might furthermore suggest that the *mu'min*, in reciting *la ilaha illa Allah*, is looking for another sense of *al-shahadah*, which is martyrdom. If so, he is considered as a *shaheed* (English: martyr) because he is killed for the sake of Allah (Al-zabidi 8: 252-253).

At this stage, one might wonder about the significance of incorporating those Islamic verses into *The Light That Failed* as a Heading to Chapter XIV. To do so, it is important to draw the reader's attention to the novel. This fifteen-chapter novel narrates the story of Dick Helder, who travels in the Orient and Africa, and works as a war correspondent in Sudan in 1885. Dick is portrayed as a successful artist, who unrequitedly falls in love with Maisie. Unfortunately, a wound in Sudan causes his blindness before he is killed by a bullet there. The function of those verses in the Heading is to introduce the reader to that chapter which centers on Dick's suffering and obsession with suicide. To Kipling, the death of the believer foreshadows the death of Dick. In so doing, Kipling identifies Dick with the *mu'min*, and if Dick is a self-portrait of Kipling himself, then Kipling becomes that *mu'min*. Based on the Islamic meanings of calling on Allah and the death of the *mu'min* explained above, then it is possible to suggest that this relationship between Dick, Kipling, and the *mu'min* might imply Kipling's admiration of the most important pillar of Islam

which justifies his recontextualizing of that pillar of Islam in that novel.

Al-Sirat

Like Kipling's recontextualization of the Names of God and *al-shahadah*, his recontextualization of the Islamic concept of *Al-Sirat* is surprising. Before considering his reference to *Al-Sirat*, it is important to explore its denotations in Arabic and its types in Islam. *Al-Sirat*, which means the path, has two types. The first is *Sirat Al-Donya* (English: the Worldly Path), which is *Al-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem* (English: the Straight Path). This path, referred to in *Surah Al-Fatiha* (1: 6) and in *Surah Al-Ana'm* (6: 153), means faith, Islam, *The Quran*, the Prophet, and the Truth (Ibn Kathir 1: 40- 41, 3: 234; Al-zabidi 19: 437; and Al-Hanbali 64-65). Nevertheless, there are other evil paths (Paths of *Shaitan*), or paths of those who have deserved Allah's anger (*Surah AL-Fatiha* 1: 7), which leads to *Sirat Al-Jaheem* (English: Hell Path) as stated in *Surah As-Saffat* (37: 24).⁷ Ibn Mas'ud reported, "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, drew a line with his hand and said, 'This is the straight path of Allah.'" Then the Prophet drew lines to the right and left, and he said, "These are other paths and there is not another path except that a devil is upon it calling to it." Then the Prophet recited the verse, "Verily, this is the straight path so follow it and do not follow other paths."⁸

The second type is *Sirat Al-Akhirah* (English: the Afterlife Path). On the Day of Judgment, all people must cross *Al-Sirat*. It is a Bridge, which crosses over Hell. It is described as being finer than a strand of hair and sharper than the edge of a sword. There are briars and hooked thorns on each side. There are some sayings by the Prophet (pbuh) which describe *Al-Sirat*.⁹ For instance, it is narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

There is a bridge over Hell which is finer than a strand of hair and sharper than the edge of a sword. Upon it are hooks and thorns made of iron which catch hold of those people whom Allah wills. The people will pass over the bridge of *Siraat* in different ways. Some will pass over it (very swiftly) like a blink of an eye, some like lightning, some like the wind, some will be like riders riding fast horses and camels. The Angels will be reciting "Oh my Lord, let him pass safely," "Oh my Lord, let him pass safely." Some Muslims will be saved, some will be injured, some will be tripping and falling and some will fall face first into the fire of Hell.¹⁰

The light (which stands for humans' deeds) will direct them. The bright light

will direct believers to Paradise, who will cross it easily; darkness will cause unbelievers to fall into Hell (Leeder 132-33). In the same vein, it is argued that the wideness and narrowness of *Al-Sirat* will be determined by the deeds of the people. For believers, it will be so wide that they can cross it easily, whereas for unbelievers it will be so narrow that they will fall into Hell. In this sense, Sa'eed bin Abi Hilal said, "I have heard that on the Day of Judgement the bridge of Siraat will be like a strand of hair for some people and for others it will be like mansions and wide valleys."¹¹

It is apparent that Kipling appropriates the Islamic concepts of *Al-Sirat* in "O Hassan! Saving Allah there is no one Stronger than Eblis."¹² Kipling portrays Eblis as stronger than humans. Eblis, whose invisibility brings out his invincibility, has many different evil *Sirats* of misleading "the sons of Adam" from the Straight Path. Eblis, in this poem, appears in the forms of "[f]oul marsh lights," "errant stars," "red, devil-ridden meteors," "ice-bound seas," "the crow," "the owl," and "the hooded snake," among many others:

Foul marsh lights he made
 To wander and perplex us, errant stars,
 Red, devil-ridden meteors bringing plague
 [...] in darkness wove the grass
 That kills our cattle, made the flowers that suck
 Man's life like dew-drops, evil seeds and shrubs
 That turn the sons of Adam into beasts
 Whom Eblis snatches from the sword-wide Bridge

It is in the same poem that Kipling alludes implicitly to the Quranic narrative of Eblis, who refuses to prostrate to Adam and swears he "will sit in wait against them (human beings) on [Allah's] Straight Path (*Surah Al-A'raf* [7: 16]).¹³ *The Quran* narrates that Allah bid the angels to prostrate to Adam. They did so save Eblis who was one of the disbelievers, justifying his refusal by saying that he was better than Adam because he was created from fire, whereas Adam was created from clay. After Allah accursed him, he asked Him to give him respite till the Day of Judgment. He decided to mislead, from the Straight Path, all human beings except believers (*Surah Al-Baqarah* [2: 34-36]; *Surah Al-Araf* [7: 11-18]; *Surah Al-Hijr* [15:31-44]; *Surah Al-Isra'* [17: 61-65]; *Surah Al-Kahf* [18:50]; *Surah Taha* [20: 116-120]; *Surah Saba'* [34: 20-21]; *Surah Sad* [38: 71-85]). Eblis is central in the Quranic references to *Al-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem*. Eblis, the only name of jinn mentioned in *The*

Quran, is the father of *Shayateens* (English: Satans), and is considered one of the kafirs (English: Unbelievers) as stated in *Surah Al-Hijr* (15: 27), *Surah Al-Kahf* (18: 50), *Surah Saba'* (34: 20-21), and *Al-zabidi* (34: 372). Linguistically, *Al-zabidi* (15: 464) points out that, the word, Eblis, is derived from the verb root, *balasa*, which means “despaired of Allah’s mercy.” Eblis, as an Arabic name, is symbolic of his despair of Allah’s mercy.¹⁴

Kipling describes Eblis as successful in turning “the sons of Adam into beasts” because of the evil seeds he grows in their hearts. He succeeds in deviating them from *Al-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem* in this world, which is faith and all its premises, and leads them instead to *Sirat Al-Jaheem*, which is Hell. This is alluded to in *Surah Al-Araf* (7: 16-17): (Iblis) said: “Because You have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your straight Path. Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones.” However, Kipling presents Eblis as stronger than even believers. This is a deviation from the Quranic verses, which stress that Eblis can mislead only kafirs. Moreover, there is another reference to the other type of *Al-Sirat* in the Afterlife as apparent in Kipling’s “the sword-wide Bridge,” from which Eblis snatches “the sons of Adam” who have turned into beasts because of their evil deeds. In defining that Bridge, Durand points out, “[a]ccording to Mohammedan belief, the soul after death has to cross a bridge, as narrow as the edge of a sword, that connects earth and Paradise. Should the soul be overburdened with the weight of sins it will fall into the abyss below” (356). Durand’s explanation is certainly not accurate. The Bridge does not link earth and paradise, but it is stretched over the Hell, and leads to Paradise.

It is apparent that Kipling is aware of the connection between Eblis and his followers, who deserve Allah’s anger and punishment. According to *The Quran*, kafirs (Arabic: *kuffar/ Kaffiroon*), misled by and subjugated to Eblis, will be punished in Jehannum. Kipling uses “kafirs/kaffirs” five times in “Certain Maxims of Hafiz,” “The Light That Failed,” “Wilful Missing,” and “The Ballad of the King’s Mercy.” Kipling defines kafir as “an unbeliever in the Moslem faith” (31). In Arabic, *kafir* (plurals: *kuffar, kafarah* and *kifar*), derived from *kafara* which means covered, is an infidel, who does not believe in Allah, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, in *Al-Qadr*, etc. (*Al-zabidi* 14: 53, *Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan* 971). In other words, he is called *kafir* because *kufir* (the opposite of faith) covers his heart by hiding Allah’s favors (*Al-zabidi* 14: 52-54).¹⁵

Among Kipling’s significant references to kafirs is that reference in “Certain

Maxims of Hafiz,” which is another Quranic influence. Kipling’s “Yea, though a Kafir die, to him is remitted Jehannum” stresses the inevitable punishment of those who do not believe in Islam by torturing them in Jehannum (English: Hell). One may suggest that Kipling might have translated one of the following Quranic references which convey this sense of punishment. In *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2: 24), Allah warns, “But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.” In *Surah Al-Anbiya* (21: 98), Allah says, “Certainly! You (disbelievers) and that which you are worshipping now besides Allah, are (but) fuel for Hell! (Surely), you will enter it.” In *Surah Al-Mulk* (67: 6), Allah similarly says, “And for those who disbelieve in their Lord (Allah) is the torment of Hell, and worse indeed is that destination.”

Jinn

Along with his gloomy references to Eblis, Kipling’s representations of jinn, *shaitan* and *al-ghoul* deserve scrutiny. It is important to turn to the Arabic denotations of jinn, *shaitan* and *al-ghoul* before any consideration of Kipling’s references to them. Linguistically, the word, jinn, (Singular *jinni* or *jann*) is derived from the verb roots, *janna* or *janana*, meaning covered or hid (Al-zabidi 34: 371). From an Islamic perspective, Islam admits the existence of jinn as supernatural creatures. There are many references to them in *The Quran*, especially in *Surah Al-Jinn* (72). Although they, like humans, live, breed, and die, they are supernatural creatures, created from the smokeless flame of fire in order to worship Allah (*Surah Al-Araf* (7: 2); *Surah Al-Hijr* (15: 26-27); *Surah Az-Zariyat* (51: 56)). Some jinn believe in God, some do not (Ibn Kathir 8: 159). Unbelievers are called *shayateens* (Ibn Kathir 6: 242). Abu Tha’labah Al-Khushni reports that the Prophet (pbuh) said, “Jinn are divided into three types: a type that has wings and fly through the air; a type that looks like snakes and dogs; and a type that stops for a rest then resumes its journey” (Al-Munjid, “The World of Jinn and Its Secrets;” Ibn Kathir 6: 242). *Al-ghoul*, Eblis, and *Shaitan* are classified as jinn.

Kipling’s references to those types of jinn are significant.¹⁶ He, for instance, uses Djinn(s) in “*From the Masjid-al-aqsa of Sayyid Ahmed (Wahabi)*,” in the preface to “In the House of Suddhoo,” and in “The Camel’s Hump.” It is possible to suggest that Kipling’s reference to jinn is an implicit allusion to the Islamic narrative of Solomon (Arabic: Suleiman).¹⁷ In “*From the Masjid-al-aqsa of Sayyid Ahmed (Wahabi)*,” Kipling implicitly alludes to the story of Solomon and his flying carpet: “And the words of his mouth were as slaves spreading carpets of glory/Embroidered with names of the Djinns — a miraculous weaving.” On

the surface, the reference to the embroidered carpets echoes oriental decorations to which Kipling might have been exposed through Lane's translation of *The Arabian Nights*: "Here also I found an open door, and, entering it, I saw a flight of seven steps, by which I ascended to an apartment paved with marble, furnished with gold-embroidered carpets, and containing a couch of alabaster, ornamented with pearls and jewels," and to "The mak'ad was furnished with silken carpets embroidered with gold and silver" (Lane 1: 176, 489). At the deep level, what attracts one's attention is Kipling's reference to the names of jinn, with which the carpet is embroidered. One might suggest that Kipling implicitly intends Solomon's subjugation of jinn and his flying carpet carried by the wind and jinn. Kipling might have been exposed to Solomonic narrative through translations of *The Quran*, or through Lane's translation of *The Arabian Nights*. Kipling's point here might be that Sayyid Ahmed is, like Solomon, protected by Allah, who endows Solomon with dominion over wind, jinn, among other miracles. Furthermore, like Solomon, he is presented as royal, and his words (like Solomon's jinn) are his slaves who pay him homage and make him tolerate the torture of kafirs.

One may, in particular, suggest that Kipling, in his poetry, is preoccupied also with evil jinn (devils) such as Eblis, *al-ghoul*, and *shaitan*.¹⁸ For instance, in his preface to "In the House of Suddhoo," Kipling similarly describes the whole world as evil for it is haunted with supernatural, exotic, and dark powers:

Churel and ghoul and Djinn and sprite
Shall bear us company to-night,
For we have reached the Oldest Land
Wherein the powers of Darkness range.

Kipling lists *churel*, ghoul, jinn, and sprite as inhabitants of this exotic world.¹⁹ Moreover, Kipling's ghoul is identified with the wilderness and with "the powers of Darkness." This is in line with Arabic attitudes towards *al-ghoul*. In Arabic folklore, *al-ghoul* is a male *jinni*, or *shaitan* (Al-zabidi 30: 129). It is thought that *al-ghoul* appears in desolate places in order to mislead people from the Straight Path (Al-zabidi 30: 129). According to Al-nathr, it is a *shaitan* (evil *jinni*) which eats people; others mention that it is any *jinni* or *shaitan* that misleads people (Al-zabidi 30: 130). It is viewed as a huge animal, killed by Ta'bbata Sharran; or it is anything which brings out one's *muss*, (English: madness) according to Al-zabidi (16: 506, 30: 130).²⁰

With respect to the abodes of jinn, Kipling refers to two different places. For

instance, he refers explicitly to Shaitanpore in Kipling's "The Mare's Nest":

It was a misdirected wire.
Her husband was at Shaitanpore.
She spread her anger, hot as fire,
Through six thin foreign sheets or more.
Sent off that letter, wrote another
To her solicitor — and mother.

Shaitanpore, which Kipling defines as "a fictitious name for a place," is a bilingual combination of the Arabic word, *shaitan*, which means Satan, and the English word, pore, which means place (49). In the lines quoted above, the woman is angry with her husband who lives in Shaitanpore. In making the husband live in that place, Kipling intends to highlight his emotional and geographical distance from her and his evil nature. This sense surprisingly goes with the negative denotations of *shaitan* in Arabic folklore. In Arabic, *shaitan* is derived from the verb root, *shatana*, meaning became distant (Al-zabidi 35: 278). *Shaitan* is also a *jinni* (i. e. Eblis), revolting against Allah (Al-zabidi 34: 371). Abu Obeid (Al-zabidi 35: 278) mentions that *shaitan* might be a rebel (be human, a *jinni*, or an animal).²¹

More interesting than Kipling's reference to Shaitanpore is his possible reference to Mount *Qaf* as another mythical abode of jinn. Consider the following verses from "Kitchener's School":

Not at the mouth of his clean-lipped guns shall ye learn his name again,
But letter by letter, from Kaf to Kaf, at the mouths of his chosen men.
He has gone back to his own city, not seeking presents or bribes,
But openly asking English for money to buy you Hakims and scribes.

Kipling's "from Kaf to Kaf" is ambiguous and confusing (even to a native speaker of Arabic), so it is not certain to decide whether he means the letter *qaf* (فاق), the letter *kaf* (فك), or Mount *Qaf*, which frequently recurs in *The Arabian Nights*. A back transliteration of Kaf to Arabic is (فك), which is the 22nd Arabic Alphabet, which Kipling does not intend. Unaware of this, Durand claims that *Kaf* corresponds to the English K, which Kipling uses as initials of both Kitchener and Khartoum (234). If this is reasonable, one might similarly suggest that K is the initial of Kipling and the last letter of Dick, the hero of Kipling's *The Light That Failed*. What Kitchener, Kipling and Dick share is exile in Sudan.²² However, it

is possible to suggest that Kipling means *qaf*, the 21st Arabic Alphabet, which is different from *Kaf* which he uses.²³ If Kipling uses (as the context implies) from letter *kaf* to letter *kaf* to mean from A to Z, he should use the Arabic expression, *minil alif lil ya*, which means from the beginning to the end.

Durand, furthermore, suggests that the expression, from *Kaf* to *Kaf*, means “from world’s end to world’s end” (234). If so, there is an allusion to Mount *Qaf*. Lane explains that *Kaf* is a chain of mountains that surround the Circumambient Ocean, which engirdles the whole earth (1: 19, 20, 21, 30, 118). He argues that interpreters of *The Quran* said that mountains of *Kaf* are composed of green chrysolite, and the Prophet said that the green colour of the sky is a reflection of the green colour of these mountains. Lane points out that beyond those mountains there are countries, one of gold, seventy of silver, and seven of musk, all inhabited by angels and each country is ten thousand years’ journey in length, and the same in breadth. Al-bidairi argues that Persians believe that the earth is surrounded by a mountain from the east and another mountain from the West (4). Accordingly, the expression, from *Qaf* to *Qaf*, which means from the east where the sun rises to the west where the sun sets, is found in Richardson’s translation of Hafiz’s poetry which Kipling might have read (80).²⁴

One might point out that the undecidability of Kipling’s “from *Kaf* to *Kaf*” is faced even by Arab philologists who controversially interpret *qaf*. For instance, consider *Surah Qaf* (50: 1) which begins with *Qaf*. It is interpreted as an Arabic alphabet according to Al-Hilali and Muhsin Khan (804), Al-zabidi (24: 290- 291) and Al-hamawi (7: 15-16). Al-zabidi (24: 291) furthermore suggests that it might be another name of *The Quran*. Al-zabidi (24: 291) and Al-hamawi (7: 16) mention that some interpreters of *The Quran* think that *Qaf* is a green mountain (made of green emerald, or green ruby) that surrounds the Earth.²⁵ It is very close to heaven which reflects its green colour. Beyond it, there are creatures, whom only Allah knows. Some claim beyond it there is a part of the afterlife. It is named by ancient people *Al-burz*. If Allah wants to destroy a people, He orders the angel, named *Salsa’il*, who lives there, to carry out this task (Al-zabidi 24: 291). Ibn Kathir (4: 258-9) mentions that Al-imam Abu Mohammed Al-razi narrated that Ibn Abbas said that Allah has created a huge sea that surrounds this earth, and beyond that sea Allah has created Mount *Qaf*, which carries the earthly sky. Then Allah has created beyond that mountain another earth which is larger than this earth seven times, and then Allah has created beyond it another huge sea. Then Allah has created beyond it a mountain, called *Qaf*, of the second heaven, until he mentioned seventy earths, seven seas, seven mountains, and seven skies. Nevertheless, Ibn Kathir

suggests these myths of Mount *Qaf* are Israelitic (4: 258). There are references to this mountain in the Arabic version of *Alif Lailah wa Lailah* (1,3) and in Lane's translation of *The Arabian Nights* (1) in "The Story of the Young King of the Black Islands" and "The Story of the Second Royal Mendicant." In elaborating on Mount *Qaf*, Lane says, "It is believed that the chief abode of the Jinn is in the Mountains of Kaf, which are supposed (as mentioned on a former occasion) to encompass the whole of our earth" (1: 29).

Conclusion

By way of concluding, it is significant to iterate that Kipling's involvement in Islam and *The Quran* surfaces in his poetry. There are translations and transliterations of some Islamic expressions such as *Asma' Allah Al-Husna*, *Al-Shahadah*, *Al-Sirat* and jinn, which reveal his exposure to English translations of *The Quran*. His treatment of those expressions results in a metonymic gap, polysemy, and undecidability. For instance, his translation of *Asma' Allah Al-Husna* as "the Wondrous Names of God" in "The Ballad of East and West" represents a cross-cultural harmony between Kamal, the Afghani warrior, and the English Colonel's son. This Islamic expression acts as the bridge that links the two warring cultures and territories and promotes peace between the West and the East. Furthermore, Kipling translates *al-tahlilah* or *al-shahadah* as calling on Allah — an expression that is open to some interpretations. As argued above, Kipling incorporates those Islamic verses, which include that phrase, into *The Light That Failed* as a Heading to Chapter XIV. Kipling identifies Dick with the *mu'min*, and if Dick is a self-portrait of Kipling himself, then Kipling becomes that *mu'min*. Based on the Islamic meanings of calling on Allah and the death of the *mu'min* explained above, then it is possible to suggest that this relationship between Dick, Kipling, and the *mu'min* might imply Kipling's admiration of the most important pillar of Islam. By the same token, Kipling appropriates the Islamic concepts of *Al-Sirat*, jinn, *shaitan* and *al-ghoul*. He, for instance, portrays Eblis as stronger than humans. Eblis, in Kipling's eyes, has many different evil *Sirats* of misleading humans from the Straight Path. It is apparent that all those instances of Kipling's translations and transliterations of some Arabic expressions, as argued above, enrich and make Kipling's poetry open *inter alia* to an Islamic interpretation.

Notes

1. Rodwell (350, 493).

2. See Umberto Eco's *The Open Work*. The sense of openness means that a text is open to a variety of meanings.
3. All subsequent quotations from *The Quran* are taken from Al-Hilali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din, and Muhammad Muhsin Khan.
4. There are other two references to building a mosque to Him, and to without crying to Him.
5. See *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling 1872-89*. 1: 57.
6. Among the various transliterations of this word are Kizzilbashi, and Kizil Bashi.
7. See also Al-Hanbali (65).
8. See «Hadith on Islam.»
9. See Al-zabidi (19: 437-8).
10. < http://library.faizaneattar.net/Books/Pages_en.php?id=145&img=4> (Access 26 May 2015).
11. < http://library.faizaneattar.net/Books/Pages_en.php?id=145&img=5>.(Access 27 May 2015).
12. It is possible that Kipling might have been exposed to Sale (97-8).
13. Kipling, in *Letters of Travel* (1892-1913), explicitly mentions this Quranic story (266).
14. It is narrated that Ibn Abbas said that the names of Eblis are Al-Harith and 'Azazil (Ibn Kathir 1: 95, 97).
15. Other derivations are based on this sense of covering. One instance is *kafara/kaffara*, meaning covering anything. Another example is *kafir*, which denotes three things. It refers to a *zurra* (English: an agriculturalist) who covers the seeds by the land; to a night because its darkness covers everything; and to the sea for it covers anything beneath its surface (Al-zabidi 14: 54-55). The English word, covered, is semantically and phonetically similar to the Arabic word, *kafara*, which means hid.
16. Kipling's transliteration is similar to Sale's and Rodwell's. In this essay, I use *jinn* as plural, *jinni* or *jann* as singular.
17. Kipling also repeats an almost similar allusion to Solomon's dominion over the wind and *jinn*:

And then you will find that the sun and the wind,
And the Djinn of the Garden too,
Have lifted the hump —
The horrible hump —
The hump that is black and blue ("The Camel's Hump").
18. I have discussed Kipling's references to Eblis in *Al-Sirat* Section.
19. Kipling uses Djinn as a singular of Djinn. In Arabic, *Jinni* or *Jan* is the singular.
20. Al-Rawi examines the portrayals of mythical ghouls in Arabic culture (45-66).
21. *Shaitan* furthermore signifies a snake (Al-zabidi 35: 279). Other derivations include *al-shatin* which means distant, and *Shatanan* which is a valley in Nejd (Al-zabidi 35: 280).

22. I have argued above that Dick is a self-portrait of Kipling.
23. Lane and Burton transliterate *qaf* (فأق) as *kaf*.
24. An allusion to Mount *Qaf*, and the expression from *kaf* to *kaf* recur in "Khasidat Abu Al-qanis." Abu Al-qanis is a Jordanian poet. He addresses Nimr Ibn Odwan in this melancholy poem.
25. The past verb root, *qafa*, means traced, *al-qa'if* is the person who traces; the noun, *qafa*, means the back of someone or something. As Al-zabidi and Al-hamawi mention, Mount *Qaf* is called so, because it traces and surrounds the earth (24: 290-291; 7: 15).

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Rethinking the Definition of a Classic: A Milestone Approach to James Joyce's *Ulysses*

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Abstract This essay critically re-examines the “test-of-time” definition of a classic, which is, at best, a method, not a criterion. Taking James Joyce’s high-modernist work *Ulysses* as a test-case, it argues that a work needs to be considered significant or insignificant not because it passes or does not pass the test of time, which logically makes it unamenable to any evaluation during its author’s lifetime, but because it engages, at least at a meta-level, substantial political, cultural, social, philosophical, and aesthetic questions. *Ulysses* has been a milestone in Western cultural history, reflecting or triggering the evolution of the Occidental world view. Arguably, it also occupies a key place in humanity’s larger endeavours to understand itself, as attested by several twentieth/twenty-first-century thinkers, across a wide spectrum of disciplines — political theory, ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, psychology, historiography, and cultural studies, to name a representative few — citing Joyce to illustrate their ideas. Probably, this has to do with Joyce’s unapologetically meticulous engagement of quotidian lived life, even to extremes of triviality, which is the subject of what I propose to call delicate *épistèmes*. Within literary studies, *Ulysses* is considered a paradigmatic text for many approaches, which makes it a ‘critical classic’ as well.

Key words polymorphous capacity; milestone approach; delicate *épistèmes*; paradigmatic; Joyce buzz

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My experience in a South African English department was probably very similar to that of many others at institutions of higher learning throughout the English-speaking world in the early sixties. The powerful Lawrentian/Leavisian model, premised on a moral earnestness and an attachment to organicism that left little room for playful ingenuity or the foregrounding of linguistic and literary conventions, for effects of the Joycean kind, fostered in students an appreciation of strenuous verbal engagements with perennial human dilemmas but did so at the cost of rendering them impervious to the pleasures and insights of a large body of literary writing. . . . In small quantities, Joyce's writing could be used to demonstrate the local felicities produced by the skilful deployment of literary language, but the larger-scale enterprises demanded too much 'surface' decipherment for too little yield of imaginative, psychological, and moral 'depth.' And, of course, Joyce demonstrated his commitment to false gods quite clearly by increasing the surface-to-depth ratio with each work that he wrote. — Derek Attridge, *Joyce Effects: On Language, Theory, and History*

Etymologically, the English word “classic” is derived from Latin *classicus*, which means “belonging to a certain class,” and historically came to mean “of the highest class.” For centuries, a literary classic has been defined as a work which passes the test of time. It has been understood as a work of “timeless quality,” typified by Ben Jonson’s posthumous and belated paean to Shakespeare: “He was not for an age, but for all time.” Though Jonson, by the way, also said of Shakespeare “on this side idolatry [sic]” “*Sufflaminandus erat*” (he should have been clogged, or he needed restraint), he seems to have set the critical ball rolling, at least for modern literature, in this direction of defining a classic when he made the oft-quoted former statement. The temporal definition of a classic has two underlying assumptions. The first is that as time passes, readers will have thrown out a work of poor quality into the dustbin of literary history. This definition assumes time to be the matrix within which reflections occur on which works pass the test of quality, and which do not. Though the criteria for a classic may change through centuries — Is there a classic under each genre? Can its delineation alter between “high” and “low” literary art? — these reflections need not involve a meta-level engagement of the criteria themselves. The second dimension is a more experiential one: every generation of readers is able to discover new significances in the work under question. Though the provenance of this rather traditional idea is different from that of deconstruction, the two share a striking similarity between them. As deconstruction has it, the text will renew itself across spaces and ages due to its “textuality.” Many “worlds” (even futuristic ones) are implicit in language, which are invoked when the reader meets the signifiers on the page. “Iterability,” Jacques Derrida’s polyglottal portmanteau term, describes the capacity of signs and texts to be repeated in new situations and to produce new meanings. The term encapsulates Sanskrit *itera* (other) and Latin *iterare* (to repeat).

If the criterion of literary merit is test of time, we shall obviously miss the worth, if any, of contemporary works, which will be abandoned till a retrospective reevaluation recovers them for the canon. Strictly speaking, the so called test-of-time criterion is not a criterion at all. It does not provide us the standards by which we can distinguish a classic from a work which is not one. It is rather a method, that too an indirect one, and hence the imperative to look for criteria elsewhere. Critical history has witnessed many other methods and tests, which are equally elusive with regard to the criteria of literary excellence, Matthew Arnold’s comparative “Touchstone Method” being one. The pervasive elusiveness is understandable given the fact that a consensus on “literary value” is difficult to obtain. Ideological criticism of the literary canon, and of any professed criteria, is philosophically

premised on the near-impossibility of consensus. For instance, Terry Eagleton's historicizing narrative of the rise of literary studies as a discipline foregrounds the class- and racial basis of the apparently neutral definitions of literature [in the honorific sense]: "The criteria of what counted as literature . . . were frankly ideological: writing which embodied the values and 'tastes' of a particular social class qualified as literature, whereas a street ballad, a popular romance and perhaps even the drama did not" (15).

The lack of consensus, in turn, is also understandable since, as we know experientially if not logically, apprehension of artistic value is a delicate process. As M.H. Abrams puts it, "the ultimate standards of valid critical judgments are not sharp-focus but soft-focus standards which we signify by terms such as *sensibility, good sense, sagacity, tact, insight*" (85; italics as in the source). Harold Bloom concurs when he says: "Pragmatically, aesthetic value can be recognized or experienced, but it cannot be conveyed to those who are incapable of grasping its sensations and perceptions. To quarrel on its behalf is always a blunder" (17). The subtle aesthetic elitism of the statement notwithstanding, Bloom is well within his rights to object to the exclusively political definition of literature — which is the context of the assertion — coming from what he calls the "School of Resentment": "The cardinal principle of the current School of Resentment: what is called aesthetic values emanates from class struggle" (23). According to him, the argument that "literary works join the Canon because of successful advertising and propaganda campaigns" is a case of "academic radicalism" (20). He is categorical that "[t]he deepest anxieties of literature are literary." More importantly, Bloom does provide a criterion for the canonicity of a work — "strangeness": "When you read a canonical work for a [sic] first time, you encounter a stranger, an uncanny startlement rather than a fulfillment of expectation" (3).

It might seem too late in the day to argue for or against an essentialist definition of literature or literary value. Contemporary criticism has more or less recognized that it is contexts, institutions, and discourses which decide it. Further, literary values are pluralistic; there are many kinds of excellence. It is a contemporary critical commonplace that an unconscious system of values lies (no pun intended) behind our evaluations of literature, and that this varies from culture to culture and from person to person. Apropos the subjective side, indeed the apprehension of literary value is partly a matter of the subject-object symmetry. If this is the case, value (I refuse to categorize it as exclusively "aesthetic" because there are more aspects to value than pure aesthetic) is located neither exclusively in the reader nor in the text, but at the precise point of encounter between them.

But the subject is not an autonomous Cartesian one but is constituted in the collective, historically specific discourses. As such, the system of values consists of culturally acquired elements, and may be entangled in the networks of power and ideology. For a Marxist critic such as Eagleton, this system of values is related to class structure and the intellectual hegemony of the dominant class. For a postcolonial critic, the texts which were considered prestigious and were prescribed for academic study were so, because they were ideological tools of, and in turn received impetus from, the politico-cultural project of imperialism.

The politico-cultural contexts and personal bases of the criteria notwithstanding, we cannot be held hostage either to relativism or to subjectivism. For that would render any discourse on the subject logically impossible. How can one evaluate a work without at least a vague understanding of the implied values or a reflection concerning our assumptions in this regard, particularly when even interpretations are conditioned by unconscious evaluations? Taking James Joyce's high-modernist magnum opus *Ulysses* (1922) as a test-case, I propose a re-examination of the criteria by which a work can be assessed as significant or otherwise. My endeavour will be to clarify criteria which we are intuitively aware of, but have hesitated to articulate.

“Keep the Professors Busy for Centuries”

Ninety-three years have passed since *Ulysses* was published as a book by Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company (post its serialization in *The Little Review* and *The Egoist*), but it cannot be ascertained if a sufficient span of time has lapsed to apply the test-of-time method as could be and was done to its epic template, Homer's *Odyssey*. However, certain of its innate characteristics make it a highly probable winner if this is the method of testing. In his characteristic joco-serious style, Joyce told the French translator of *Ulysses*, Jacques Benoît-Méchin: “I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality” (Ellmann 521). That Joyce's insurance policy is still valid is clear enough, but the reasons thereof need some clarification. *Ulysses* is written at the micro-level and structured at the macro-level in a way that makes it capable of generating meanings at various levels, most of them beyond any assumed authorial intention. The book is an elaborate contrivance, an overstretched network of correspondences, motifs, and symbols — a network capable of infinite expansion. As a result of this “polymorphous capacity” (an allusion to Freud's term “polymorphous perversity”; in *Finnegans Wake*, it will become a “polyglottal perversity”), at least four

generations of readers have found in it new meanings, ideas, and significances. All the *Ulysses*-criticism we have had in the last nine decades is a fragment of the book's hermeneutic infinity. The text itself self-reflexively illustrates the possibility of creating meaning through making connections between its apparently unrelated parts. When Martha Clifford, Leopold Bloom's epistolary love-interest, makes a typographical error in her anonymous letter to him, he pursues its possibilities to affirm the plenitude of the human world around in contrast to the poverty of the other world. She writes: "I called you naughty boy because *I do not like that other world* [instead of "word"; emphasis added]. Please tell me what is the real meaning of that word? [sic]" (*Ulysses* 5.244-6).¹ Bloom responds to the error several pages later in the Prospect cemetery, ironically also conveying Joyce's "this-worldly" religious attitudes: "There is another world after death named hell. I do not like that other world she wrote. No more do I. Plenty to see and hear and feel yet. Feel live warm beings near you. Let them sleep in their maggoty beds. They are not going to get me this innings. Warm beds: warm fullblooded life" (*Ulysses* 6.1001-5). Similarly, when Bloom's cat mews "Mrkrgrnao," it is not a meaningless sound or a random combination of letters. The Italian translator of *Ulysses* has seen in "Mrkrgrnao" a covert version of "Mrkr," the Greek spelling of Mercury, and thus a signal to the Homeric Hermes, the messenger from the gods (Levine 139).

In "Ulysses Gramophone" Derrida shows how the book's elements can coalesce in non-linear ways to create meaning: Molly Bloom's life-affirming "yes" in the interior monologue of the "Penelope" episode, the coda of the book, is a belated response to her husband's telephone call to Alexander Keyes in "Aeolus." In a linear narrative, the elements follow one after the other (*nacheinander*). But the reader needs to keep them mentally one next to the other (*nebeneinander*).² The *Ulysses*-text is like an array of dots which can be joined in multiple ways to create endless patterns of meaning. The most lauded of "Joyce effects" consists in the change he ushered in our conception of language — particularly, his role in foregrounding the "plurisignificatory" character of the word. Perhaps, in a lighter vein, we can say: Had there been no Joyce, there would have been no Derrida — a mystical apostolic succession!

The relatability of *Ulysses* as a text is apparently (only apparently) compromised by the self-professed hermetic tendency of avant-garde modernism. In the same vein, its unapologetic subject matter — the ordinary and the commonplace — finds itself, paradoxically, at odds with this tendency. The self-reflexive difficulty of modernist texts has been discussed for almost a century. The difficulty of Joyce's later texts, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, seems to stem

from two textual characteristics. First, their reading requires a fairly large cultural repertoire (linguistic as well, in the case of the *Wake*) and mythico-historical memory, which is ordinarily not possible for the reader to achieve. *Ulysses* self-reflexively alludes to the challenges posed by its telegraphic allusiveness when it has Malachi Mulligan wittily mention, in a veiled reference to Yeats and the texts of the Celtic revival, the “[f]ive lines of text and ten pages of notes about the folk and fish gods of Dundrum” (1.365-7). Second, it is the question of why certain elements are there in the textual space, after all. Why should seven pages of the book be spent on Bloom’s defecation, which happens in full view of the reader? Across generations Joyce’s insistence on the undistinguished aspects of life has exhilarated many readers, and baffled or disappointed many others. While the shared character of the quotidian activities invited many to a vicarious participation, the apparent absence of a narrative rationale behind them guided the irritation of many early readers. Carl Gustav Jung was disappointed that “nothing happen[ed]” in the 735 pages of the book: “Every sentence raises an expectation which is not fulfilled; finally, out of sheer resignation, you come to expect nothing any longer” (584-5).

The discussion pertaining to the status of *Ulysses* as a classic needs to factor in the complex, and the seemingly convoluted, relationship modernism has with *profanum vulgus*. Indeed the “difficult” art of the modernists, including Joyce, places itself beyond the reach of the common reader, an attitude expressed by Eugene Jolas in his pronouncement in the Paris-based journal *Transition*, “[t]he plain reader be damned” (Ellmann 588n). According to Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, modernist art represents “a hoarding of the artistic powers against the populace” (28). But this distancing has an objective, and is to be seen in the context of the avant-garde’s negative engagement with reality. As Theodor Adorno argues in *Aesthetic Theory*, it is precisely by a critical distancing from the masses and the existing reality that modernism is able to critique both and conceive a new reality. That is why Adorno claims that modernist art respects masses by showing them what they can be “rather than adapting to their dehumanized condition” (*Aesthetic Theory* 341). Adorno defends modernist art’s tendency of cordoning itself off from the populace. According to him, art that is truly emancipatory does not reflect on and communicate with society. Rather, it resists society: “Art is the negative knowledge of the actual world” (“Reconciliation under Duress” 160). Realist art that caters to the masses faces the danger of integration into the dynamics of the system. Art as social protest faces the threat of degenerating into an affirmation of the status quo. Society is willing to incorporate protests and assert its own totalizing power. Adorno sees this totalizing power in the

“culture industry.” Culture industry is the manner in which contemporary capitalist society accommodates artistic practices, even those which were once radical, into its own processes of commercialism and commoditization. To Adorno, the ideal art is a hermetic one. The irony, however, is that the very character of Joyce’s avant-garde art as an esoteric system makes it a commodity of a different order — a collector’s item, with a heightened market value.³

Just as the book’s esoteric potential for meaning-generation enhances its value when tested by the temporal method, the reverse can also be true with regard to the passage of time. The expansion of the canon has rendered the erstwhile distinction between “high” and “low” literature invalid. As we know, contemporary academic research devotes an unprecedented degree of attention to popular culture. Folk tales and folk arts, street theatre, advertisements, travel books, and graphic novels are legitimate critical concerns. Technological changes have ushered in research on cinema, cyber punk, print and television media, social media, and e-novels. Do old definitions of canons and classics still hold water? Despite its early characterization as ‘high art’ and its reputation as an esoteric work, *Ulysses*, like the rest of Joyce’s oeuvre, being replete with pantomimes, folk songs, music-hall numbers, street and barroom ballads, bits of popular fiction, advertisement jingles, nursery rhymes, and, above all, bawdy Irish jokes, has a strong basis in popular culture.⁴ Understandably, Joyce has somehow managed to transcend the high-low distinction and the related cultural transitions. In fact, contemporary popular culture has a Joyce buzz. Joyce is the subject of a lot of popular intertextuality, Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson)’s “non serviam” quote and young Colin’s immediate identification of the source in Martin Scorsese’s *The Departed* (2006), and the Joycean associations of the Soviet code-name Ulysses/Stas Siyanko (Oleg Stefan) in Robert De Niro’s *The Good Shepherd* (2006) being examples. Ironic as it might seem of a work which critiques mass marketing and commodity capitalism from the inside (Bloom is an advertising canvasser), as Emer Nolan points out, “in Ireland, quotations from Joyce’s texts have been used to sell all kinds of commodities, from lemon soap [Bloom buys it from a Dublin chemist] to sausages” (153). *Ulysses* has something for everybody. I am reminded of an observation made by a student the last time I taught the book: “Reading *Ulysses* is like being in a supermarket. You don’t know what to take and what to leave.” As for myself, when I see the flag of European Union fluttering over the chateau of William the Conqueror in Caen, I wonder what Joyce, with his humorous critique of parochial Irish nationalism, would have thought. Nevertheless, there are dimensions of a text in respect of which *Ulysses* might have lost its sheen in course of time. For example, it is doubtful whether an

allusive text such as this may have as much impact in the age of the internet (the eleventh muse!) as high modernist ones had had. Technology changes the text-reader symmetry!

A Milestone Approach

Though difficulty stimulates exegetical research, it cannot be the sole reason for perpetuation of interest. I contend that a work needs to be considered significant or insignificant not because it passes or does not pass the test of time, but because it engages substantial political, cultural, social, philosophical, and aesthetic questions. The claim of *Ulysses* to the status of a classic rests not on its passing the temporal test but on its ability to engage such questions. Perhaps, it may pass the former because it fulfils the latter requirement or expectation. Many projects, both aesthetic and socio-political, are at work in Joyce's texts, and, not surprisingly, they have been at the centre of many perennial concerns, quests, re-examinations, dilemmas, and agonies.

During the early decades of Joyce criticism, the mundane events that Joyce consciously chose to depict in *Ulysses* at the expense of conventional narrative expectations were read in conjunction with the catastrophe of the Great War as symptomatic of the absurdity of contemporary life, a mild prelude to the Beckettian Absurd. In the Literature of the Absurd, human action is represented as fundamentally pointless in a universe deprived of its metaphysical moorings. Beckettian absurd is, of course, not the reappearance of the ordinary as the ordinary. Here the ordinary is short-circuited back into negative metaphysical significances. Coming as they did in the wake of the first war fought on a global scale, and the fragmentation and alienation in daily life wrought by a dehumanizing capitalist production, they were bound to receive such pessimistic but significant appraisals. To T. S. Eliot, who otherwise commended *Ulysses*, the life in the book pointed to "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which [was] contemporary history." He believed that in order to give "a shape and a significance" (270) to this deplorable state of affairs, Joyce and many writers who would follow him were obliged to pursue the mythical method. Similarly, Jean Paris saw the triviality of Joyce's content as a sign of degeneration from the ideals of the past, and atrophy of the times when *Ulysses* was written.⁵ Erich Auerbach also saw the phenomenon in a pessimistic light, as "a mirror of the decline of our world" (551). To him the book presents an "atmosphere of universal doom," "confusion and helplessness," and a "blatant and painful cynicism" (551). In fact, that the book reflected the spirit of its time (*Zeitgeist*) was so taken for granted that when the belief was belied it resulted

in sharp responses. For instance, Marxist critic Karl Radek complained about Joyce's neglect of momentous historical developments. He found Joyce's "method" at the most suitable "for describing petty, insignificant, trivial people, their actions, thoughts and feelings." It would prove "utterly worthless if the author were to approach . . . the great events of the class struggle, the titanic clashes of the modern world" (625).

Joyce has been cited by almost every major thinker and critic of the last one hundred years for one purpose or the other. For instance, Charles Taylor, perhaps the greatest philosopher alive, exploring the making of the modern identity in *Sources of the Self*, employs Joyce's concept of epiphany, in relation to affirmation of ordinary life. Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher who can be called a public intellectual, in her book *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, considers Bloom, the tolerant cuckold, a political model for our times. Bloom's conscious decision to abstain himself from home during the rendezvous between Molly and Boylan illustrates a philosophy of the other: a You-relation, which recognizes the subjectivity of the other as another I, in contradistinction to an It-relation, which merely objectifies and uses the other (a distinction made by Martin Buber). Declan Kiberd's book *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Life in Joyce's Masterpiece* argues that contrary to its reputation as an obscure text, *Ulysses* makes available to common man the wisdom and art of ordinary life. Similarly, in a case of analogous reasoning, Fredric Jameson claims in *Marxism and Form* that *Ulysses* is structured in a way that replicates the totalizing dynamics of capitalism (apparently, very little is left outside his schemata for the book). M. Keith Booker's *Ulysses, Capitalism, and Colonialism: Reading Joyce after the Cold War* is another example which shows the book's ability proleptically to engage phenomena beyond the period of its origin. The point is that writing on Joyce is not mere literary criticism. The conclusion I draw from the proliferating examples of the above-mentioned kind across disciplinary boundaries is that Joyce is not merely a creative writer who extended the frontiers of fiction with his experimental writings but one who is an indispensable part of humanity's long endeavour to understand itself. I am aware that terms such as 'humanity' and 'human nature' are suspect in the contemporary critical climate. But in order to understand a phenomenon one has to suspend for a while the uncompromising conceptual scepticism, which is often considered synonymous with critical intelligence, and the assumed naiveté which accompanies this scepticism. In any case, Joyce's works have been milestones in Western cultural history, both reflecting and triggering the evolution of the Occidental world view in the twentieth century.

In an essay entitled “Joyce à la Braudel: The Long-Temporality of *Ulysses*,” I have argued that Joyce espouses alternative historical trajectories neglected by traditional historiographic paradigms, which largely deal with great personages and momentous events. The essay draws a parallel between the quotidian material life depicted in *Ulysses* and the concept of “structural history” proposed by the French micro-historian Fernand Braudel.⁶ In *Ulysses*, Joyce foregrounds the historicity of the quotidian and holds out the down-to-earth praxis, the immediate challenges, and possible fulfilment in the daily life of ordinary men and women as an experiential contrast to a “grand history” of conspicuous (and cataclysmic) events. If one historicizes the everyday Joyce, this contrastive grand history may be seen to have comprised of not only the Great War, but also the seven-century-long English imperial rule in Ireland, the climactic years of the violent Irish struggle for independence, the civil war that followed, and various kinds of religious and sectarian bigotry, including anti-Semitism, both in Ireland and on the Continent, where Joyce was in voluntary exile. Paradoxically, it is the historiographically privileged phenomena of the greater world — wars, civil wars, colonial domination, violent nationalism, and anti-Semitism — that constitute the content of the “nightmare from which” Stephen is “trying to awake” (*Ulysses* 2.377).

Indeed Joyce’s greatest contribution to “life” (sometimes dismissed as a humanist abstraction) has been in the understanding of everyday life, its unconcealed subtleties, and unarticulated intricacies. No doubt the quotidian in *Ulysses* is historically specific, set at the beginning of the twentieth century in urban Dublin. It is not even an Irish quotidian. Joyce knew very little about the Irish countryside. Further, within Dublin, it is only the lower middle class that finds space in the book. Except for indirect references, the urban working class represented in Seán O’Casey’s plays, and the rural folk in Synge’s works are conspicuous by absence in *Ulysses*. The life-experiences of a specific group of people at a specific moment in time cannot claim universal significance. Having said this, it would be equally naive to consider a cosmopolitan writer’s representation as only locally or nationally relevant. One of Joyce’s attempts as he moved from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake* was to impart a transnational and transtemporal significance to his works. The *Wake* presents the cosmic dream of an archetypal man HCE (Here Comes Everybody). In *Ulysses* Joyce makes Bloom’s day so representative that many of its aspects will have implications that transcend time and place. He told Arthur Power, “I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal” (Ellmann 505). Acknowledging Joyce’s

ability to capture the universal in the particular, Herman Broch, one of the first Jews who received Joyce's help during the *Anschluss* to escape from German territory, refers to 16 June 1904 as the 'Welt-Alltag der Epoche' [universal quotidian]" (64). Virtually every aspect of the spectrum of existence — education, work, leisure, shopping, sleep, family, birth, sex, death, social camaraderie, religion, politics, and art — finds a place in the encyclopaedic novel. Its representative inclusiveness makes *Bloom's Day* a microcosmic specimen where the workings of human life are instantiated.

Joyce's Delicate *Épistèmes*

That Joyce raises the ordinary and the commonplace to the sanctity of religion and ritual is vouchsafed by his use of the term "epiphany" to describe its trivia. The "vulgarity of speech or of gesture" or "a memorable phase of the mind" is capable of achieving "a sudden spiritual manifestation." The "soul" of the commonest object, "its whatness leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance" (*Stephen Hero* 216). Stephen's epiphanies include a colloquy overheard in Eccles Street (where Joyce was to house Bloom and Molly later in *Ulysses*) between a young lady and a gentleman, and the string of three mundane scenes in *A Portrait*, each beginning with the clause "[h]e was sitting" (67-8). During an epiphany commonplace phenomena receive the attention and emphasis which they are denied under the workaday perspective. Stephen considers these moments "evanescent" because the sensitive state of mind which apprehends the "triviality" may be lacking later: "He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments" (*Stephen Hero* 218).

A Portrait, a revised version of the partially extant *Stephen Hero*, opens with Stephen's vivid recollection of the story about the "moocow," which his father told him. He remembers the physical sensations of infancy with immediacy — the smell of his parents, and the change from warmth to cold when he wets the bed (*Portrait* 7). He is attentive to the sound "suck" produced by dirty water going down through the hole in the basin (11). In *Ulysses* the odour of the pickings of his toe nail, nauseating though it may seem to the reader, takes Bloom back in time to childhood (17.1488-96). The tender sense that Joyce's detailed portrait of Leopold Bloom leaves is that of a little, finite life: Here was a man, uncounted and isolated, who passes unnoticed, through or alongside the otherwise convivial Dublin gatherings. Here was a man with a mole on his nose. And one day he ceased to be. That Rudolf Bloom, the father, had purchased "a new boater straw hat"

(17.629-32) before his suicide speaks volumes about his inner life, which contrasts with the matter-of-fact manner in which Joyce makes Bloom recollect the scene of the inquest. The lamb wool corselet that Molly knitted for infant Rudy, and with which she buried him (14.269) and the bowl of china into which Stephen's mother vomited the bile in her deathbed (1.108-10) are experiential tokens of a life that is unknown, of an unaccounted history. Small things of ordinary human life matter because they are framed by mortality. The finitude of life imparts an existential momentousness and an emotional gravity to non-events. When people are gone, these small things attain an unprecedented significance by "retrospective arrangement," a repeated phrase in *Ulysses*. The strength of literature lies in its ability — a sensitive audacity — to deal with such delicate reality. From an epistemological point of view, a delicate reality is something which we are often compelled to be apologetic about in the face of logical fastidiousness. It is not easily amenable to rational demonstration or empirical verification. It is vulnerable to the charge of stating the obvious. In order to apprehend it we need what André Gide calls *disponibilité* — a conscious openness to all kinds of experience.⁷ To a world of instant generalizations and quick dismissals, where words have failed to signify, where habitual skepticism is mistaken for critical intelligence, Joyce seems to be suggesting that all knowledge is a matter of delicate *épistèmes*.⁸ The imperative for a callous world is to be sensitively open and imaginatively perceptive to unarticulated, subtle, and diverse realities of human experience. Virginia Woolf, another writer of interior monologues, praised Joyce as a "spiritual" writer for his ability to understand the interiority of being (190). Joyce's own interior monologues lay bare before the reader the subtle realities of his characters' inner life — even semi-formed and half-articulated thoughts, dubious perceptions, overwhelming feelings, and unconventional opinions. To this end Joyce fragmented narratives, recast English, perverted its syntax, broke down its vocabulary, peeped into its semantic possibilities, and in the process, rendered the Oxford English Dictionary irreversibly obsolete.

At another level, the self-conscious representation of trivia in *Ulysses* is also meta-art. Therefore, it is possible to detect in it a meta-level significance as well. One may account for the presence of elements such as Bloom's defecation by arguing that by incorporating inconspicuous occurrences, the author is raising a meta-literary question: "What will count as literature?" The Joycean trivia may be seen as part of the transgressive avant-garde response to the arbitrariness of defining and delimiting art.⁹ Joyce's fiction does reveal the arbitrariness of unwritten literary norms through their breach. In the "Calypso" episode Bloom defecates and wipes

himself with a copy of *Titbits*, where the prize story of “Matcham’s Masterstroke” by Philip Beaufoy has appeared. Material that is conventionally unacceptable as art and frowned upon is self-reflexively brought in contact with the printed word.

A Classic to Literary Criticism — *Ulysses* as a Paradigmatic Text

In this final section I explore the significance of *Ulysses* to literary theory, criticism, and research. My contention is that while the book outwits formulaic critical propensities, it is also a paradigmatic text for many schools of criticism. I claim this in the context of certain tendencies in contemporary literary research. Today if one reads a cross-section of secondary materials on any author, three-fourths of them are likely to claim one of the following, or versions thereof: i) Meaning is undecidable (the theoretical insight of deconstruction); ii) Literary texts are not neutral or transcendent entities but inevitably entangled in discourses of race, class, and gender (from schools of ideological criticism); and iii) Some concept or the other is a cultural construct (from constructivism). In a version of deductive reasoning, more often than not, literary research begins with certain *a priori* assumptions, and the final product becomes a mere application of the theoretical assumptions to a few more texts. Though books have been written on *Ulysses* from such theoretical perspectives, its fecund complexity resists critical pigeonholing and facile theorization. Joyce’s writings have been a slap in many faces. But above all, they are a slap in the face of those who prepare procrustean critical beds for his texts to rest.

In a very limited sense, I call Joyce’s writing “aphilosophical.” Here everything is valid; nothing has absolute authority. The texts are a play of competing discourses, world views, and lifestyles, even the most aberrant ones. Of course, some are singled out for parody — ecclesiastical tyranny and parochial nationalism, for instance. But one cannot with cognitive ease hierarchize the various discourses and enlist the author as the ideologue of a cause or the mouthpiece of an idea. This makes Joyce, paradoxically, the highpriest of mismatches and contaminations. Let me illustrate the rift between the rhetorical efficacy of criticism and what “the case” is. Drawing upon Hayden White’s postmodern philosophy of history,¹⁰ Richard Poirier explains self-parody in Joyce and Nabokov saying that it stems from the awareness that literature is no longer the primary source of fictions. History itself is a fictional construct, and all narratives, historical and fictional, are tentative constructs. Self-parody results from this loss of primacy. But those who know the *Lebenswelt* (reality as actually organized and experienced by an individual subject; literally, life-world) out of which Joyce’s texts emerged — he punned on his own

name to be “shame’s voice” and “germ’s choice” — recognize their self-parody to be a complex imaginative output of several ingredients — his degenerate home, his difficult relationship with Ireland and Catholicism, his position as a colonial subject, the strategies of the subaltern, his messianic fantasies, the comic literary pedigree of the Western literary world, particularly Rabelais, the Irish bull, and his own joco-serious *Weltanschauung*.

Ulysses not only transcends theoretical lure, but is also a paradigmatic trigger-text in itself for quite a few approaches to literature: Genetic Criticism, Geocriticism, and the New Economic Criticism, to name a few. As the essays collected in *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant Textes*, edited by Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, and Michael Groden, demonstrate, Genetic Criticism does not content itself with one particular state of the text (the final published version), as most approaches in literary studies do, but focuses on the chronological process by which the text came to be. Geneticists are interested in what Jean Bellemin-Noël calls the “avant-texte”: a critical gathering of the writer’s notes, sketches, drafts, manuscripts, typescripts, proofs, and correspondence. In practice, the Genetic approach is a combination of biographical studies of writers, including the dynamic cognitive processes involved in writing; textual criticism; and intertextual studies (what were called “influences” under the now-obsolete “source-studies” as well as the “hypertexts” of the structuralist studies à la Gérard Genette). It looks at the successive states of a book — alterations, exclusions, interpolations, and approximations. It is a unique approach to literature in that it aims to restore a temporal dimension to texts.

Ulysses, whose composition is a history in itself, was an inevitable stimulant for this critical paradigm-shift from textual “being” to avant-textual “becoming” — a shift which has profound ontological implications for literary studies. *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934), a memoir written by Frank Budgen, English painter and Joyce’s friend, is probably the first “genetic” record of the compositional process of the magnum opus. Budgen tells us about the author’s search for the most appropriate syntax, “an order [of words] in every way appropriate,” which would add the seduction motive from the “Lestrygonians” episode in the *Odyssey* to the scene where Bloom goes to lunch. The resultant sentences are: “Perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore” (Budgen 20; *Ulysses* 8.638-9). An understanding of the compositional process makes explicit the capacity of textual elements to coalesce and cross-validate, for example, the significance of the apparently erroneous use of the word “crosstree” in the “Proteus” episode of

Ulysses (3.504):

“You know, Joyce” [Budgen] said, “When Stephen sees that three-mastered schooner’s sails brailed up to her crosstrees”

“Yes,” he said. “What about it?”

“Only this. I sailed on schooners of that sort once and the only word we ever used for the spars to which the sails are bent was ‘yards.’ ‘Crosstrees’ were the lighter spars fixed near the lower masthead. Their function was to give purchase to the topmast standing rigging”

“Thank you for pointing it out,” [Joyce] said. “There’s no sort of criticism I more value than that. But the word ‘crosstrees’ is essential. It comes in later on and I can’t change it. After all, a yard is also a crosstree for the onlooking landlubber.” (Budgen 57)

And crosstree does recur in the pattern of “Scylla and Charybdis” episode, where Stephen propounds his Shakespeare theory: “Who put upon by His fiends, stripped and whipped, was nailed like bat to barndoor, starved on crosstree” (*Ulysses* 9.494-6). The passage is a parody of the Apostle Creed, and the erroneous usage is essential to the Christ-symbolism of the book, and to the theme of the Passion of the artist (both Shakespeare and Joyce). As is recognized today at least in some quarters, as the crosstree episode demonstrates, genetic research has potentially tremendous repercussions for meaning and interpretation.¹

Geocriticism is a contemporary critical approach which aims to study real and fictional geographical spaces, its chief practitioners being Bertrand Westphal and Robert Tally. Perhaps, the single source of origin for modern Geocriticism is spatial studies of Joyce’s Dublin. When Joyce told Budgen that he “want [ed] to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of [his] book” (Budgen 69), he was setting new standards of spatial correctness in fiction. Budgen adds: “Joyce wrote the ‘Wandering Rocks’ episode with a map of Dublin before him on which were traced in red ink the paths of the Earl of Dudley and Father Conmee whose journeys frame the occurrences of the episode. He calculated to a minute the time necessary for his characters to cover a given distance of the city” (124). Similarly, the school known as the New Economic Criticism explores “parallels and analogies between linguistic and economic systems,” “between language and money” (Woodmansee and Osteen 14-5). Mark Osteen’s economic analysis of *Ulysses* views Joyce’s signifiatory practice itself as characterized by an economy of thrift and extravagance (*Economy*

of *Ulysses* 200).

One of the trends in Joyce Criticism in the last forty odd years has been a political radicalization of his writings, *Ulysses* in particular (e.g. Enda Duffy's *Subaltern Ulysses*). Such an approach enables us to assess the extent and meaning of the subtle 'commitment' of a writer who *was* widely believed to have cultivated the image of a detached aesthete, primarily interested in form and technique. As Joyce's position on Irish nationalism demonstrates, lack of ideological commitment does not necessarily mean lack of interest. We have seen in the course of this essay that he is vitally interested in everything under the sun but engages in a way that suits his art. Only we have to decipher the nature of this engagement in the book's maze of fragmentary references, its jarring aesthetic, serio-comic play, undermining parody, and ubiquitous irony. A tenacious exercise on these lines can hopefully illustrate what a classic actually means.

Notes

1. In keeping with the tradition of using the Gabler edition of *Ulysses*, episode, and line numbers are cited instead of page numbers.
2. *Nacheinander* and *nebeneinander* are terms which feature in Stephen's interior monologue in the "Proteus" episode, and are a reference to the German aesthetician Gottfried Ephraim Lessing's work *Laocoön*.
3. For a further discussion of the economic logic of the modernist masterpiece, see Lawrence Rainey, "The Cultural Economy of Modernism," *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, pp. 33-69.
4. See Richard Brandon Kershner, *Joyce and Popular Culture* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1996).
5. Paris says: "*Wenn die »Odyssee« hier in entarteter Form auflebt, so nur, weil unsere Welt nicht mehr die Kraft besitzt, eine zweite zu schaffen, weil ihre Kultur bereits dazu verurteilt ist, sich an Abfällen zu sättigen* [If the *Odyssey* revives here in degenerated form, and only thus, it is because our world no more possesses the strength to create a second one, because her culture is already condemned to feed itself on rubbish]" (qtd. in Lobsien 20).
6. The cataclysmic historical events which precipitated the crisis-ridden world view of avant-garde modernism also led to innovative historical inquiries. One call for historical rethinking came from Fernand Braudel, who belonged to what has become known as the Annales School of historians. Having lived through the two world wars and the political upheavals in France, Braudel believed that beneath the ruptures and discontinuities of grand history, a day-to-day life of relative stability and inertia could be discovered. At this micro-level of history, human life is determined not by short-term factors such as the whims and fancies of political leadership but

long-term ones such as geography, climate, and demography.

Braudel demonstrated the operation of such a micro-history in his work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949). He reconstructs the apparently ephemeral lives of slaves, serfs, peasants, and the urban poor in terms of their food, clothing, social customs and mentalities, and suggests that these people are the real makers of civilization. For Braudel, history operates at various levels and is subject to various temporalities. He calls the first temporal level the *longue durée* (longer duration) (*On History* 208). This is geographical time, in which man interacts with his environment for survival (*histoire structurale*). Changes in geographical time happen in the course of centuries, and, hence, are almost imperceptible. The second level of time comprises social and cultural history, with social groupings, empires, and civilizations. Change at this level (*histoire conjoncturale*) is much more rapid than in the first. The third level of time is *histoire événementielle*. This is the history of personalities, politics, and exceptional events. Traditional history mostly takes into account only this third level. The history of events is conditioned by the two other levels underlying it. Braudel includes under material civilization – the story of man’s contact with the inanimate – food, clothing, housing, towns, civic amenities, money, prices, incomes, and technology.

7. The character Michel in Gide’s novel *L’Immoraliste* (*The Immoralist*) embodies this quality.
8. *Épistème* is Michel Foucault’s term for historically specific norms of discourse which determine what can be accepted as valid knowledge.
9. We would do well to remember that the Dadaists had hoped, by destruction of canons of taste and of logic, to show their contempt for bourgeois society. They had made Zürich their home like Joyce, and he was aware of their programme. Of course, Tom Stoppard presents a fictional meeting between Joyce and the Dadaist poet Tristan Tzara in his comedy *Travesties* (1974).
10. White in his *Metahistory* sets out to demonstrate that historical narratives are neither simple representations of a sequence of events nor the revelation of a design inherent in them. Instead, he analyzes historical narratives as shaped by the imposition on events of cultural patterns similar to narratological concepts such as plot and character-type.
11. For a recent example of the genetic approach to Joyce, see Daniel Ferrer and Jean-Michel Rabaté, “Paragraphs in Expansion (James Joyce),” *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes*, pp. 132-51.

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Orientalizing The Female Protagonist in Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley*

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Abstract Within the contours of contemporary feminist theory, this paper aims to undermine critical allegations assuming that Naguib Mahfouz is an anti-patriarchal novelist introducing a “balanced view” of the feminine/masculine nexus in his novels. This paper provides a new reading of *Midaq Alley*, Mahfouz’s celebrated novel, to uncover the hidden patriarchal ideology underpinning the narrative. Located in the intersectional discourses of hegemony and patriarchy, Mahfouz’s narrative aims to distort the identity of the female protagonist by transforming her into a rebellious whore dismantling the foundations of a patriarchal society. On this basis, the novel promotes the masculine narrative advocated by the domineering patriarchal community. By denouncing the justified rebellion of the marginalized protagonist against male brutalities, the author views the powerless female subaltern as a transgressor of domestic traditions. Instead of exploring the spaces — what feminist critics call silences — that exist in domestic collective memory with regard to women, Mahfouz portrays his female protagonist in a way which complies with indigenous patriarchal norms about women. Instead of dealing with Hamida, the female protagonist of the novel, as a victim of a patriarchal society regulated by masculine cultural constructs, the author stresses masculinity and macho conviviality, providing little space for the projection of the female counter-narrative.

Key words patriarchy; narrative; Mahfouz; feminist; brutalities; Oriental

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1. Introduction

In general, Arabic literature and culture are carriers of patriarchal values and the major instruments in the execution of the law of the father. In local religious mythology particularly the Adam myth, women are adjunct to men and are not considered as independent entities. Further, myths in postmodern criticism, are tales used to reinforce a master narrative by providing it with a veneer of “eternal truthfulness” which aims to overshadow the conflicts, contradictions and differences lying beneath the surface. Jean-Francois Lyotard categorizes these differences as “legitimizing narratives” (19). In order to uncover the dynamics of gender construction in *Midaq Alley*, the myth of what Hisham Sharabi calls “neo-patriarchy”(4) should be initially explored. Sharabi refers to the dichotomization of emerging classes in the Arab world as neo-patriarchy whereas Miriam Cooke examines neo-patriarchy as a metanarrative that should be questioned.

In a related context, neo-patriarchy is considered as a corporate institution dealing with the female community by appropriating it, making statements about it, authorizing views of it, ruling over it, dominating it, restricting and having authority over it. In *Neo-Patriarchy*, Sharabi points out that patriarchy in contemporary Arab societies is in several ways “no more than a modernized version of the traditional patriarchal sultanate”(7). He argues that neo-patriarchy is a structural corollary of dependent modernization limited to peripheral, semi-colonized and colonized societies in the wake of colonial expansion and European supremacy concluding that Western modernity is authentic and probably is not located in patriarchy. Sharabi also clarifies that patriarchy transcends the issue of gender oppression and involves hierarchal trajectories within social classes in addition to political and religious questions. In the same vein, Anshuman Mondal indicates that Mahfouz’s underlying representation of women is “symptomatic of what Sharabi calls neo-patriarchy” (4). In reality, Mahfouz seems to comply with traditional patriarchal categorization of women disguising itself as an adoption of modernized notions of femininity. Unequivocally, the gender construct in *Midaq Alley*¹ is tightly connected with paradigms of power, totality and the position of women within social classes.

In her discussion of the concept of patriarchy, the Egyptian feminist writer, Nawal ElSaadawi argues that class and sex are simultaneously responsible for the oppression of women in Arab societies. Personal life obviously includes the

intricacies of sex, the relations between man and woman and the relations between production and the division of labor. She proceeds, "Arab women are still exposed to different forms of oppression (national, class and sexual). The original cause of their triple oppression is the patriarchal class system which manifests itself internationally as world capitalism and imperialism and nationally as the feudal and capitalist classes of Third World countries" (1982:206). According to ElSaadawi, women in the Arab culture are conditioned to accept oppression because throughout successive ages "a system has been built up which aims at destroying the ability of women to see the exploitation to which they are subjected"(1980:5). While female sexuality is suppressed and any expression of it outside marriage brings dishonor to the family "the male ego grows in proportion to the number of his female conquests, and his sexual relations are a source of pride and occasion for boasting"(1980:30).

Moreover, in Islamic doctrine men are superior to women in the light of several verses from the Koran: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard."² Allegedly, male superiority is not contingent on any biological or gender element but it is attributed to God's will who has made the one superior to the other and because men spend their wealth to maintain women. There is no doubt that female inferiority is reinforced by the agency of a masculine and patriarchal culture rampant in Arab societies where the psychological and mental development of a woman "is greatly retarded and she is unable to free herself from passive attitudes and the habit of depending on others. She remains like a child in the early stages of his life but differs in the fact her body has grown, and she may have reached the age of thirty or forty."³

Apart from the preceding masculine / feminine debate, Mahfouz, the Nobel Prize winner, is described as "the godfather of the Arabic novel and one of the major underground historians" (Mehrez 9). Moreover, Roger Allen demonstrates that the sheer bulk and sophistication of Mahfouz's contribution to Arabic fiction in Egypt and the Arab world as a whole, "has tended to push other contributors somewhat into the shadows" (79). It is relevant to illustrate that Mahfouz was profoundly influenced by Western literature to the extent that his novels are often perceived as developed patterns of prose genres affiliated with the European novel. His fiction is generally read in the context of Western novels; its trends measured against supposed western equivalents, its innovations viewed as parallels or

departures from genres “like existentialism and magical realism” (Phillips 285). As a whole, Mahfouz came under the impact of several Western writers such as Gustave Flaubert, Honore de Balzac, Emile Zola, Charles Dickens, William Faulker, Dostoevsky and others.

However, the presentation of women in his fiction simultaneously reveals traditions deeply rooted in religious / cultural norms and echoes female images of Oriental women as reflected in Western colonial novels. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said points out that Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan, Kuchuk Hanem, becomes symbolic of the power relations between West and East. It also has generated “a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for her and represented her”(Said 6). Emulating Flaubert who was one of his masters, Mahfouz speaks on behalf of the female subaltern in *Midaq Alley*.⁴ Since Orientalism is a totally male phenomenon, to use the words of Said, Mahfouz provides stereotypical images appropriated from oriental discourses introducing the Eastern woman (Hamida) as seductive and the Eastern man (Abbas) as shy. Duplicating master narratives peculiar to colonial fiction where Oriental women are projections of European male fantasy, he views the relationship between the Western colonizer (represented by the British troops dominating Hamida's body) and the colonized Oriental (Hamida) as one of power and domination.

Though Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley* is categorized as a realist novel implying an ideological commitment to social change exposing the impact of “nineteenth-century French realism” on the author and reflecting “fatalistic narratives of social and cultural determinism” (Oersen 5), the novel is pervaded by a gendered discourse generated by a patriarchal ideology latent in the male subconsciousness. It is associated with an intense fear and distrust of women. Although the harem no longer exists in the Arab world as a physical reality, its psychological ramifications are still in every house. Women are conflated with the body and its disruptive sexual impulses. The patriarchal order rooted in Arab culture is based on binary and ontological oppositions between men and women, reason and desire, order and chaos. In most of Mahfouz's novels, few women have the courage to construct a life of their own beyond the seated-off chambers ruled by the patriarch.

Exploring the conscious and unconscious ideological bases of Arab-Muslim patriarchal systems, several critics have investigated what is called “the Muslim erotic and orthodox texts.” They argue that in Muslim erotic texts women are portrayed as omnisexual beings transgressing patriarchal and social systems and violating the class structure in pursuit of personal sexual satisfaction. The orthodox

discourse gives priority to male desire as a basis for social order. In this context, the submission of women to men is given a spiritual value equal in importance to human submission to God.⁵ In most of his early novels,⁶ Mahfouz, a pioneer in the male-dominated literary tradition in the Arab world in the Post WWII era provides depictions of Egyptian women that are often reductive perpetuating local myth of female subjection preoccupied with female characters delineation, he creates them within preconceived stereotypes: motherhood versus prostitution and innocence versus sin, and thus reduces women to mere objects of voyeuristic attention suitable for preconceived types and stereotypes indispensable to a patriarchal culture.

Nevertheless, many critics and scholars consider Mahfouz as a novelist defending women's rights in the Arab world. They point out that Mahfouz in his representation of gender advocates a non-patriarchal perspective. For example Miriam Cooke claims that Mahfouz is a feminist writer who challenges patriarchy in his society. Adopting a feminist stance due to his capture of the shifting gender relations within the Egyptian society, Mahfouz, according to Cooke's doubtful opinion, interrogates masculinity particularly the way in which he assumed that gender relations are located in "asymmetric power"(107). Cooke also illustrates that the early works of Mahfouz reflect what she calls "the psychological and sexual victimization of women, by selfish greedy men"(107). Ostensibly, Mahfouz seems, on the surface, to be a liberal writer who deals with the gender issue objectively but "it is not difficult to see that the novelist's neutrality of presentation is only superficial" (Elenany 23) particularly in *Midaq Alley*.

2.The Dynamics of Anti-Feminism in Arabic Literature

In traditional Arabic literature women are presented as decayed figures more absent than present and are marginalized by being muted. Even if women are given full physical presence, their power of speech is obliterated. Until the 1950s, Arabic literature "is not about women. It is not about women and men equally. It is by and about men" (Russ3). Arabic literature and culture masculinity as opposed to femininity is embedded in religious, social and economic interfaces besides the vortex of inherited tradition. Different forces have historically given impetus to the cultural metamorphosis shaping the concept of masculinity. Moreover, the institutionalization of masculinity sustained by religious and political intersects with what Judith Butler calls "racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" (3). Masculinity, reinforced by the patriarchal matrix produced a diversity of male paradigms and hierarchies underpinning and determining contemporary gender politics in the Middle East.

In *Midaq Alley*, Mahfouz introduces an antagonistic perspective toward the female community. Lying at the core of Mahfouz's negative vision of Cairo are hostile images of women dominated by greed, lust, gossip, and envy. These women are either old and sterile like Umm Hamida and Mrs. Saniya Afify, or have had children in a remote past like Mrs. Salim Alwan and Mrs. Radwan Hussainy, or hate children and women equally like young Hamida delineated as totally self-engrossed and dominated by one passion, her lust for power and riches. In fact, the female figures the reader encounters in the novel, according to Mona Amyuni, sum up in their lives, activities, and yearnings the image of Cairo itself, a kind of female monster whose entrails are chewed by imperialist greed and a small, corrupt, rich class under King Faruk (25).

Historically, male philosophers and writers have played a significant role in disseminating anti-feminist sentiments which contributed to the degraded status of women in some societies including the Arab world. For example, Thomas Aquinas refers to the connections between women and Satan whereas Socrates observed that "man was created for noble pursuits, for knowledge and the pleasures of the mind, whereas women were created for sex, reproduction and the preservation of the human species".⁷ In an interview with Salwa Elnaimi, Mahfouz states: "our world is masculine and one cannot imagine it otherwise. Women continue to struggle to become part of social life. But I could not describe a world in which women play the same roles as men."⁸ The preceding argument by Mahfouz disrupts Cooke's notion about Mahfouz's alleged anti-patriarchal perspective underpinning his fiction. There is no doubt that Mahfouz was brought up in a very conservative religious environment and he married at the age of forty which was an anomaly at his own time when men used to marry in their early twenties. It is also known that he did not have direct contact with females either at work or within his own family. The most famous works of Mahfouz constantly betray his anti-feminist sentiments.

In Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy*, Yasin, the stepson of Amina, a central and dignified female figure in the *Trilogy* refers to her as "a woman. Yes, she's nothing but a woman. Every woman is a filthy curse. A woman doesn't know what virtue is, unless she is denied all opportunity for adultery" (2001:88). In this context, ElSaadawi, argues that none of the male authors in the West and the Arab world she has read "has been able to free himself from this age-old image of women handed down to us from an ancient past, no matter how famous many of them have been for their passionate defense of human rights, human values and justice."⁹ ElSaadawi points out that in Mahfouz's fiction women fall into two main dichotomies. The first category includes "sacred pure mothers and frigid chaste, respectable wives"

whereas the second group is epitomized by “the prostitute and the mistress, women who are warm, pulsating, seductive, but despised” (1980:166).

As a counter argument against critical assumptions suggesting that Mahfouz, is a pro-feminist writer who emphasizes the evils of patriarchy in his fiction, the incidents of *Midaq Alley* divulge a one-sided vision of the female Oriental. His representation of Hamida, the female protagonist of the novel, is polarized by a complex pattern of images situating her as a whore and a rebel who threatens an inherited patriarchal system. Markedly, Mahfouz has fallen into the snares of patriarchy in the novel most likely because of his gender and cultural/religious orientation and since language speaks in literary texts not the author to use the words of Roland Barthes there is an ample evidence in the text to support this assumption.

In this basis, *Midaq Alley* is integrated in the male/female power nexus prevailing the narrative. Viewing the female subaltern as a vicious woman (vile whore) and stripping her of her humanity, Mahfouz’s master narrative is transformed into a patriarchal construct characterized by what Jacques Derrida calls “violence of the letter, a violence of difference, of classification, and of the system of appellations” (110). Viewing the Eastern female as a lustful whore, Mahfouz portrays the protagonist in a manner not only conforming to local patriarchal traditions but also to norms deeply seated in Orientalist and colonialist literature. In fact, Hamida is defined by a “system of values that treats women as mere sex objects and inferior, helpless beings” (Amyuni 27). Unequivocally, the status of women in the alley as dominated by a local patriarchal institution represented by the father, the brother, or the husband. Within this hegemonic system, woman’s life and destiny are controlled by a male master or a guardian. In her study of *Midaq Alley*, Mona Amyuni points out that early marriage is welcome to guarantee the bride’s virginity, a symbol of family honor. She adds that “forced marriages are customary and it is taken for granted that the girl has no say in the choice of her husband. Sexual life and sexual fulfillment are therefore prohibited to women, while men indulge in polygamy.”¹⁰

In the patriarchal microcosm of *Midaq Alley*, Hamida’s narrative is restructured and rearticulated to conform to masculine and class politics. Feminism and patriarchy, in the novel, intersect with other issues such as class conflict and colonization. Like other men of the new lower middle class Mahfouz seems to believe that the limited emancipation available to women in Egypt since the women’s liberation movement led by Qasim Amin at the outset of the twentieth century threatened to increase competition for scarce professional positions. The

limited emancipation obtained by women denied men their “traditional source of status as guardians of family honor” and imposed on them “values associated with their European competitors and oppressors” (Cole 405). This association is evident in the narrative. In *Midaq Alley*, Hamida is simultaneously exploited by the male community in the alley as well as Farag, the pimp who allured her into the prostitution swamp selling her body to the British colonizers.¹¹

3. De-centralizing the Female Subaltern in *Midaq Alley*

In several novels by Mahfouz including the *Cairo Trilogy*, women are frequently treated as property owned by men. They are eroticized, rewarded or punished according to male desires. In *Midaq Alley*, Hamida, as a constructed body of seduction and desire is textually contained and the myth of the sensual female is disseminated in the text. From the beginning, Hamida is concurrently threatened by the intruding gazes of the male narrator and the male community in the alley who condemned her for her explicit sexuality. She is seen by both male and female as a woman who ventures to challenge the patriarchal authority. In *Midaq Alley*, Egyptian women are seen as what Edward Said calls “communities of interpretations” (Said 1985:89) which remain voiceless until being reinterpreted and reconstructed by the masculine author. For example Hamida, remains inaccessible to the extent that the reader of *Midaq Alley* learns more about an inherited patriarchal system rather than s/he learns about the life of the female protagonist. Portraying Hamida as an incarnation of the forces of evil in the alley and viewing her male lovers as helpless preys duped by her seduction and temptation, Mahfouz's narrative categorizes the former not only as immoral but depraved. In this sense, the novel provides support for the powerful at the expense of the powerless depicting the aggressive males as victims and the marginalized female as victimizer humiliating the one who has been historically humiliated. Hamida is introduced as a young girl who is not interested in the role of the traditional wife involved in house-keeping, suckling and bearing children. She also wants to emulate the liberal Jewish girls whose economic freedom gives them the means to dress well and whose attitude at that time is considered as a transgression of the boundaries of the conservative local morality. Hamida encounters these girls outside the alley and she competed with them because she was aware of her beauty compared to the girls. They look rich, free and bold though not as attractive as her. Moreover, she was not able to imitate the Jewish girls and get a job in the factory because she was illiterate, therefore she selects prostitution falling into the trap of the pimp.

Ostensibly, the factory girls triggered her rebelliousness and revolt against the alley particularly after the failure of her marriage from Salim Alwan. Alwan's sudden illness, which desexualizes him, shatters her dreams and thus she wants more than ever to escape the stranglehold of the alley. The agent of her release is the pimp Ibrahim Farag, the pimp whose Arabic name is translated by Cooke as "Abraham the Liberator."¹² Meeting with him for the first time, Hamida was attracted to Farag's neat appearance and luxurious life style. She thought he is a passionate lover like Abbas, the barber or Salim Alwan, the rich merchant. Farag, infiltrated into the alley during general election campaigns.¹³ He was able to drag Hamida out of the alley by pretending love for her. Finally she fell into the snares of his evil schemes and became a whore. Though falling in love with Farag in the beginning, Hamids was not concerned about the idea of marrying him after she discovered he was a pimp.

Due to the wide difference between the alley's world and the new world of the pimp, Farag succeeded in luring Hamida out of the alley described as a wasteland and a graveyard of decaying bones where women are subject to enormous pains resulting from constant pregnancies, children-bearing and filth. Farag transforms Hamida into a prostitute changing her attire and external appearance. He also changed her name into Titi in order to be pronounced easily by her customers mainly the British soldiers in the tavern. Nevertheless, the transition from Hamida into Titi and from the alley to the brother took place when the female subaltern "was surrounded by social and economic difficulties and suffering from hunger and deprivation. She was prepared to do anything including prostitution to achieve more money, power and luxury but she wanted also to protest and rebel against her oppressors particularly in the alley" (ElSheikh 1991:88).

Ebrahim ElSheikh points out that Hamida is inferior to the male community in the alley because of her "lack of advanced education, social immobility and blind concentration on the age-old practices of housekeeping and marriage" (90). On the surface, her decision to become a sex worker brings shame to the whole alley and inevitably she has to pay for her non-conformist behavior. Evidently, Hamida is oppressed by an unjust social and political order and devastated by poverty, social classification and a brutal male-dominated mentality. She was given two options: either to stay in the impoverished alley or to become a prostitute. She was "more or less inferior to men on almost all levels, whether economic, social or political."¹⁴ Like the women community in the alley she is marginalized and crushed. Some women were working very hard to keep their starving families whereas others were deprived of any opportunity to improve their lives and cross the poverty line.

Few critics sympathize with Hamida considering her as a scapegoat who takes prostitution willingly as a means of gaining independence to confront her degrading economic condition. Cooke observes that prostitutes are “the most interesting and creative women characters in the fiction of Mahfouz” (111). Cooke clarifies that Hamida “has to break out of a world that expects her to be other than she wants to be. She will break that particular circle only if she can escape the constrictions of her space” (116). Likewise, Amyuni argues that Mahfouz “depicts Hamida as the direct result of a corrupt socioeconomic situation that imprisons her and absolutely determines her fate” (30). Nevertheless, many conservative critics severely criticized Hamida for her rebellion against domestic social traditions. For example, Shahinaz Abdel-Hady claims that Hamida “has no religious, moral or human values to believe in” (84). According to Abdel-Hadi, Hamida has rejected her destiny as a traditional Egyptian woman and the convention of marriage is not important for her. She is not condemned by her circumstances to sell her body. Further, Hamida has rejected her destiny as a traditional Egyptian woman for whom marriage is the sine qua non for social acceptability. She is not condemned by her circumstances to sell her body as she is engaged to a respectable young man and has a secure, if poor and unexciting future in the alley (83). Because of these reasons Hamida should be banished out of the alley

The rebellious nature of Hamida coupled with her beauty materialistic ambitions paved the way for her to become a whore according to some critical speculations. Marius Deeb demonstrates that Hamida, a “stubborn, narcissistic and over-zealous” woman is not crushed by poverty or social circumstances and she was fully responsible for her destiny, “Mahfouz never states anywhere in the novel that Hamida has been forced to become a prostitute” (1991:33). In the same scenario, Deeb argues that Hamida is a cunning woman who wants to get rid of her pimp and her lover at the same time, therefore she encouraged Abbas to take revenge against Farag. Other critics who sympathize with Hamida consider her as one of the few women characters in Arab men’s literature who makes a real choice. She chooses prostitution because her choices are limited, not because she is forced. Sasson Somekh illustrates that “Hamida is not a pathetic prey: unconsciously she is willing to be trapped” (85).

Nevertheless, the mainstream narrative is over-eclipsed by a predominantly patriarchal perspective which dehumanizes Hamida. By identifying her as “a whore by instinct”¹⁵, the narrator adopts the voice of Farag, allowing him to exercise his masculine power on the female victim. In other words, the male pimp uses his power to classify, categorize and represent the subaltern other. By calling the poor

Hamida a prostitute even before she fell into sin, the pimp utilizes his strength as a male who is able to name and identify. Since naming and addressing is an act of possession performed by the dominant oppressive narrator, any name attributed to the female subaltern is a hegemonic act of naming, i.e. erasing the real or original name. It is then a re-naming intended to deprive the female protagonist from her identity in order to affiliate her with the prostitution quagmire or obliterate her existence.

The process of identity formation through which the male narrator creates and formats the female other and the traumatic impact of such formation on the victim is apparent in *Midaq Alley*. The male-female relationship in the narrative is damaged by masculine assumptions and psycho-pathology about women inherent in Arab culture. As a matter of fact, the entire process of refashioning, labeling, framing, naming and renaming are all masculine strategies aiming to subjugate and negate female individuality. Firdous Azim argues that the notion of “naming and addressing is an act of possession to be performed by the dominant subject” (60). Farag associates Hamida with inherited immorality betraying his masculine supremacy of naming and calling her a whore. He also changes her name into Titi to fit her new role as a professional prostitute frequented by foreign troops.

In the beginning of the narrative, Hamida was supposed to be sold by her foster mother to Salim Alwan, the company owner, at a low price. Afterward, she was transformed into Titi who was sold at higher price by Farag to the colonizing soldiers. In this sense, Hamida’s body is physically exploited by representatives of a patriarchal culture and their accomplices. Ignoring the wide age gap between them, Mr. Alwan wants to marry Hamida her for sexual purposes after his aging wife fails to satisfy his raging desires. Farag changes her name and teaches her English language and dancing in order to sell her body to the British troops. Attributing a new name to the female subaltern by an agent of patriarchy involves an un-naming dynamic which is an act of hegemony aiming to erase her original or real name. Renaming in this context intends to obliterate the female identity in order to affiliate or misappropriate her. In a related context, the female subaltern is dealt with as a newborn baby appropriated by the father / narrator/ pimp when given her name. This process also aims at stereotyping the victim by placing her at the bottom of the social and human hierarchy.

In *Midaq Alley*, Hamida is reduced to a non-entity, an object enclosed into a gendered classification. From her first appearance Hamida is introduced through the gaze of the male narrator and the male characters in the alley: “Hamida set out, wrapping her cloak around her” and listening to the clack of her shoes on the stairs

as she made her way to the street. She walked slowly conscious of both her gait and her appearance, for "she was aware that four eyes were examining her closely." The eyes belong to Salim Alwan, the company owner, and to Abbas, the barber. Apparently, she is viewed as a pure sex object not a human being: "She draped her cloak in such a way that it emphasized her ample hips and her full and rounded breasts. The cloak revealed her trim ankles on which she wore a bangle; it also exposed her black hair and attractive bronze face" (Mahfouz 1977: 33).

In *Midaq Alley*, Hamida, the female in the cloak, sustains the stereotype of the latent sexuality waiting to be unveiled. She is viewed as the embodiment of the passionate, sensual and inviting woman. The focus here is on Hamida's external appearance with implications that the male agents only have the power of unveiling and penetrating the secrets of the female body in cloak. In other words, the male whether in the alley (Abbas and Alwan) or in the brothel (Farag) or in the tavern (the British soldiers) has the masculine supremacy of pulling the veil / the cloak. Pulling the veil / the cloak off a woman in colonial fiction signifies or "serves as a visual metaphor for ideas of opening and discovery" (175). Franz Fanon considers the pulling of a veil off a woman as "baring her secret, breaking her resistance, making her available for adventure" (43). Emulating colonial fiction, the author of *Midaq Alley* portrays sexual relationships within the power structure integral to the Egyptian society. Unquestionably, Hamida is the victim of a socially decayed system and her combative nature is limited to the sex object which she represents in her microcosm. Lured out of the alley by Farag, Hamida was unveiled and inevitably lost the power game with the pimp, because "he is a man in male society that has crushed women for endless centuries" (Amyuni 30).

The journey of Hamida from the alley, an epitome of impoverished conservative Egyptian/Arab societies, to the world of prostitution is also dominated by male power and desire. In this context, the text is shaped by masculine politics engendering a set of stereotypes about the female protagonist. Hamida's story is narrated in a male-oriented manner reducing her to a sexual object. Events are tailored to tantalize the sexual fantasies of the male readers whose eyes are determined to colonize the body of the female subaltern. Laura Mulvey indicates that women are frequently colonized by the male gaze "so that they can be said to connote 'to-be-looked-at-ness'" (162). The discourse of eroticization surrounding Hamida provides a pretext for the male gaze to project its fantasies on the female Oriental who is styled accordingly. Obviously, the powerful patriarchal discourse reinforced by religion and tradition guaranteed men a sense of superiority in terms of society, politics, economics and sex. In *Midaq Alley*, patriarchy

ferociously defends its policies, therefore female individuality is problematic in the conservative society of the alley where women should conform to inherited norms.

In the view of Henry Giroux, we live in “an age marked by a crisis of power, patriarchy, authority, identity and ethics” (2). For centuries, women in Arab culture have been looked at but never allowed the power of looking. They are frozen in what Laura Mulvey calls “moments of erotic contemplation” (163). It is within “this economy of the gaze” that the body of Hamida is reified. The male gaze aims to strip off and break through Hamida’s “intimate life.” According to Hager Ben Dris, “the gaze has the power of unveiling and penetrating the secrets” of the female other (167). Looking is a male privilege denoting masculine power of action while the looked-at-female is a passive object of the male gaze: “The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact”¹⁶.

The gaze in psychoanalysis emerges as a central problem. In Freudian terms the object of the gaze (the woman) is approached as an absence or a lack. Her lack of the male penis arises an anxiety of castration in the male looker. The symbolic castration happens once the female shrinks into an object and she is mutilated as a punishment for luring the male. In *Midaq Alley* Hamida is reduced into an object through a strategy which “objectifies her into a fragment, a lack, a part, an object of what was once whole” (Sullivan 95). Thus, the male unconsciously adopts two ways of escape from his fears: He either underestimates or subjugates the female and punishes her or over-evaluates her into a fetish. In other words, the masculine oratory is basically an ambivalent discourse. Through such an ambivalent perspective the masculine discourse maintains, perpetuates and gains power.

Besides, the ambivalent way of stereotyping the female other is perceived by Homi Bhabha as a Freudian fetishism as “the disavowal of difference, is that repetitious scene around the problem of castration” (74). This fetishism implies an ambivalent vacillation between an acceptance of similarity and a refusal of difference. The ambivalence of the masculine is originated in the oscillation between the pleasure of acceptance and the anxiety of disavowal. The fetish also bears within the seeds of its own ruin. While being seductive and desirable, the female other is filthy and repulsive. This affection and hostility which runs parallel with the acknowledgement and disavowal of castration, according to Freud “are mixed in unequal proportions in different cases, so that the one or the other is more clearly recognizable” (345).

It is relevant to argue that *Midaq Alley* abounds with references to sexuality,

aggression and enslavement which are symbolically conflated in the narrative. Further, the female beauty of Hamida explicitly exerts an emasculating power over the men in the alley and the masculine tries to confront the power of castration. The fear of weaning masculine power is indicted through castration anxieties motifs in addition to images and metaphors of sexual weakness in the text epitomized by the Salim Alwan episode and the symbolic castration of Abbas by the foreign soldiers. Mr. Alwan is afflicted with a disease which strips him of his sexual potency shortly after he decided to marry Hamida.

The embedded problem in *Midaq Alley* is not female sexuality but the sexuality of the Egyptian-Arab man, his burden. Thereupon, there is no surprise that the males in the alley attempt to liberate themselves from the emasculating power of the female Oriental. In fact, the dilemma of the Arab male “becomes his sexuality and its control and it is this which is transformed into the need to control the sexuality of the other, the other as sexualized female” (Gilman 256). In this context, Hamida is viewed as a femme fatale, a sexually attractive woman but cruel and dangerous to men who have relations to her. The “femme fatale” is defined by Gilbert and Gubar as an immoral female “whose mystical powers deprive man of his powers” (8). Hamida, the engulfing oriental female who rejected to be chastised and her sexuality was not calmed and subjugated should be mercilessly punished by the patriarchal forces inside and outside the alley.

Mahfouz delineates Hamida as a ferocious woman who is strikingly attractive: “Her most remarkable features were her black, beautiful eyes. When, however she set her delicate lips and narrowed her eyes she could take on an appearance of strength and determination. Her temper had always been something no one could ignore” (Mahfouz 1977: 21). Her foster mother, Umm Hamida, told her that no husband “would want to embrace a burning firebrand like you” (1977: 22). She is not interested in marriage or bearing children or cooking or serving a husband like the other women in the alley. Instead of longing for traditional marriage “she was constantly beset by a desire to fight and conquer and she draws pleasure from attracting men and dominating her foster mother” (1977: 34). In the same vein, the narrator points out that she does not care about morality or religion but seeks power, money and men. Thus, Hamida overtly epitomizes the Amazonian woman or the femme fatale defined by Rebecca Scott as “a powerful and threatening figure, bearing a sexuality that is perceived to be rapacious or fatal to her male partners” (1992:8).

In a related argument, Louis Montrose demonstrates that “Amazonian mythology seems symbolically to embody and to control a collective anxiety about

the power of the female not only to dominate or reject the male but to create and destroy him” (15). Therefore, Hamida — who dares to subvert the male supremacy by emulating the figure of the Amazon or the femme fatale — should be penalized by being deprived of marriage and being cursed as a cast-out prostitute. According to Walter Raleigh, the Amazon societies are known to be basically located in Africa and Asia. For him, the women who are categorized as Amazonians are existed in the ancient societies in Africa and Asia. The Amazonian tribes are governed by queens not kings and the basic characteristics that distinguish the Amazon is cruelty and terror: “They are very cruel especially toward those who attempt to invade their territories.”¹⁷ Geographically speaking, Hamida is from Egypt, an African country, therefore, she partly fits into the figure of the Amazon given her cruelty and ferocity. As the alley’s queen of beauty, she desperately fights against the invading and intruding powers of patriarchy but unlike the Amazon women, she lost her battle with the enemies of femininity.

4. Conclusion

Literature does not exist in a vacuum but it is originated in cultural and social milieu shaped by ideological orientations. Instead of reconstituting the distorted image of the female other, in *Midaq Alley*, Mahfouz projected her in a way consistent with the patriarchal politics of his era. His priori approach pertaining androcentric tendencies manifesting themselves in his amplified presentation of the male characters leads to female abuse and subordination. The female other is therefore projected as obsessed with a spirit of violence and abuse. Hamida destabilizes the fixed moral codes of the alley thus she should be dismissed out of it. To protect what David Radavich calls “wounded patriarchy” (135) the alley brutally cracks down on Hamida.

The events of the novel impart that Hamida is victimized three times: by poverty, by local patriarchs and by the British colonizers. In the eyes of the male narrator, Hamida is the cause for all the evils in the alley. She is held responsible for Abbas’s departure to work in the British army camp though we did not have any specific incidents in the text to confirm this allegation. She never talked with him or persuaded him to work with the British army. It is Hussain Kirsha, the friend of Abbas, who suggested that the later can emulate him and join the British camp to improve his income. When he heard of Hamida’s involvement in prostitution, Hussain, a representative of the alley’s male community, was offended. He promptly urged Abbas, to slaughter Hamida: “Why didn’t you murder her? If I were in your position, I wouldn’t have hesitated a minute. I’d have throttled her on the

spot and then butchered her lover and disappeared.”¹⁸ This argument is triggered by the honor killing notion deeply rooted in Arab societies.

Surprisingly, Hamida alone has brought shame and disgrace upon the entire alley according to the narrator. Therefore, she should compromise her dreams as retribution for her transgression and violation of the local moral codes. In Arab societies, male sexual corruption is ignored whereas women's illicit sexual behavior is not tolerated. ElSaadawi argues that a man's honor is safe as long as the female members of his family keep their hymens intact. She adds that the concept of honor is more closely related to the behavior of the women in the family (31) or even in the neighborhood than to male conducts. For example, Hussain Kirsha is offended by Hamida's behavior whereas he turns a blind eye to the delinquency of his father, a drug-trafficker who spent his money on poor young boys in order to sleep with him.

Hamida is also incarcerated because she rejected marriage as an institution where women are domesticated and subjugated. She is abused twice because she is a woman and an Oriental. While Hamida is hurt severely and tarnished for being seductive, capricious and strong-willed, the sexually dangerous Kirsha, the café owner, who exploited young boys is not punished. According to the male community in the alley, Abbas's love for Hamida led him to cooperate with the colonizers in order to improve his financial condition and satisfy her ambitions. Undoubtedly, *Midaq Alley* is hermetically sealed against the female subaltern. The text is rooted in a patriarchal culture where everything is approached from a male perspective. Hamida is being marginalized by being denied a voice, by being objectified and renamed. The readers are given no details about her parents or her full name unlike other characters in the novel.

The image of the female protagonist, in *Midaq Alley*, unfortunately proclaims the predominance of a hostile male narrative originating in a backward indigenous culture. The valorization of the militant views toward Hamida turns the novel into a patriarchal tale depicting women as inferior. Moreover, the authorial adoption of masculine views about the humiliated female protagonist, introduced through the eyes of the male community in the alley, intensifies the hegemonic overtones of the text. Shaped by historical and monolithic discourses on women, the female subaltern in *Midaq Alley*, remains the victim of hegemonic masculine representation indispensable to patriarchal environments. A scrutinized reading of *Midaq Alley* concedes an undercurrent patriarchal agenda prevailing the novel particularly with regard to the treatment of the relationship between Hamida and her lovers, the male oppressor.

Some critics claim that Mahfouz broke new ground in Arabic literature by exposing ways in which women have historically been denied their humanity opening the academic literary canon to previously neglected anti-women discourses. This premise may be apparent in few other novels by Mahfouz but it is not applicable to *Midaq Alley*, one of the most well-known novels in Western literary canons. Instead of exploring the spaces — what feminist critics call silences — that exist in domestic collective memory with regard to women, Mahfouz portrays his female protagonist in a way which complies with local patriarchal norms about women. His representation of women conforms to domestic patriarchal visions of femininity while on the surface it masks itself as a progressive image of womanhood. In this sense the narrative is reflective of what Sharabi refers to as “neo-patriarchy” prevailing Arab culture.

Egyptian and Arabic cultural mythology is replete with negative images about women manufactured by male authors and disseminated in literary works. Cooke argues that female characters in Mahfouz’s fiction threaten male identities while the males “are constructed according to the binary model of master/slave.” She argues: “their conception of masculinity is too rigid to accommodate interaction with women on the basis of equality” (108). In this context, Naguib Mahfouz has been characterized by Cooke as a pro-feminist author deconstructing patriarchal constructs and giving voice to the voiceless female subalterns in the Arab world. This paper introduces a new reading of *Midaq Alley* arguing that Mahfouz’s one dimensional and minimalized portrayal of women betrays that the novel is entrenched in patriarchal trajectories aiming to trivialize the role of the female protagonist, Hamida, who is demoted and given peripheral proportions in the narrative canvas. The paper also illustrates that the act of stereotyping imposed on Hamida is a male invention, therefore, it is repeated in Mahfouz’s novels following *Midaq Alley* until it becomes integrated into the popular and collective consciousness of the Arab people. Evidently, the readers of Mahfouz encountered several silenced female subalterns in other successive novels who replicate Hamida.

Notes

1. *Midaq Alley* is Mahfouz’s most well-known novel in the West because it was translated and published in English in 1966 before he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in the late eighties. Written in Arabic in 1947 the events are set in a tiny blind alley in the heart of Islamic Cairo near the historic district of Alazhar. Most of the action occurs in the microcosm of the alley. Diachronically the narrative spans the WWII events and the presence of the British soldiers (and

their allies) in Egypt.

2. The citation is quoted from *The Koran*, The Women Sura/Section, verse 34 translated from Arabic by Yusuf Ali. See Abdulla Yusuf Ali, *The Koran*. Beirut: Alaalami Library press, 2001. 114.

3. See ElSadaawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, trans. Sharif Hatata. London: Zed Press, 1980. 30.

4. The incidents of the novel are located in ancient Cairo uncovering deteriorating system within which age-old institutions are collapsing and human relationships are totally fragmented.

5. For an interesting account on this issue, see Fatnah Sabbah's book: *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious*. New York: Pergamon, 1984.

6. *Midaq Alley* (1947) was written after Mahfouz published his first collection of short stories in the 1930's followed by the publications of three historical novels: *Fate's Mockery* (1939), *Radobis* (1943), *The Struggle for Thebes* (1944) and two novels *New Cairo* (1945), and *Khan al-Khalili* (1946) belonging to what critics call the tragic realism period in his career.

7. See ElSadaawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, 1980.120.

8. Cited in Miriam Cooke, "Men Constructed: In the Mirror of Prostitution." *Naguib Mahfouz: From Regional Fame to Global recognition*. Eds. Michael Beard and Adnan Haydar. New York: Syracuse University Press, 199. 108.

9. See ElSadaawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, 1980.160.

10. See Mona Takieddine Amyuni, "Images of Arab Women in *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz and *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Saleh." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (17) 1985: 28.

11. The events of the novel took place during the last years of WWII. In his introduction, the translator, Trevor Le Gassick, argues that the novel is set in the early forties providing glimpses of "unusual intimacy into Egypt in a period of fast transition." However he affirms that "both the locale and the events of this novel should certainly not be viewed within a narrow framework of time. We see how characters are enticed away from the roles natural to their birth and upbringing by the hope of material gains chiefly through work with the British army." See Trevor Le Gassick, Ed. *Critical Perspectives on Naguib Mahfouz*. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1991. 8.

12. See Cooke, "Men Constructed: In the Mirror of Prostitution." 1993.117.

13. Political corruption and the economics of war constituted the backdrop of the novel. The war (WWII) enhanced the economic potential for the alley dwellers opening new work opportunities for young men in British army camps and for young girls in the domain of prostitution entertaining the British colonizers — the soldiers in the tavern. In the novel Cairo is delineated as a squalid city "gripped in decomposition." "Images of Arab Women in *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz and *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Saleh." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (17) 1985: 25. .

14. See Ibrahim ElSheikh, "Egyptian Women as Portrayed in the Social Novels of Naguib Mahfouz." *Critical Perspectives on Naguib Mahfouz*, ed. Trevor Le Gassick. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1991. 88.
15. See Naguib Mafouz, *Midaq Alley*, trans. Trevor Le Gassick. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1977. 170.
16. See Lura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, ed. Anthony Easthope and Kate McGoam. Birmingham: Open University Press, 1992. 162.
17. Sir Walter Raleigh's account on the Amazons was published in 1904. For further details about the attitude of Raleigh toward Amazonian women, see Hager Ben Dris. "Closed to Oriental Heroines: Ethos of the Colonial Text." *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* (36) 2003: 164-189.
18. See Naguib Mafouz, *Midaq Alley*, trans. Trevor Le Gassick. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1977. 279.

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“Who Am I?” : Between the Burden of the White House, Clutches of Political Agency¹and Eagerness for Privacy in Nadine Gordimer’s *Occasion for Loving*

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Abstract People’s lives in South Africa were dangerously affected by the policies of apartheid. White people of conscience, like the natives, were also prone to the repercussions of these policies. As a result, these whites lived as a minority within another minority suffering from unbearable psychological wounds because of their racial identity, the necessity to be politically active and their yearning for privacy. This paper investigates this predicament in Nadine Gordimer’s *Occasion for Loving (OFL)* specifically. Jessie, a white liberal woman, shows that living in such a milieu is so demanding, for she, like most of Gordimer’s female protagonists, lacks this sense of belonging that she starts questioning her being in South Africa. While using basically a psychoanalytic lens, Jacques Lacan’s model of human development, along with some of Bakhtin’s and Bhabha’s concepts, the paper demonstrates that after an arduous psychological journey which epitomizes the author’s understanding of this dilemma, Jessie succeeds to construct an identity of her own. Gordimer’s heroine concludes that the personal and the political cannot be set apart in apartheid South Africa. This paper then aims at shedding light on the process of white female identity construction in this turmoil suggesting that the novel under scrutiny endows the white woman in Africa with an intricate compromise to enjoy, at least partially, a satisfactory self-image.

Key words Gordimer; white; woman; identity; political; personal.

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“[T]he real influence of politics on my writing is the influence of politics on people. Their lives, and I believe their very personalities, are changed by the extreme political circumstances one lives under in South Africa. I am dealing with people; here are people who are shaped and changed by politics. In that way my material is profoundly influenced by politics.”

— Nadine Gordimer (Interviewed by Jannica Hurwitt)

Like the wide range of characters in Nadine Gordimer’s early long fiction, white women of conscience are strangled by the condition of living in South Africa in the light of apartheid legislations. The latter inflict unbearable psychological wounds, for being white equals conspiracy. The outer pressures are filiatively tied with the inward anxieties and the psychological traumas since the first forges the second. Therefore, Gordimer’s female characters are subject to a twofold coercive system which prevents them from living as ordinary people and leading a private life. The lack of a sense of belonging is the overriding trauma that disturbs them. They refuse willingly to align themselves with the rest of whites, and at the same time they are not seen to fulfill an effective role in the struggle by black people, at best, if not radically discarded. This leads them to feel as outsiders living in the margins of life; subsequently, they do not only have a troubled sense of belonging to South Africa, but the whole world becomes too small to encompass them.

The paper brings Gordimer’s female protagonist of *Occasion for Loving*, a white woman of conscience, to the fore to investigate her possibilities for forming a personal identity under the influence of the abovementioned factors. It revolves around the idea that this woman’s voice and personality are greatly influenced and largely shaped by circumstances she goes through to reach maturity. These circumstances, of course, since they are the product of a particular ideological system at a certain point of time in history and in a specific geographical setting which is South Africa make the experience of this woman unique. As such, one wonders in what way can the trio of time, place and ideology impinge on the life of this sensitive creature, named as Jessie, in particular and South Africa’s white women of conscience as a whole? Further, is she really able to form a personal identity? i.e. Can she live a private life and escape the demands of the public

realm? And if so, what is the process?

Nadine Gordimer’s fiction is generally seen as presenting readers with white women who are not able to reconcile the traumas implicated by their biological whiteness in a land in which acting against the government’s system is a difficult alternative to espouse. For this reason, these women are usually perceived as voiceless locked in a tricky situation. However, by taking *Occasion for Loving*’s female protagonist, Jessie, as a case in point, the paper demonstrates the opposite. Before attaining a sense of a redeemed self, Jessie goes through a tremendously arduous psychological journey that runs in parallel with the structure of the narrative. She passes through three ² consecutive psychological stages: contemplation and alertness, stigma and self-questing, relief and reconciliation. Each of these stages corresponds amazingly with one stage of human development in Jacques Lacan’s model. These striking similarities will help to analyze her movement towards forming an image of her “self”. Accordingly, the paper will be structured into three main points; each will demonstrate how the protagonist perceives herself in a particular stage.

From Homi Bhabha, two key concepts are borrowed, the borderline and the unhomely lives, to point out the dilemmas and the troubles that Gordimer’s female character is trapped in. Borderlines are “the locations of culture” in which new dimensions of existence leap to the surface. Unhomeliness is not a physical condition rather it is a moment of psychological confusion in which the individual fails to locate himself within the usual conditions of his living, and his life turns to be too strange to him. Jessie falls in an intensely harming state of confusion which leads her to question her being in South Africa much in the same way Bhabha describes the state of unhomeliness. Once she crosses the threshold of the state of the unhomely, Jessie’s voice emerges in the midst of others daringly in an attempt to negotiate a sense of privacy. This echoes in essence Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the dialogic novel which embraces “a diversity of social speech types [...] and a diversity of individual voices” (262). Whether extrinsically or intrinsically, in this novel, voices do always compete before a sense of resolution takes place. On this ground, Gordimer builds the novel. This intermarriage between psychoanalysis, postcolonialism and dialogism seeks to bring to light the Gordimerian theory of white female identity construction in apartheid South Africa.

1. “In our time the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms”³

Nadine Gordimer’s novels include usually a long array of characters, amongst emerge female protagonists whose lives impart how living in the turmoil apartheid

caused looks like. She does not narrate their stories, but they are responsible for re/presenting themselves. A close reading of Gordimer's novels reveals that the process of female identity formation in a tense political context is more complicated in comparison with the process the characters portrayed through the ideal lens of the liberal Gordimer go through. On this Basis, the process Liz in *The Late Bourgeois World* and Rosa in *Burger's Daughter*, as examples, undergo to gain an appreciation of their selves is more intricate compared to Jessie's in *Occasion for Loving*, though hers cannot be minimized, simply because concrete political activism in the lives of both Liz and Rosa is a daily commodity that cannot be easily relinquished.

Jessie starts her search for a meaning for her life as a twice-married woman. In this first stage of her development, contemplation and alertness, most of the action takes place in her mind. Through moments of contemplation, she recalls her past. She analyzes cautiously her past through the eyes of the present. The technique of flashback helps the readers to know the character: who she is and from where she comes. Juxtaposing the past and the present successfully spawns comprehension. In view of that, she becomes alert to the psychological emptiness, loneliness and estrangement she endures. She comprehends that the mode of life apartheid generates renders her as an isolated creature oscillating between two blocks, the oppressor and the oppressed. After an important event suddenly crops up, she hurriedly steps towards reexamining her roles in life. As a matter of fact, she spots no progress because she is still dominated by roles already assigned to her. For Lacan, the human being during the first stage of his development is a dependent creature co-existing as a one entity with someone else. It is the same case for Gordimer's female protagonist; she understands that she does not possess a private identity as she is reliant on her family and the will of the collective. The demand for recognition is henceforth her main preoccupation. Not surprisingly then, she rejects the imposed ideals that make her "destiny" forcibly yields to "political terms" and steps to the next psychological stage.

Jessie is strangely attached to her mother for most of her life. The novel opens with Jessie in her late thirties; she is married to a liberal-minded professor of history. She, next to her job, leads an ordinary life as a mother of four children. As a pregnant woman, she goes to consult a doctor to discover the cataclysmic lie around which her mother configured her life.

Jessie had gone to a heart specialist to see if the old ailment had left any weakness that might make a normal birth dangerous for her, and he had told

her with empathic quiet that not only was her heart perfectly normal, in fact it was not possible that a heart ailment serious enough to keep a child out of school for years could leave no sign of damage. (*OFL* 74)

Definitely, after she “clipped her wings and brainwashed her” (74), the mother does not make out of Jessie an overdependent human being only but terribly a woman without a self. She does not pass a normal childhood and leaves her mother’s house only to her husband’s.

As the novel opens, Jessie sits in her garden. The quietude carries to her mind the “illusion of silence and motionlessness” (3) typical of her mother’s house. She feels for some time that “she had never left her mother’s house” (3). This is indicative of the lack of vitality that characterizes her current life in person as well as that of most women, for this is the life mode emblematic of the standards of white bourgeoisie — this minority — in South Africa and reminiscent of the Victorian stereotype. She is vigilant that she accepts submissively the roles she occupies throughout her life, whether motherhood or marriage. In the moments of contemplation, “[t]he past [rises] to the surface of the present, free of the ambiguities and softening evasions that had made it possible in the living” (83). She constantly watches herself in her three little daughters playing without inhibitions. Unlike them, “there was no excitement” of such things “for the little bourgeois girl from the mine” (192).

The coming of the lively girl Ann from England to the Stilwells’ house awakens in Jessie the desire to pursue “the life dreamt and not lived” (67). By breaking the routine of that house, Ann becomes in a relatively short time the source of life. She is an open-minded girl who optimistically, unlike Jessie, enjoys living under whatever circumstances. Curiously attracted to everything, discriminatory laws are, to her, the last hurdle to think about. Her eagerness to discover the unknown leads her to fall in love with a black man and to cross the color line the white government mapped. Ann does what the years could not do in Jessie; she rejuvenates in her an inner yearning for privacy. “At last,” Jessie has “time to ask herself why she lived, and [...] she had scarcely begun to know to formulate the question, let alone grope for the possible answers” (19).

In Lacan’s theory, the identification of the human being, in the mirror stage, with an object outside the body is actually a misidentification or a misrecognition. It is a misrecognition in the sense that the subject (child) conceives the image in the mirror as “me.” Logically, the mirror in which the subject sees his reflection and identifies with is not only the real mirror but other people or objects he

encounters as well. The subject is usually accompanied by people who confirm the connection between him and the images he sees. Because the object the subject identifies with subsists outside the body and may change, the ego or “I identity”, to Lacan, is always on some level a kind of fiction (Zizek 25). In this regard, the first sense of the self that Jessie has throughout the first stage of her development is a misrecognition. The image of the self she gains is a duplicate figure of her caregiver. In Lacan’s terms, she sees her reflection in the people surrounding her, and she identifies with this reflection. She mystifies herself with other characters which display a pivotal role in her life. The first insight Jessie gets into herself is of course provided by her disturbed mother.

Elizabeth Grosz contends that the Mirror Stage does not only provide the subject with “an image of its own body in a visualised exteriority, but also duplicates the environment, placing real and virtual space in contiguous relations” (87). The subject, as a consequence, besides gaining an understanding of itself, establishes spatial relationships. Environment is not taken here to refer only to the character’s own house or entourage rather to the whole county which falls under the mercy of the successive white regimes to be likened to a white house. Taking into account what has been revealed about this female character’s life, she maintains a mutual relationship with the space she inhabits i.e. Jessie is not only supposed to act in this environment as a white citizen, but she is also fraught with its prejudicial legislations that engender two categories of human beings. For this reason, house in the novel appears as an indicator of psychological emptiness that causes boredom; frailty prevails everything. Notwithstanding she lives with her family in the same house, there is no strong familial relationship that ties them in the common sense. Their lives are cold in spite of the heat politics incorporates. There is no strong contact between Jessie and her mother and then her husband. Even though she lived for a long time with her mother in the same house, resentment grows instead. In the same way, as pointed to above, she maintains a troubled sense of belonging to what is normally considered as her homeland, South Africa. This tortured land, white house, holds a white European minority that exerted its hegemony over, roughly, 90% of the whole population establishing itself as the leading class with its bourgeois life standards. Unfortunately, such standards dispossess Jessie of her right to feel at home in this land as she is taught since her childhood that she should not, for example, mix with the mine workers she resided nearby. What is worse, these standards succeed to keep her in a total isolation to, according to her mother, save her purity, for the white woman is the “vessel for the virtues of “white civilization” in the “heart of darkness” (Visel 33).

From a different angle, however, the motif of house in Gordimer’s fiction is, according to Susan Pearsall, “associated with inherited features and, like the idea of ‘culture’, also represents those traits the subject inherits but that are not considered ‘genetically fixed’ ” (109). Since the inherited conditions are not genetically fixed, they can be thus changed. Ironically, Jessie inherits her mother’s mode of life and, strangely, her destiny: both lost the first husband and married again. Gordimer’s female protagonist comprehends at a certain point in her life that she must rid herself of the external factors that render her as a manipulated object. These hereditary traits resemble resonantly the past for the protagonist in her present situation. In Homi Bhabha’s perspective, this is a borderline situation where “past and present, inside and outside no longer remain separated as binary oppositions but instead commingle and conflict” (McLeod 217). The present does conflict with the past in the character’s mind in order not to allow a space for it to overshadow her anymore. From the border spaces her mind provides, “*something begins its presencing*” (*Location of Culture*, original emphasis 5). It is the longing for personal freedom, for self-assertion, and for recognition. And this is how the second psychological stage starts.

2. “There are possibilities for me, certainly; but under what stone do they lie?”⁴

Of the three stages, the second is the most complicated. Jessie enters the stage of stigma and self-questing more convinced that she is the product of her society rather than of herself. Not satisfied by her current position, she strives to find her own voice in life exploring the possibilities available to her. Summative of this stage is the first epigraph of *The Late Bourgeois World*: “[t]here are possibilities for me, certainly; but under what stone do they lie?” What applies to Liz applies also to Jessie; nevertheless, each woman makes a distinctive experience. As it appears, the epigraph comprises two segments. Whilst the first segment “[t]here are possibilities for me, certainly” concedes the availability of other options to live by in South Africa, the second one “but under what stone do they lie?” is suggestive of the difficulty to grope for them.

Pursuing a private life is not an easy task, for Gordimer’s female protagonist is hampered by many obstacles. The foremost predicament is, of course, the government’s system which leaves no choice other than to act against it or to remain silent. All the borderline situations the novel unfolds lead her to maintain an attitude, at least an intermediate position which is “refusal.” Before this, she emerges from these borderlines usually embarrassed because of her inability to alter the odds. Her status as a member of the society of the white oppressor adds

to her embarrassment. She passes through a very difficult psychological state of loss and confusion interrogating her existence in such a tormented land. These are the features of the “liminal space”. It is also the very stage of puzzlement which Bhabha terms as the unhomely. The “uncanny voice of memory” (“World and Home” 146), or the unhomely, is put into play with the voice of the present, seen in the demands and the pressures imposed on the heroine, and the monologic voice of apartheid. Worth noting here is that “neither ‘voice’ nor ‘dialogic’ is usually related to individual subjects in a given text,” and that “Bakhtin distinguishes ordinary dialogue between individuals from a dialogic relationship between ‘voices’” (Eigler 196). The notion of the dialogic “includes tension and struggle between antagonistic ‘voices’” (197) or discourses that constitute the narrative, be they two interlocutors or more in the common sense of dialogue or two competing forces like it is the case in Gordimer’s apartheid fiction between apartheid and the oppressed majority.

Gordimer exploits a set of literary techniques to help the readers to absorb the perplexity this character is locked in. She does not exhibit the physical traits of her character rather she ponders the workings of the mind. In point of fact, the main terrain of action throughout most of the novel becomes the character’s mind. This does not sound strange out of a writer who believes in the brainpower and sufferings of her white women of conscience. Another technique is the sudden shift in point of view, first person and third person narration, which brings many views in opposition and raises voices against one another. This technique adeptly makes the text a site of contention between the “personal” and the “political,”⁵ yet it appends more ambiguity to the protagonist’s confusion because the reader cannot guess who is speaking sometimes unless he concentrates especially when Jessie is accompanied with her husband. The interior monologue is a one more device that is useful to understand how this female character questions herself. It is closely linked to the previous technique, for between the use of one narrative perspective and another a short monologue is intruded. The latter of course is interrupted by the third narrative perspective alluding to the fact that the personal is always disturbed by the political in this land.

To end confusion, the protagonist must confront her apprehension as well as all the outer pressures. Through reviving a previously mentioned black male character, the confrontation takes place. Of course, the novel centers around many twists that can be sorted out as sub-climaxes, and this encounter is one since it changes markedly the course of action. According to Lacan, this stage is the realm of the father, or the male character which Jessie abruptly encounters.

Khursheed Qazi equates the father, the figure responsible for socialization, with the “society’s ideologies: its beliefs, values, and biases; its system of government, laws, educational practices, religious tenets” (8). In this instance, the black male character is one aspect of the political. Our interactions with and reactions to this ideology, the political, make us who we are, and this is what happened to Jessie.

Finally, Jessie understands in this stage that the “self [is] the creation of man” (*OFL* 19). To feel at home, as Gordimer believes, one must come to grips with the “concealed side” (*Writing and Being* 45), the true sense of the self lurking somewhere. Ann, interestingly, mirrors Jessie but not in consistency with Lacan’s terms i.e. Ann is the mirror which penetrates the shell to reveal the concealed side of Jessie. Even she worked as a “secretary to an association of African musicians and entertainers” (*OFL* 18), Jessie is still unable to unlock herself from the cage of the white bourgeois life. The latter dictates certainly living as a minority within a minority. How can a liberal woman who strongly believes in the merit of human soul, be it black or white of course, break free from her isolation and come to life again to be effectively a member of the multi-colored South African society? The only possible way, Ann illustrates, is to cross the racial borders beyond all expectations.

Occasion for Loving shows how Ann and Jessie are involved physically and mentally in many borderline situations. Gordimer’s characters attempt to escape alienation taking refuge hopefully in those borderland spaces where they meet people across the racial bar. The pervasive liminality of these spaces puts Jessie in a tricky state of contestation with herself and her race. The most obvious example is that of Ann who and her black lover Gideon Shibalo visit Western Transvaal, a township⁶, to see James Mapulane. The Stilwells, Jessie and her husband, were completely aware that the couple was constantly under high risk since the relation is criminalized by the government fearing harm that was more likely going to fall in a whole on the black part. If Ann’s presence was discovered by the commissioner, the results would be unknown. Alongside, Gideon appears on the beach with Jessie and her daughters. Amazed because the white inhabitants of the town think seriously that “some arrangements ought to be made ... a part of the beach ought to be set aside for *them* [Blacks]” aiming “to enjoy [their] beautiful beach in privacy” (263, emphasis added), Jessie cannot embarrassingly utter a single word. Apartheid legislations grimly mediate all the country: “nothing was innocent, not even here [the beach]. There was no corner of the whole country that was without ugliness” (264). This incident makes Jessie more vigilant of a deeply entrenched race consciousness between whites and blacks.

After a short time, Ann unexpectedly returns back to England with her husband to leave the poor Gideon wandering solely. Jessie is annoyed by the fact that Ann does not show the least commitment to the man she risks everything for. Actually, Ann is unfaithful towards not only one man rather towards the African life she tastes and the colored people she eagerly mixes with in “Lucky Star” and “Tommie’s”. This indifferent attitude exasperates Jessie to harshly criticize her: “[a] fat lot she cares about people like that. In a whole year, has she ever really *said* anything, except “It was marvelous fun” or “Let’s do this” or “So-and-so’s got a marvelous idea, we’re going to...” (208-9, original emphasis). Homi Bhabaha sees in the borders a fascinating ability to fashion “a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation” (*Location of Culture* 7). Likewise, the departure of the Davises, Ann with her husband, bestows Jessie with a new kind of an understanding of the erroneous attitudes of her white community towards the other race in South Africa.

Jessie does not emerge safe from these experiences. “[H]er consciousness was a plot without theme” (*OFL* 197), the third person narrator unfurls. This is a clear sign of the wounding effects of the state of the unhomey appalling Jessie: is it possible for a person to fall in love with another and at the same time destroy him?! Well, Jessie herself could not come to terms with this impasse, and she cannot endure thinking wordlessly. Thus, she unveils these feelings to her husband. Tom tries to calm her down by finding a justification for Ann: “[b]ut what could the bloody woman do, if she didn’t want him, or couldn’t face wanting him?” (286). But to Jessie: “[s]he didn’t have to stick to him to harm him; it was done already” (286). In a long conversation with Tom, Jessie makes her claims and fear more understandable:

“Ah, Tom , don’t ask me to postulate it .We don’t see black and white and so we all think we behave as decently to one colour face as another. But how can that ever be, so long as there’s the possibility that you can escape back into your filthy damn whiteness? How do you know you’ll always play fair? [...]”

“Yes, yes, but all right –what ‘harm’ could you do or I do to Len and Gideon or anybody else?”

“But how can you be sure, while one set of circumstances governs their lives and another governs yours?”

Tom said shortly, “I don’t see Ann thinking about this, tough.” [...]

[...] “If she really loves him, as you say, what harm can she do him?”

[Tom]

“First he couldn’t get out on his scholarship because he’s black, now he can’t stay because she’s white. What’s the good of us to him? What’s the good of our friendship or her love?” (278)

The above passage reveals three clusters of dialogical relationships which construct the novel. The most apparent level of this sort of relationships takes place between Jessie and the other characters all over the narrative, significantly with her husband. The resulting dialogue is not only a kind of questioning or blaming as it seems; however, it is fundamentally a search for the meaning of life in South Africa within the norms of the white bourgeois class. The second type of the dialogical relationships is observable between the voice of the liberal white minority Jessie is representative of in this novel and the white minority enjoying life at the expense of the other races. Ann and her husband escapes back into their “filthy damn whiteness” once finished exploiting the Africans and Africa respectively. Most important is the third type which raises the monologic voice of apartheid and the voice of two thirds of Colored South Africans, who refuse to live according to a “one set of circumstances” governing “their lives”, against each other. Similarly, Gideon Shibalo, though drunk, does not falter to announce his true feelings to Jessie: “[w]hite bitch –get away” (296). It is the moment of confrontation of Jessie.

3. “I am the place in which something has occurred” ⁷

The phase of relief and reconciliation extends between the moment of confrontation and the moment Jessie gains a deep self-awareness, psychological relief, and reconciliation. This actually does not take, unlike the preceding phase, a great deal of time. The implications of the moment of confrontation pave the way for new possibilities of living to spring. Relief is the phase during which Jessie throws away all the shackles used to circumscribe her soul. In comparison with the other phases, she displays a notable maturity since she enters the realm of the ‘Real’ where she acts beyond any kind of interference. By taking an extremely crucial decision, she ascribes voluntarily a particular identity to herself. This woman, however, whether she chooses a new stance for her life or accepts an already assigned one according to her own terms of course, remains the product of the South African society.

Jessie could not forget Gideon Shibalo’s words; they open her eyes on another reality. She understands that she is not the only tortured self under apartheid in South Africa and, on the contrary, there are voiceless millions like Gideon whom apartheid dispossesses of all the rights accessible to whites: the right to speak up,

to get a passport, and even to love across the color line. One of the most potent ironies Gordimer creates to describe the alienated selves apartheid spawns comes from Jessie's memory of a mad woman who "was sewing without any thread in the needle ... connecting nothing with nothing" (*OFL* 40). For the Stilwells, this experience discloses the inefficacy of their liberal attitudes, their "stony silence" (286). And in case apartheid is not abandoned, nothing will bring the buried selves to life again. Jessie's consciousness of herself and the world surrounding her escalates considerably, hence a favorable change in personality. Indeed, echoing Gordimer's epigraph which is cited above, Jessie becomes a "place in which something has occurred."

At the end of her inner journey, Jessie finds the thread whereby to connect the fragments of her 'self'. Her efforts to attain a sense of awareness and privacy lead her to end up committed. Commitment is not simply a political act though which the individual is supposed to be fully immersed in politics. To Gordimer, "it is seeking that thread of order and logic in the disorder, and the incredible waste and marvelous profligate character of life" (Hurwitt 140). Well, commitment seems to escape literal representation as it is the case of the Real with its unchangeable nature. The thread of order and logic in Jessie's situation is her decision to continue meeting people across the racial divide in the "Lucky Star," "where coloured and white people mixed" (*OFL* 100), ending by that the authority of apartheid over her life. Again, the Real manifests itself through this very act, for an actual nature implies people contacting one another, as this is the nature of human beings, beyond all systems of symbolization that create races and incarcerate their relations.

Robin Visel emphasizes the above saying that Jessie "who has learned to see herself as another, starts *to become one* by removing herself from the protection of her white society"(37, emphasis added). In this regard, the occasion for loving of the title stands for a moment to love one's self first and the other second. Jessie, at the end of the novel, becomes a new person: "[t]he ribbon of her identity ... there was no coil of it continuing from the past. I was; I am: these were not two different tenses, but two different people" (*OFL* 18-9). In the realm of the Real, "the uninterpretable dimension of existence" (Qazi 10), Gordimer's woman is metaphorically born again. She realizes that ideology is "only a curtain that is embroidered and makes everything bleak" (10). Therefore, she seeks a meaning for her existence beyond this curtain. She succeeds to manage a definition for her 'self' in which maturity, high self-esteem, and action based on her own determination are pervasive. The trio of place, time and ideology seems, on the surface, to have no

impact on her decision. Nevertheless, as I mentioned few lines up, this woman for more or less is the outcome of the interplay of these external forces.

Gordimer presents her readers with a woman who endeavors to find her own voice in her own country crossing many psychological stages. She ends her journey of spiritual renewal committed. For this reason, Gordimer’s female heroines’ journeys are frequently criticized of being predetermined as they arrive at the same point they depart from. During her journey, which is both external and internal, Jessie experiences a radical change at the level of her personality and the way she perceives herself and the turmoil of her country. Between the point of departure and the point of arrival many things change to denote the movement of time and her growing consciousness of the workings of apartheid. The meaning of living under the despotism of apartheid is tasted by Jessie only when she traverses the color bar and is caught in physical and mental borderline situations like that of the beach. Her and Ann’s experiences with Gideon Shibalo allude to a series of segregationist legislations as the *Group Areas Act* of 1950 and the *Native Laws Amendment Act* of 1952 through which constraints to live in urban areas were further imposed on the natives by mostly specifying poor residential areas where they were condensed.

In her article “Othering the Self: Nadine Gordimer’s Colonial Heroines,” Robin Visel contends that Gordimer’s “female characters are [...] internal battlegrounds in which the conflicts of South African society are played out” (35). The most remarkable conflict occurs always between the personal and the political i.e. between the need to enjoy a personal life and the burden of the political engagement that falls upon those of conscience. The process of identity construction in Gordimer’s fiction includes always a figure of reference designating the political with which the protagonist is constantly juxtaposed and confronted to gain maturity. In *Occasion for Loving*, the political is exceptionally signified by two characters; Jessie’s mother represents the dying white regime while Gideon Shibalo is its counter force i.e. the anti-apartheid campaign. Through emphasizing the role of the conflicting events in restricting and shaping the character’s life, Gordimer is using an outstanding technique to foreground that the public and the private realms cannot be set apart in apartheid South Africa. Understanding the impossibility of setting them apart unquestionably resolves other dilemmas.

Notes

1. In this paper, “political agency” does not refer necessarily to the concrete political involvement as in many of Nadine Gordimer’s novels but typically to the fact of challenging every

segregationist act including crossing the racial bar.

2. In “White Women In South Africa: An Inferior Gender Within a Superior Race” (Thesis 1989), Tamar M. Copeland, reading the novels of Nadine Gordimer, devised six stages to describe how self-perception of the white women contributes to make them understand their past to create the future. However, as the title indicates, Copeland perceives these women as an inferior gender within a superior race. This paper takes one novel, *Occasion for Loving*, as a case study to investigate how Gordimer’s female protagonist Jessie finds her voice, self-image, amidst three incarcerating factors in particular. For this reason, she passes through a psychological journey of three stages. The paper is against the idea that gender is a source of victimization.
3. The epigraph of *Occasion for Loving*.
4. The epigraph of *The Late Bourgeois World*.
5. See Baena Molina, Rosalía. “Revising South African History: Multiple Perspectives in the Novels of Nadine Gordimer.” *Miscelánea* 16 (1995): 25-44 which is specified to tackle this point.
6. Homelands, reserves, townships and bantustans are among the various terms created to designate the areas black people lived in separately from whites.
7. The epigraph of *Burger’s Daughter*.

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***Walking With Shadows* and the Critique of the Evolutionary Character of Nigerian Narratives**

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Abstract The emergence of a full blown representation of same-sex sexual relationship in the Nigerian literary tradition, courtesy of *Walking with Shadows* (2005), demonstrates a unique expression of the universal human will hitherto unknown in the Nigerian literary tradition. In analyzing *Walking with Shadows*, this article argues that the Darwinist tendency, the evolutionary character embodied in conventional Nigerian narratives is undermined in a number of respects. Since no same-sex sexual partners are primed by evolution for reproduction of humankind, this sexual phenomenon as demonstrated by the central character of this work is thus not only monumentally anti-evolutionary, but also immensely against human occupation of the earth through biological reproduction. The above tendency partly accounts for why the major same-sex character's kin and society cannot understand him. *Walking with Shadows* would be read against some conventional works in the Nigerian tradition in order to show how the vital indices of identity and marked kinship enhancements indigenous to Africa and, hence Darwinian, are upstaged, even as it adds an interesting but varying literary dimension to Nigerian literature.

Key words evolutionary character; Jude Dibia; Nigerian literature; Nigerian narratives; *WalkingwithShadows*

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About 150 years after Charles Darwin declared that "all organic beings are exposed to severe competition" (Darwin 70), a competition for life, no one has refuted him convincingly. Rather, within the span of the above years his influence has expanded, laying the foundation for today's Life Sciences. He further remarks that:

Owing to this struggle, variations, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if they be in any degree profitable to the individuals of a species, in their infinitely complex relations to other organic beings and to their physical conditions of life, will tend to the preservation of such individuals, and will generally be inherited by the offspring. The offspring, also, will thus have a better chance of surviving, for, of the many individuals of any species which are periodically born, but a small number can survive. I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term natural selection, in order to mark its relation to man's power of selection. ... But Natural Selection, we shall hereafter see, is a power incessantly ready for action, and is as immeasurably superior to man's feeble efforts, as the works of Nature are to those of Art. (70)

Implied above are — one, that organic beings, including humans naturally abide by a universal principle operating through their action, or inactions, in their day to day lives as they attempt to maneuver pain to get pleasure in order to survive; two, that during these maneuvers and for the eternal transfer of this trait of maneuver from one generation to another as conditions of life vary from a generation to the next, reproduction, the willing coming together of two hosts of the female and male gametes, is very crucial. Without it, the whole process of natural selection is void, namely, there would be no Charles Darwin and his immense and foundational contribution to the Life Sciences. Therefore, Darwin's groundbreaking concepts of species, genera, variation, and tens of others, come about because of the operation of biological reproduction. Three, what is inherited by an offspring is what has enhanced the survival of the forebear; in other words, there is nothing inheritable

via reproduction by the offspring which has not been gainful to the ancestor(s).

Biological reproduction is inherently fundamental to Darwin. His theory asserts that life evolved, in a series of developmental stages, from the primitive to the present state through a rigorously proven complex process of mate selection (selection of opposite sexes) that spans millions of years and still does. This process is the origin, foundation, and the sustainer of life. The centrality of biological reproduction led him to what he called sexual selection, a competition amongst males of organic animals using very special weapons for winning members of the opposite sex, females. He explains:

This form of selection depends, not on a struggle for existence in relation to other organic beings or to external conditions, but on a struggle between the individuals of one sex, generally the males, for the possession of the other sex. The result is not death to the unsuccessful competitor, but few or no offspring. Sexual selection is, therefore, less rigorous than natural selection. Generally, the most vigorous males, those which are best fitted for their places in nature, will leave most progeny.

[...]

Thus it is, as I believe, that when the males and females of any animal have the same general habits of life, but differ in structure, color, or ornament, such differences have been mainly caused by sexual selection: that is, by individual males having had, in successive generations, some slight advantage over other males, in their weapons, means of defense, or charms; which they have transmitted to their male offspring alone. (93-94)

Cocks, alligators, hymenopterans insects, lion, male salmon, the rock thrush of Guiana, and others are cited as cases in point where this sort of selection takes place. Of course, humans are included.

If the above rule generally applies to all animals, including mammalian ones to which humanity belongs, it is therefore a fact that humans in Nigeria, whose (reproductive) activities Nigerian narratives and discourses capture before Jude Dibia's *Walking with Shadows*, would not be different. In Nigerian narratives, to survive is to reproduce through the biologically reproductive means, and all efforts are geared towards realizing this in a most natural and organic manner, so natural that every agent of reproduction is oblivious of the superstructural principle of Darwinian evolution at work. This characteristic obtains from Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-wine Drinkard* (1952) to Tope Folarin's Caine Prize winner short story

“Miracle” (2013). Father of the gods in *The Palm-wine Drinkard* goes in quest of his dead palm wine tapper only to return with a wife (not a male as a “wife”), and not his object of quest; in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Okonkwo, including his sisters, begotten by Unoka, engages in a sexual selectional competition with another male for the hand of Ekwefi in marriage. His rival succeeds in marrying her, but it is with Okonkwo she remains, experiencing conjugal bliss and fulfilment having run off to his place. His being an able wrestler was his unique weapon for winning her. Fifty-five years later, a work in this tradition, E. E. Sule’s *Sterile Sky* (2012) makes explicit in a grandma’s conversation with her grandson what is implicit in *Thing Fall Apart*. She says, “I married your grandfather because he was the greatest wrestler of his time. Do you know how to fight, city boy? Come let me teach you” (Sule 41). Okonkwo later has another wife, an opposite sex, a female with whom he has other children, among whom is Nwoye. Nwoye’s son, Obi Okonkwo, is the main protagonist in Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* (1960). He loves Clara and before he knows her well enough, she is pregnant for him, a fetus that, had he allowed it to be, would have been his child, fathered by him, and would have become the fourth generation of the Okonkwo we met in *Things Fall Apart*. All the major characters of Wole Soyinka’s *The Interpreters* (1972) are all procreated by the biological union of their father’s (male) and mother’s (female) gametes. Though what brings sexes together is commonly ascribed to as “love”, technically, in Darwinian terms, it is natural selection, or specifically, sexual selection. Take, for instance, Professor Oguazor’s libidinousness in *The Interpreters*. He has a wife, a female, with whom he has had some children, but finding the youthfulness of his maid irresistible as against the shooing wrinkles of his rapidly aging wife, he fathers a child by her, and to avoid the ridicule his action attracts, sneaks both mother and child away to the United States from public knowledge. From the house maid who yields to him and in other characters in the text, we observe the imprint of Darwin’s evolutionary theory. His wife having reached menopause (because if she continues to procreate, unless naturally thus hindered, she would bring about an explosion in population that would be unhealthy to nature’s system) and with his virility intact, he is guided by nature to a far younger female than his wife, not on account of her beauty or youthfulness, a layman’s reason, but because of nature’s implicit guide in order to make this young and blooming maid yield her due by bringing forth offspring, favoring Darwin’s argument that the evolutionary code is as much a subtle and potent factor dictating the destiny of the female and the male as a powerful gravitational law holding man from falling from the earth to space.

So when children are in Nigerian narratives and there is joy, to the joyous, as

already claimed, they have got people to bury them after they die, but to Darwin, as expository ascertained, they are only fulfilling nature's interest in continuity and sustenance of life from one generation to the other as the process of natural selection enacts itself indefinitely into the farthest future. And when characters sorrow for not having children in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* (1966), *One is Enough* (1981), Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* (1966), Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* (1982), and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2005) or they grieve over a character's inability to procreate, either in the male or female, a phenomenon very common in Nigerian literature, this circumstance, with insights from Darwin, is the consequence of natural selection, namely that, if both sexes are unable to reproduce, virile males had already chosen equally virile females in the process of selection leaving behind the unproductive ones to serve as the offscouring of the (market) economy of biological reproduction. The same would equally apply in instances where either of the opposite sexes is virile and the other not. The left over is expected to perish with her/his traits as those with the highest capability of reproducing themselves and transferring their traits, maximally, are likely to survive to fulfill nature's whims, and one way of doing it is to, abiding by Nature's dictates, choose the opposite sex capable of making procreation possible.

When natural disasters, including war, take place, especially as warfare has been since time immemorial and at an increasing rate an instrument of mass death since Darwin first postulated his theory of destruction (crisis or war being paradoxically the tool for survival), it is because Nature wants to moderate the population of the world through the insupportable conditions of life. Darwin says, "There is no exception to the rule that every organic being naturally increases at so high a rate, that, if not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair" (72). Intended in the term "destroyed" is agency of action. If destruction does not set in by an active agent, with the relative stability of the size of food and other scarce resources for the upkeep of mankind, humanity would soon outnumber in organic world the resources needed to not only keep them comfortable but also to keep them alive. We infer further from Darwin:

Hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life. ... Although some species may be now increasing, more or less rapidly, in numbers, all cannot do so, for the world would not hold them. (72)

Indeed the world cannot hold the increasing number of the human species, so there must be some form of struggle, and in the Nigerian literary tradition, this struggle is in form of war, lethal politicking and intrigues, assassination, manslaughters, abortions, and so on. The phenomenon of war is the most perceptible in Nigerian narratives, with examples showing forth in Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* (1986), Eddie Iroh's *Forty-eight Guns for the General* (1976), Amadi Elechi's *Sunset in Biafra* (1973), Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* (1982), Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007), and undeniably, in a segment of the Nigerian literary tradition that has got "the war novel in Nigeria" tacked on to it (Emenyonu xiv).

Manifest in consequence of the above is that both in pristine organic and socialized (before *marriage* came to be known, alongside its accompanying [socio-cultural] ceremonies that differ from society to society and the taken-for-granted factors that influence mate choice-making) selection, the free will of human is at work. Nigerian narratives have represented the afore-discussed evolutionary principles and features so adequately that when Jude Dibia's *Walking with Shadows* appeared in 2005, it sent shockwaves through critical circles in Nigeria. This may have prompted Jude Dibia's revision of the same work two years later, inserting the Rotimi kissing episode and a few others possibly to ambiguate his representation some more. Before him, African writers (Nigerians inclusive) abstained "from fully characterized and nonschematic depiction of a homosexual relationship between African" (Desai 733); when they did, their representation was monothematically offered (Dunton 737). So Dibia is the first to give us a mouthful of same-sex relationship in a full length novel where the psychological growth of the central character can be tracked. After him, some short stories of the Chimamanda Adichie's collection, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009) as "On Monday Last Week," "Jumping Monkey Hill," and "The Shivering" supplies us snappy depictions, too. But these other narratives being short stories, the characters, as with stories of this brevity, lack space for development and thus proper character appraisals of these works are sketchy. For instance, Kamara, in "On Monday Last week," arrives in America to work as a nanny with no obvious account of how she comes by her same-sex attraction for Tracy, the mother of the boy she is a nanny to. The story leaves us with the question: "why is it that it is after her marriage and her arrival in America that she begins to feel this way?" In the second story, the same-sex issue comes up in form of an assertion of identity in an argument, while in the third through its same-sex lover character, Chinedu, we are lead into the equal access involved in matters of faith and religion. With these grossly insufficient

representations, one is left with no option than to focus one's critical attention on Dibia's *Walking with Shadows*.

On the other hand, sociological and anthropological scholarships have tended to make up for African writers refraining from the depiction of same-sex sexual relationships right up to *Walking with Shadows*. There is no longer any doubt that same-sex sexual relationships abound in Africa (the denial that it never existed in Africa was first made by Western colonialists possibly for political and racial reasons, which in a way confirms the belief of Africa being an exotic continent [Dunton 727]) (Murray and Roscoe; Hoard; Epprecht; and Zabuz). I shall use the term *same-sex* in this article (except when reporting the narrator or characters in the works under analysis and furthering and expanding their descriptions and statements) because other somewhat substitutive terms such as *heterosexuals*, *gay*, *queer*, *sissy*, *homosexual*, and the like are so burdened with inexactitude in capturing other same-sex sexual relations that contrast significantly with the Euro-American sort, say, that of Africa (Epprecht 38; Guadio 119), that its usage becomes very problematic in describing African same-sex sexual relations. Unfortunately, these imprecise concepts have been resorted to in the representation of same-sex tendencies in current Nigerian short stories and novels, including *Walking with Shadows*. My term for *heterosexual(ity)* would be "Darwinian" or "Darwinism" since his theory of opposite gametes from opposite sexual mates which help to further evolution and biological reproduction has remained scientifically unrefuted till date and, if I may say, so will be.

So when *Walking with Shadows* appeared and broke new grounds in the depiction of same-sex sexuality, readers, especially critics and bloggers, reacted differently, ranging from outright loathing, rejection to disinterestedness. I am not sure it would get to the stage of acceptance without qualification. A modest search has revealed that not one critic has applauded the work as groundbreaking in the tradition without ascribing conflicting remarks to it. Onukaogu and Onyerionwu's comment is moderate and adulatory:

Jude Dibia's *Walking with Shadows* has remained of the talking points of present day Nigerian literature because of its audacious exploration of homosexuality. No Nigerian novel, present or past, has taken such a sacred and blasphemous tangent that has found a home in the West. With this novel, Dibia has become almost the Salman Rushdie (*Satanic Verses*) or Naguib Mahfouz (*Children of Gebelawi*) of Nigerian literature. (131)

Such is the paradox with which the work is greeted in Nigeria. In praising the work as “audacious exploration of homosexuality,” they show they are not free from the general atmosphere characterizing its reception in tagging it “sacred and blasphemous.”

Rather than observe it as such, this article regards it as hugely anti-traditional through its undermining of the evolutionary character embodied in modern Nigerian narratives as already bared. In arguing this, I will do a close-reading of the work from the perspectives of Adrian’s assertions and actions, the language and actions of his wife and brothers who are Darwinists and whose attitudes in being evolutionary is purely anti-same-sex, and those of his same-sex friends and (sexual) lovers who are pro-gay and anti-Darwinian. The implications of this work, Adrian being its preeminent image and presence, on the evolutionary nature of Nigerian narratives, using a few canonical narratives of the tradition as examples, would be unearthed. In doing the latter, I will bring into view references to the socio-cultural forces and identity-informing and -forming elements that have furnished Nigerian narratives their character and the Darwinist reproductive nature that derives from these. Adrian is in consort with the narrator in furthering the biological argument regarding his sexuality. In a philosophically-encrusted expression, he claims to his wife Ada that:

... being gay has nothing to do with the physical action of sex or a person’s sexual preference, be it with the opposite sex or same. Sleeping with a man or woman will always remain the individual’s choice. I am gay because it is who I am. It is the way I see the world. It is the way I reason and live. It is waking up in the morning and going to bed at night. It is listening to music and loving it. It is watching a movie and wanting to see it over again. It is laughing when I am happy and crying when I am sad. It is appreciating the simple things life brings and not the act of sexual intercourse. Sex on its own is a physical expression of love or lust. ... a man can be gay all his life without actually sleeping with another man. Can you understand this? (Dibia 239)

But he falters, engendering notable inconsistencies. Here is a professed gay lecturing a nongay, his wife, in order to make her, who has just discovered his sexuality and is seeking divorce, unlearn what *gay* means, but it is pure deception and hypocrisy. Physical contact is the very essence, the definitive essence of being gay — the evidence he and his gay group of friends exhibit. His rumination a few pages later authenticates this. Antonio himself declares: “I got careless after you

left me. Too many beautiful black men, so little time ...” (247). All the gays in the text, with no exception, engage in physical sexual contact. Listen to Adrian’s consideration of Antonio’s predicament:

But Antonio had brought this on himself. He had chosen to have multiple partners and not use protection when it mattered most. This was a part of the reckless lifestyle of many gay men that bothered Adrian. He wondered why so many people thought nothing of having multiple partners. He wondered why some felt incomplete if they did not sample as many partners as possible. He was no saint himself, there had been a time he was like that, but then he had believed he was trying out as many options he had available to him to find the right partner for himself. [...] For him, moving on to the next partner had been his own emotional trump card against disappointment. But even then he had been careful. Could this be the driving force that made promiscuity within the gay community rampant? (248-249)

If what he says negates what he does in this very vital and all-defining instance, it would be germane to take whatever he says concerning his sexuality with a pinch of salt pending when what he does corroborates what he says impeccably. In consequence of these, two conclusions are reached: Adrian’s same-sex sexuality might have been environmentally induced, and hence, not in perspective with Darwin’s evolutionary and his rigorous theory of the origin of species. In a word, Adrian and his lovers are critiquing the evolutionary character of their forebears in *Walking with Shadows*, and by extension, the evolutionary character of Nigerian narratives. The attempts by the text to undermine evolution begin with Adrian, the second child of three children born of a woman who was inseminated by a man, both nonsame-sex sexual parents that never were gays. He first undermines himself and his argument through his reproductive actions on his wife Ada, before proceeding to do same to the narratives of the tradition. Throughout a substantial portion of the text, he keeps reaffirming that “I am gay” after Abdul drums it into him (47). But is he?

After he was conditioned by his sexuality to same-sex love desire, an unbiological orientation, in the many years after the bath incidence, the shower of love meditation, the acceptance of the term *sissy* as being sexual, and having no sister as a sibling, he decides to marry, his “second”, Ada. When his wife discovers that he was once gay, even in spite of the conditioning, he blurts: “I made up my mind to suppress my need to be with a man” (50). When we read

this *need* against what he says of Ada: “Ada was a wonderful person ... I was in love with her” (50), we observe that the homosexual choice to him is not inborn him. But by opting for marriage, he allows the innate to overrule culture and lets the Darwinistic to overthrow the anti-evolutionary when he fathers Ego through Ada. Begetting Ego means there was *jouissance* that helped inseminate Ada, and afterward, detumescence of his organ, all of which also aid him in suppressing his gay orientation and relieved him of pressure from within for five full years after his body was conditioned for twenty-six years. This cannot be a miracle; gay instinct is not just natural for him.

So when Adrian debates the incrimination of sodomy in both the Koran and Bible (51), he was challenging statutes but not his biology, a thing he privileges in the last five years. We hear him: “‘Ada is a wonderful person.’ Adrian said. ‘I was in love with her ... I thought marrying her was the right thing to do. I made up my mind to suppress my need to be with a man’” (50). Nevertheless, with his sexual lovers before marriage being all males including one same-sexual marriage, for about twenty years, it is a marvel how he quickly adjusts sexually to Darwinist marriage and suppresses his homosexual desire for another five years after this marriage. His homosexuality could not have been “biological somewhat” (52). We hear the narrator utter thus, “They made love that night and, for the rest of the week, they made love several times each night” (61); it is a little wonder how he suppressed his gay urge for five years, for it appears sex in the Darwinist fashion is so pleasurable to him that it could be said to be innately driven. The evolutionary nature in him has the upper hand, and rightly so because he is not anatomically, hormonally, and neurotically disjointed to do otherwise.

By loving a woman, an opposite sex and marrying her, fathering a child, with his anatomical sexual organs functioning well in keeping true to Darwin’s rule of selection, he not being an incipient member of the species of humanity, he makes himself a real Darwinist the sort Nigerian narratives have in large numbers. For example, despite his declared sexual orientation, he is better than Emenike in Elechi Amadi’s *The Concubine* (1966) and Adizua in Flora Nwapa’s *Efuru*. In the second, the offspring dies in contrast to Adrian’s who lives; in the first work, there is none. While Ada in *Walking with Shadows* is by far more productive than both Ihuoma and Efuru in the above works, respectively, and the southern Nigerian woman in Alkali’s *The Stillborn*, in that her child lives, the latter have difficulties and they have no children. But while Habu in *The Stillborn* is forced to stick to his woman, the southern Nigerian, Adizua and Eneberu in *Efuru* are free to move on to other women. Both Efuru’s and the southern Nigerian lady’s abilities to bear

children are greatly stunted, the first by her body nature, the second by medical condition, with the former reacting in a Darwinist fashion to her situation. She, Efuru, is so reproductively conscious and consistently aware of her inability to bear children that she is willing to bring a second wife for Eneberi, her second husband to give him children, in giving him directly she receives indirectly. Though Darwin does not recognize the extranatural, because what he acknowledges we are able to ascertain, she is said to be like her *chi* who has no children. So it is fitting to say that Efuru is an incipient species for not being able to bear children, for managing to bear that which survives not, a remote reason why she has husbands in quick succession.

By fathering Ego and for having a blissful marriage for those five wonderful years that — courtesy of a wonderful lady — would have gone on to six, seven, and so on had the secrets of his past gay life not been known, to Darwin, he is an accomplished innate Darwinist in sexuality whom the environment has pushed to become gay. His being a successful Darwinist rests on his “success in leaving progeny” (Darwin 62). Another reason is that, to Darwin, he is not an “incipient species” (53), one whose variation of the reproductive drive, a variation in structure brought about by the environment, a structure transferable to the next generation and inheritable from an earlier one is qualified to be so classed. Nonetheless, in Adrian’s homosexuality as lived out with Antonio and so many others negates Darwin and the above, given that a homosexual dies a homosexual without bringing an offspring through his coitus with another man. If climate has tampered with Ebele in bringing about the homosexual trait, this character in him is neither transferable nor inheritable; so he is not an incipient species. His is a patchy difference in a natural and familiar reproductive layout that bears the similitude of variation that is not, a “variation” taking place for the good of the varied being alone; it does not “tend to the preservation of such individuals” and is generally not “inherited by the offspring”. The consequence is the sort of picture Adrian projects in asserting the innateness of his gayness does not exist within the perimeters of Darwin’s clear-cut evolutionary theory; Darwin declares that not even an instance subsists and it has not been found to date. We are told:

Natural selection will modify the structure of the young in relation to the parent and of the parent in relation to the young. In social animals it will adapt the structure of each individual for the benefit of the whole community; if the community profits by the selected change. What natural selection cannot do, is to modify the structure of one species, without giving it any advantage, for the

good of another species; and though statements to this effect may be found in works of natural history, I cannot find one case which will bear investigation. (83)

Adrian partakes of sexual selection in picking Ada as a wife and Ada finding in him those attractive qualities of a young and capable man, including being a fully employed in a high-paying telecommunications company, and so is a comfortable man who can take care of his progeny, she sticks to him and marries him. Adrian is a huge success in the economy of sexual selection inasmuch as this selection always allows “the victor to breed” (84); he begets Ego. As natural selection will never produce in a being a structure more injurious than beneficial to that being, since it “acts solely by and for the good of each” being (179), the structure of homosexuality falls short of being biological.

What led to his homosexuality in the first instance, such environmental factors as neglect and loneliness also lead him back to homosexuality after those who really matter to him and who fill the void of loneliness in the last five years, first, Ada, his wife and later, Ego, his daughter by her, are denied him access. The narrator authenticates: “not having the security of their presence was killing him ... He was feeling so naked and lonely. Though he had been a loner all his life he had never felt that lonely” (Dibia 86). Rotimi and the man on the beach, both interjections on his loneliness, are at this time a recapitulation of his childhood conditions, a reemergence of the suppressed which would not be tamed by a seeming superior feeling of exhilaration of seeing his wife intermittently after leaving home. In the two days of packing out from his matrimonial home, his psyche acquires momentum to be assertive of his sexuality that would not be assuaged by occasionally seeing Ada, for Ada is in no state to yield to him sexually. So the prospect of continuing his five-year Darwinistic sexuality is bleak during this stage of upsetting transition. It is therefore understandable that when on the surface he blames society, readers know better — he is only overreacting.

No sooner has he established his Darwinist sexual propensity and trait than he complicates it. First, Abdul tries to bring him to a level where he could be assertive of his suppressed sexuality. Therefore, when he says, “Your friends will always be your friends. Your family will learn to love you for who you are and life will go on” (Dibia 26), even Adrian is incredulous somewhere in the inner recesses of his mind but because of “the way he said it”, because of the need to clutch at some straw at this critical moment of neglect and abandonment and the need for emotional support, the narrator who is not omniscient declares that “he knew he was right”

(25). The assertive confession of his being gay takes place under the cover of compulsion that could be mistaken for biological impulse. When he responds to Chiedu's queries regarding his sexuality that: "I am gay, Chiedu. ... I've always been and I've always known. Yes, I'm married and I have a kid but that does not distract from the fact of who and what I am." (47), in what seems to be a bold step towards owning up a sexuality he is not at the present time familiar with, that he is at pains to understand, Abdul seems to be speaking through him. He rephrases Abdul's words maintaining similar semantic contents in "I've always been and I've always known."

Again, he complicates his Darwinist sexual orientation by leaving Nigeria for Europe. Armed with a United Kingdom green card as a skilled immigrant, he leaves Nigeria, calling to mind Joe Golder of Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters*, who runs from home visiting "several European countries" only to discover that "human beings are all the same. Boring, insincere" (Soyinka 191). He continues, "I came here hoping Africans were different" (191). It is ironical that the West, the United States of America where Golder runs away from is the same place where Adrian hopes to find peace of mind. The West, like in Germany where George's sexual male mate, Johan, lives that would condone his sexual orientation in *Walking with Shadows*. But he would soon discover as George philosophizes, that Nigeria with all its ills, holds a special sort of an ironical enchantment to her citizens. But for now, whatever prospects the West — the US or Europe — holds for him, he would reel in his cogitation as he travels. The narrator gives us a peep into this musing:

Yes, he was leaving his home country to pursue new beginnings abroad, but he did not view this as running away. He had simply decided to move on with his life and remain true to himself. Unfortunately he would not be able to be himself if he remained in Nigeria. The majority of the people here still viewed his sexuality as abnormal. Maybe they were right, maybe they were wrong. Ebele simply knew he was the way he was right from the moment he became aware of himself as a human. No one had a right to judge him. But people would. He understood that ... He felt a tinge of abandonment and loneliness walking through the airport alone. No one had come to see him off that morning. He had wanted it that way. He had wanted to depart quietly and without fanfare, and that was why he had chosen a weekday morning to travel. ... The divorce had come through over a month before. ... His in-laws, Ada's parents and her siblings, had remained civil throughout the proceedings and the separation period. They wanted nothing to do with him, which he

could understand. ... Hopefully, Nigeria would be a different place then and its people would be more receptive and less judgmental than they were now. He could only hope. (Dibia 151-3)

The rumination above is mainly hinged on free will: freedom to live out his sexuality in a country other than his. And on his way to this country, he is struck by loneliness. But it would be mere wishful thinking for him to assume that his brothers, parents, friends, and well-wishers would come to the airport to see him off if they were told. No. No one would and they would not miss him at all like the parents of Joe Golder, the three-quarter white and one-quarter American, did in *The Interpreters* (1972). Adrian would be, like Golder, “an archaic figure disowned from a family album” (Soyinka 247). In the reflections above, Adrian is like Golder baring “his soul, mangled, spurn in the murky fountains of grief which cradled him, the long lost child” (247).

By choosing to leave Nigeria for the United Kingdom, and insisting that he is gay owing to his history but definitely not his biology, he seems to be giving voice to what is inherently unvoiced, but in so doing, he privileges the anti-evolutionary, in that what is silent is invariably absent in the evolutionary development of living creatures, including humankind and thus unacknowledged by such a precise exposition of the origin of species. In choosing to leave Nigeria and claiming his gayhood much more in words than in action, he appears to negate the argument of conditioned sexual orientation, complicating it thereby. With this complication, he proceeds to undermine the Darwinist character of the Nigerian narratives and all the vital indices of identity and kinship native to Africa and already in place for societal health as represented by Nigerian narratives. The wheel of generational existence and subsistence of humanity as represented in Nigerian narratives are at worst, tremendously undercut and, at best, problematised through him, though this also adds enriching variety to the literature of the tradition. Reading *Walking with Shadows* against conventional works in the tradition, one observes that marriage, age-group initiation rites, societal norms, family ties, bride-price payments, kindred units and affinities, all manifestations of Darwinistic process of natural selection that brought Adrian life are mocked at. The life he yearns for can be understood as his right and desire, but is it to the good of humanity, his immediate community, and the individual, considering the impact his departure on his daughter, Ego? I am sure Adrian would be very happy with a world peopled with only gays. But the implications of a global same-sex village are stunning. A century would be see the entire world wiped out because as same-sex lovers, they will NEVER reproduce

their kind in the Darwinist fashion.

The implications of Adrian's actions, in his same-sex marriage and in departing from his Darwinist family to follow his craving, are hefty when set against the Darwinistically-provoked concept of marriage, and the adjoining identity-forming and -informing categories in the Nigerian literary tradition. In *Things Fall Apart*, we are presented an occasion of Obierika's daughter's bride-price payment:

On the following morning the entire neighbourhood wore a festive air because Okonkwo's friend, Obierika, was celebrating his daughter's *uri*. It was the day on which her suitor (having already paid the greater part of her bride-price) would bring palm-wine not only to her parents and immediate relatives but to the wide and extensive group of kinsmen called *umunna*. Everybody had been invited – men, women and children. [...]

Okonkwo's family was astir like any other family in the neighbourhood. Nwoye's mother and Okonkwo's youngest wife were ready to set out for Obierika's compound with all their children. Nwoye's mother carried a basket of coco-yams, a cake of salt and smoked fish which she would present to Obierika's wife. Okonkwo's youngest wife, Ojiugo, also had a basket of plantains and coco-yams and a small pot of palm-oil. Their children carried pots of water. (Achebe 79)

Adrian will have none of these. "The first two pots of palm-wine" arriving from Obierika's in-laws will not be there for Adrian's father from the would-be in-laws (82). In fact, in his very first "marriage" to Antonio, the Spanish national, none came from Antonio nor from his family in Spain. Obierika that day was honoured, but not so for Mr. Njoko, Adrian's father. The narrator continues: "'Obierika's relatives counted the pots as they came. Twenty, twenty-five. There was a long break, and the hosts looked at each other as if to say, 'I told you.'" Then more pots came. Thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five. The hosts nodded in approval and seemed to say, 'Now they are behaving like men.'" (83-4). One of the prayers offered by Obierika's eldest brother is: "We are giving our daughter [not a son, like Adrian] today. She will be a good wife [not a man-wife] to you. She will bear you nine sons like the mother of our town'" (84). And when "the oldest man in the camp of the visitors" replies, amongst the things he says is: "'Prosperous men and warriors.' He looked in the direction of Okonkwo. 'Your daughter will bear us sons like you'" (84). It is unnatural for Adrian to bear children like a female human; bearing

offspring is as impossible to him as planting a cobble in the soil and expecting it to take root and sprout — it is against nature’s law. Already, he has Ada, his estranged wife, who could perform that function, with his place in the system of reproduction remaining unruffled.

We observe the biological, Darwinist essence of marriage in this canonical narrative, but with what Adrian has become to be, one would ask: what anatomical and biological restructuring of his Darwinist nature would make him bear children as a gay? Who will accompany him to the kind of marriage he envisages? Who will be his kinsman/woman, or who will pay his pride-price (since he has textually chosen the place of a passive gay,) when he is expected to be the one paying for his bride? — he did that before when marrying Ada To whom will the bride-price he paid? When he is prayed for that *he* “will bear us sons like the mothers of the clan”, will he say “amen”? The answers to these questions are “no’s” and “nobody”. Even in the myth of the origin of Umuofia town, it is a woman that bears the nine villages, not a man. We can now glimpse at why his first ‘marriage’ to Antonio was done surreptitiously? And to think that Adrian comes from the same cultural background as all the characters in *Things Fall Apart* is all the more baffling and disquieting. He is then fit to be tagged as one odd person out, the sort he has chosen to be by opting out of his cultural background rather than face reality by facing Ada, and salvage his five-year loving marriage in which he successfully abstained from any homosexual practice whatsoever. He is so odd that nothing odd in the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial contexts appropriated by Nigerian narratives can be compared to him.

The marriage above in *Things Fall Apart* might have been too traditional and pre-colonial to Adrian. What this indicates that as someone who is religious enough to have been baptized and christened Adrian and have dropped off Ebele, modern marriage would appeal to him, like the one he had with Ada. But even then, in Nigerian narratives, marriage is between a man and a woman, whether proposals and engagements are initiated and consummated like Isaac and Hannah Okonkwo’s in Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* (1960) or is later broken off before consummation like Obi and Clara’s in the same work or broken off after engagement, marriage, consummation and offspring, like Sunny and his wife’s in Sefi Atta’s *Everything Good will Come* (2006), after Enitan is born. There could be misgivings because modern marriages are conducted with Christian standards in view, but the kin, family members, would not have any reservations about a man and a woman coming together as man and wife. Rather, they would be joyful. This joy is seen in Okonkwo’s reflection in *Things Fall Apart*: “With two beautiful grown-up

daughters his return to Umuofia would attract considerable attention. His future sons-in-law would be men of authority in the clan. The poor and unknown would not dare to come forth” (*Things Fall Apart* 125). Okonkwo is expecting men that are males, and not women, females, to come marry his grown daughters. With what we know of Okonkwo, what would he have felt if Obierika’s son, Maduka, had come to marry Nwoye, his first son, or Ikemefuna, the child that calls him “father”? Rage. And he would have seen it as an abomination. If Nwoye’s defection to Christianity was abominable, the male-male thing would simply have killed him, a staunch Darwinist that he is. Listen to him regarding Nwoye:

As Okonkwo sat in his hut that night, gazing into a log fire, he thought over the matter. A sudden fury rose within him and he felt a strong desire to take up his matchet, go to the church and wipe out the entire vile and miscreant gang. But on further thought he told himself that Nwoye is not worth fighting for. Why, he cried in his heart, should he, Okonkwo, of all people be cursed with such a son? ... For how else could he explain his great misfortune and exile and now his despicable son’s behaviour? Now that he had time to think of it, his son’s crime stood out in stark enormity. (110)

Okonkwo ascribes effeminacy to joining Christianity; this simple act has no relation to anti-Darwinist sexuality. Adrian, from the knowledge we have of Okonkwo, he would have killed him before his baptism. It is fortunate for him not to have lived in Okonkwo’s household, or days.

When Adrian or Abdul is placed beside Nnu Ego in Buchi Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood*, he would still lose his kin, friend, and relations because as the passive partner of the gay sexuality, his parents and the elders of his family would not be able to, after his wedding, say to his other same-sex sexual male partner that: “My Daughter has been found an unspoiled virgin. Her husband people are here to thank us” in *The Joys of Motherhood*. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, biological reproduction and all that go with it are captured even more vividly:

Each visitor would peep into the kegs of palm wine and shout, “Oh, the kegs are very full. Nnu Ego has not shamed us. We pray that in less than ten months our in-laws will come and thank us again for the birth of her baby.”

Agbadi and his life-long friend allowed themselves to be really drunk. “There is nothing that makes a man prouder than to hear that his daughter is virtuous. I don’t like visiting families where the wedding kegs of palm

wine are half filled, telling everybody that the bride has allowed herself to be tampered with.” Idayi declared.

“When a woman is virtuous, it is easy for her to conceive. You shall soon see her children coming here to play.” Agbadi said with assurance. (Emecheta 31)

Anatomically, the above will never be said about Adrian (though he has had several sexual escapades before marriage and so he is not a ‘virgin’) because in same-sex sexuality, it is male organ to male organ, no vagina, nothing feminine, I mean that which can be reproductively ascribed to Darwin’s female, it is just bone to bone and muscle to muscle. Moreover, he is only a sissy in words, not in body structure and biology. He is totally off Darwin’s rigorous theoretic radar. What his gay partner could say to him and not to his parents, though the circumstances are different, is:

“... I have no time to waste my precious male seed. ... I have to raise children for my line. If you really want to know, you don’t appeal to me anymore. You are so dry and jumpy. When a man comes to a woman he wants to be cooled, not scratched by a nervy female which is all bones.” (32)

That is Amatokwu speaking in *The Joys of Motherhood*, and how reasonably consistent his remarks are with the entire gamut of same-sex sexuality as represented in *Walking with Shadows*. This comes very close indeed to describing Adrian’s situation with his fellow men who are gay. But on the other hand, Adrian in truth, is much more reproductively privileged than Amatokwu, in siring Ego through Ada, that magnificent lady, while Amatokwu is unable to achieve same with Nnu Ego.

Beyond marriage, child-bearing and ceremonies marking Darwinist sexuality in Nigerian narratives, the central place of the family unit is undermined by Adrian’s decision and the sort of sexual relations he is intent on living out in the United Kingdom. He might feel an artificial means of getting around the aches of being gay exists, say, in adopting children (Rootes 43-64 and Averette et al. 129-151); this is trending in the West at present. In going this way, as no other alternative is left, he would be discounting the distressing fact, especially to Africans, that children ‘begotten’ through this medium would lay no claim whatsoever to African ancestry by blood; s/he would never be seen as the grandchild of Mr. Njoko, Adrian’s father, in Nigeria. No trace of his forebears, a necessary ingredient of natural selection, can ever be passed on to his offspring by this method. Abdul’s mother, for example,

on learning of his gayness, cried. Abdul continues, “But I don’t know if she was crying because she had lost her husband or that she was not to expect a grandchild from me” (Dibia 22). If his father died two years earlier and the subject was not broached, it is certain his mother was crying because of the grandchildren she would be denied. Darwin shows up here again. For Adrian who would choose to go round this difficulty, his family unit would be undermining not only the sort found in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Buchi Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood*, Isidore Okpewho’s *The Last Duty* (1976), Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* (1991), Festus Iyayi’s *Heroes* (1986), Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007), and E.E. Sule’s *Sterile Sky* (2012), but also the Darwinist character observable in the entire conventional Nigerian narratives. Whatever he does in the UK and wherever he goes, Adrian would be in constant remembrance by his family back home as one lost member, an outcast, like Joe Golder of Soyinka’s *The Interpreters*, the only other same-sex lover in the tradition before him. Adrian like Golder, a very disconcerting model for Adrian, would have no family, relations, and in fact, no friends. Golder captures clearly for himself what Adrian struggles to express through action: “I know I am a misanthropist. I don’t care for people and I don’t want them to care for me. Most of them are phonies anyway” (191). Here is a rolling stone that gathers no moss, kin and companions and this would be Adrian’s fate.

With these situations in view, Adrian like Golder in following his free-will upstages the traditional mode of sexuality that him into being. By him (the first full Nigerian fictional same-sex sexual protagonist) and his fellow gays in Jude Dibia’s *Walking with Shadows*, Nigerian narratives stand undermined in their evolutionary character through which they slightly but decisively alter the geography of sexual orientation in Nigerian narratives, despite the stirring variety they offer.

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Ethical Power from “the Human Heart by Which We Live”

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Abstract In a way, this article is a brief thematic summarization of the recently-held Sino-British Conference on ethical literary criticism — “Ethical Power in Chinese and English Romantic Poetry” — characterized by stimulating dialogical approaches. It also serves as an introduction to Project P-O-E-T-R-Y as conducted at the Confucius Institute of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan CI) in the UK, and showcases one of the Project’s significant outcomes — Julie Callan’s forthcoming book of poetry, which is titled *I Could be Chinese*, and imbued with intercultural implications. Furthermore, this article attempts to verbalize the very source of ethical power — “the human heart by which we live” (in William Wordsworth’s words), and to emphasize its functions to reconnect, to recollect, to revive, to recreate, and to reshape.

Key words ethical literary criticism; ethical power; dialogical approaches; Project P-O-E-T-R-Y; intercultural implications

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In 1807, William Wordsworth published his monumental poem “Ode: Intimations of Immortality”, which ends with the following celebratory lines — “Thanks to the human heart by which we live, / Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears, / To me the meanest flower that blows can give / Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears” (Wordsworth 274). More than 200 years later, in 2015, the Wordsworthian commendation of the human heart was echoed and reaffirmed enthusiastically by a group of Chinese and British literary scholars and poets gathering in his home country — eventually at his home village — to discuss the unique value of literature as a mode of ethical enquiry, or “as a distinctive mode of thought about being human” (Haines 21), to reconsider the inextricable link between the age-old metaphor of the human heart and the contemporary jargon of “deep culture” as “human sameness beneath difference” (Pieterse 85), and to explore in Chinese and British literature how the ethical power as generated from the human heart would work effectively to reconnect multiple cultures, recollect primordial images, revive poetic traditions, recreate worthy literary critiques, and reshape today’s intercultural trends.

1. Ethical Power as Manifested in Intercultural Communication

On the 22nd and 23rd July 2015, a Sino-British Conference on Ethical Literary Criticism — “Ethical Power in Chinese and English Romantic Poetry” — was jointly held in Preston and Grasmere, UK, by the Editorial Department for *Foreign Literature Studies* of Central China Normal University (CCNU, China), and the Confucius Institute of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan CI, UK). Leading the Chinese delegation was Professor Nie Zhenzhao, Founding Director of the International Centre for Ethical Literary Criticism (CCNU), and Editor-in-Chief of two literary journals of international renown, *Foreign Literature Studies* and *Forum for World Literature Studies*.

Officially launched by Dr Paul Elmer, Acting Dean of the School of Journalism, Language and Communication (UCLan), and chaired by Ms Yu Feixia, British Director of UCLan CI, the Conference provided a platform for a diverse group of Sino-British scholars, editors, and poets (from UCLan, Lancaster University, York University, Edinburgh University, CCNU, Beijing International Studies University, etc.) to take dialogical approaches to the ethical implications of Chinese and British literary classics, to critically examine perspectives on ethical literary criticism in relation to such issues as social narratives, personal expressions, artistic critiques, educational purposes, and poetic creations, and to address the importance of interdisciplinary and intercultural communication within

literary circles and beyond. There seemed to be a consensus among the Conference participants — “Only when diverse people come together and interact can they unify rather than separate. Unity is impossible without communication. Intercultural communication is a necessity” (Neuliep 9). As “constructive marginal people” “[recognizing] the significance of being ‘in between’” (Martin and Nakayama 202), through mutually beneficial scholarly dialogues, they collaborated to “develop a universal ethic that also grants the relativistic nature of cultures” (Samovar et al 357), basically agreeing that “it is the similarities among people and cultures that can serve as an ethical guide” (Samovar et al 358). In this case, as in almost all the other cases, the unifying factor once again proved to be “the human heart by which we live” (Wordsworth 274) — the very source of ethical power.

“Communication,” in Claudio Baraldi’s opinion, “may be intercultural either because it highlights certain cultural differences, or because it produces evidence of hybrid cultures and transcultural realities” (70). For example, human nature, metaphorically crystalized as the human heart by Wordsworth, and theoretically defined by Professor Nie as “man’s moral qualities and virtues that decisively make him human” (271), is just a transcultural inner reality of this type that can be negotiated, modified, testified, reinterpreted, or even elevated in dynamic processes of personal growth, historical development, and intercultural communication. As a matter of fact, the following major principles of ethical literary criticism as established by Professor Nie represent such an understanding of human nature, and a firm belief in literature’s positive influence on human nature — “The fundamental means of ethical education is literature”. Ethical selection is realized through moral teaching, which is necessarily accomplished through literature. Literature provides guidance for human ethical selection” (1-2).

At the Conference in Preston, Professor Nie elaborated on the ethical power as embodied in Qu Yuan’s *Li Sao* and Wordsworth’s *Prelude*, and highlighted the decisiveness of ethical selection; Dr Yvonne Reddick undertook an ethical analysis of Sambo’s gravesite, and championed the human capacity to pity, to love, and to endure; Professor Su Hui gave utterance to her comparative study on Chinese and British nature poetry, and presented diverse ways of dramatization of a given poet’s self-concept as an ethical being; Ms Yu Feixia philosophized Chiang Yee’s Wordsworthian Odyssey in *A Silent Traveller in Lakeland*, and drew inspiration from his ethical ordeals; Professor Luo Lianggong described the reception of Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan* in China, and accounted for its ethical appeals; Mr Frank Pearson expounded his views on the relationship between science and poetry in representations of the underground from 1700 to 1820, and created “caverns

of the mind” as metaphors of ethical significance; Associate Professor Du Juan explained the ethical structure in Byron’s *Don Juan*, and articulated the specified features of moral naturalism; Professor Sui Gang introduced Project P-O-E-T-R-Y as conducted at UCLan CI, and commented on the ethical connotations of British students’ creative writings.... Speaking about ethical literary criticism from multiple perspectives, all the Conference participants cherished a vision of “global multicultural”(Pieterse 94), and benefited from one another by sharing their agreements and disagreements in an intellectually enriching atmosphere of intercultural communication.

Besides having fruitful dialogues at the conference venue in Preston, all the Conference participants enjoyed the opportunity to go beyond the UCLan campus to the Wordsworth Museum at the world-famous poet’s home village, Grasmere, and to read, sing, and perform the selected poems from the treasure-house of world literature there to honour not only Wordsworth, not only the Lake Poets, not only multiple national poetic traditions, but also contemporary international endeavours of poetic creations. Mr Jeff Cowton, Curator of the Museum, showcased the rare manuscripts by Wordsworth, his relatives and friends, and exemplified the ethical influence of poetry on ordinary people for personality creation by telling touching stories taken from real life. Respectfully and passionately, the Conference participants in turn gave reading, singing, and dancing performances of poetry in four different languages — Chinese, English, Japanese, and Russian! Some of them used Chinese parasols and fans as props while performing poetry. Julie Callan, a British poetess, even played zhong ruan (a Chinese musical instrument) onsite to dub in background music for her China-themed song-poems.... Intercultural communication was thus made poetically attractive, and artistically charming.

2. Ethical Power as Manifested in Poetic Creation

P-O-E-T-R-Y is one of the creative projects that we have undertaken at the Confucius Institute of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan CI) since September 2012. Among other things, it features Pluralism (P), Open-mindedness (O), Exchange (E), Transcultural Awareness (T), Recurrent Themes/Images (R), and Yield-oriented Education (Y).

To be specific, within the framework of Project P-O-E-T-R-Y, we UCLan CI teachers have been teaching “Modern Chinese Literature” (including modern Chinese poetry and fiction) in English to British students, with cultural pluralism functioning as a major principle. It is our conviction that a knowledge of modern Chinese literature (in English translation) is not only a help for a deeper

understanding of the modern Chinese mind, but also a help for the individual's ethical understanding of the universals and constants generated from the human heart, that it is feasible to conduct a parallel study of pre-modern/modern Chinese and Western literary texts, and integrate close reading techniques with any other literary approaches, and that it is significant to promote transcultural communication based on textual analysis and cultural pluralism to globalize and localize today's literary education at the same time. In class, therefore, we attempt to expound the dual influence upon modern Chinese literature — traditional Chinese literature and Western literature, take practical approaches to its stylistic diversity and thematic depth, and develop appropriate teaching methods according to the British students' mentalities and aptitudes on purpose to train them to be sensitive, imaginative, and creative — as interculturally competent communicators, who “generally have a profound respect for many varied points of view and are able to understand others and to communicate appropriately and effectively with people from a variety of cultures”, and who “are able to project a sense of self that transcends any particular cultural group” (Lustig and Koester 167).

Apart from discussing poetry in class, we UCLan CI teachers and students have participated actively in various poetry reading and performing events at Wordsworth Museum, Grasmere, and at Harris Library, Preston, etc. For most of us, poetry reading is writing-oriented reading, or in other words, yield-oriented education, and poetry writing as creative output is by nature a sharing or exchange. At the international cultural market, we exchange words, sometimes in poetic form, just as we exchange money, in the hope that our lives as ethical beings will be further enriched and fulfilled.

Practically speaking, for British students, it is recommendable to study Chinese poems in the light of English poems that have similar recurrent themes and images, cultivate their transcultural awareness, and adopt an open-minded approach to an “aesthetics of ethics” (Beshty 12) in poetic creation, readily taking the ethical responsibility “that comes with the acquisition of intercultural knowledge and insights — that this educational experience is not just transformative for the individual but should also benefit the larger society and other cultural groups in the increasingly interdependent world” (Martin and Nakayama 37).

Ms. Julie Callan, whose new book of poetry *I Could Be Chinese*¹ is forthcoming in the second half of 2015, exemplifies such an effective approach. She had already been an accomplished poetess when she began to attend our weekly classes of modern Chinese literature in September 2013. Since then she has been characteristically active in classroom discussions and presentations. In particular,

she has digested the theoretical foundations of modern Chinese poetics, and is fully acquainted with its up-to-date trend. She can apply its essential elements creditably and justifiably in her own creative writings — as well as in her academic research from textually/contextually comparative and contrastive perspectives. In Chinese literature and culture, she has found another meaning system to refer to, and another pattern of images to work with, and has ethically empowered her own poems by making them relational, inspirational, and transformational all at once.

Julie’s poems are relational. In her forthcoming China-themed book of poetry *I Could Be Chinese*, she follows a “non-detached, responsive way of being-in-relation” (Adamson 107) to be passionately engaged in conversing with the past, the present, and the future of China, and in vivifying typically Chinese figures, settings, events, images, and motifs, which are well selected, presented, and substantiated. At the same time, however, she poetically shows the wider implications of those figures, settings, events, images, and motifs — beyond China’s boundaries, and beyond the limits of any time. As a “multicultural person” “who comes to grips with a multiplicity of realities” (Martin and Nakayama 201), Julie has visited China for several times, and got in close contact with real people, routines, and objects there; more importantly, she shapes them into poetic realities, that is, expressive and suggestive images, and reveals in her imagistic poetry her personal and transpersonal relations with them through interactive intercultural experiential activities — walking the Great Wall, cruising down the Yangtze before the completion of the dam, watching lion dances, seeing a mini-opera about peacock lovers, contemplating on the terracotta warriors in Xi’an, strolling into the oldest teashop in Shanghai, hugging a panda as her mantra, and so on.

Julie’s poems are inspirational. Inspired by ancient Chinese poets and their poems, paradoxically, she has imaginatively written back to them in poetic form so as to inspire contemporary Chinese poets and scholars to reexamine traditional Chinese culture from fresh perspectives — “not as one thing or another, not as a *thing* at all, but rather as a *heuristic* ... a ‘tool for thinking’” (Scollon et al 3). For instance, Julie describes Bai Juyi as a great conversationalist, a good host, a pleasure to visit, and a comparable drinking companion in “A Great Poet”; she reuses the Chinese form of poetry on objects (*yong wu shi*) to humanize what is nonhuman, and to poetize what is seemingly unpoetic in “Stove” and “Chair”; she re-contextualizes Chinese dramatic figures, natural scenes, and ethical dilemmas in “Reply to the Tune ‘On the Water Clock at Night’ by Wen Tingyun,” “Reply to ‘Autumn Songs of the Hall of Abiding Faith’ by Wang Changling,” and “Reply to the Tune ‘Audience at Golden Gate’ by Wei Zhuang.”

Julie's poems are transformational. In the very process of writing her China-themed poetry, she has experienced a dynamic self-transformation from a cultural identity to an intercultural identity, and succeeded in keeping both, proving to be one of those who are "able to move beyond the limits of their own cultural experiences to incorporate the perspectives of other cultures into their own interpersonal interactions" (Lustig and Koester 171). As Young Yun Kim observes, "there is no contradiction between maintenance of a positive cultural identity and the development of a flexible intercultural identity" (qtd. in Baraldi 70). In her poem "I Could Be Chinese," Julie says as the "I," or the first-person speaker, "I could sing of silkworms, / rice fields, lotus flowers. / I could tell of forbidden love / over tea and bamboo. / I could dance with the cranes, / run with the wind and mountain streams. / I could tend my goats and plant my crops, / let off firecrackers in my new house / to scare away the ghosts...." The subjunctive mood of this poetic statement of hers does not indicate that she *is* Chinese, but it suffices to acknowledge the shared humanity in what is perceived to be Chinese. Actually, in Julie's case, an intercultural identity never negates a cultural identity. In "Dancing with the Pink Ladies of the Beijing Hutongs," another poem of hers, the first-person speaker is keenly conscious of her own original British identity in a Chinese local setting, but genuinely rejoices at her good fortune of having fun in an ethical environment full of sisterly love in Beijing — "... When the dance ends, I'm congratulated. / My dance teacher, smiling politely, / shakes my hand. / I can't help but give her a hug. / Perhaps it's too much. / But she can't help being Chinese / and I can't help being British. / I have danced with the Ladies of the Beijing Hutongs / and made the air turn pink!"

Conclusion

If it is true that "[the] greatest danger to our future is apathy" (Jane Goodall, qtd. in Samovar et al 361), or heartlessness, it must be also true that we do need a turn to sympathy and empathy, or simply a turn to the human heart. A turn to the human heart is in fact a turn to ethics — "a turn to the affirmative question of art, not art as negation, allegory or critique, but the description of an art that operates directly upon the world it is situated in..." (Beshty 19). "Stripping away surface differences," according to M. K. DeGenova, "will uncover a multiplicity of similarities: people's hopes, aspirations, desire to survive, search for love, and need for family — to name just a few" (qtd. in Samovar et al 359). Probably, the metaphorical meanings of "the human heart" as celebrated in Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" can be renewed to suggest the "oneness of the human

family” (Samovar et al 359) in an ethical sense. It is the human heart that generates ethical power to create “good art,” and it is the “good art” thus created that in return “provides work for the spirit” (Iris Murdoch, qtd. in Dipple 1) — for the human heart to be consoled, saved, and hopefully uplifted.

Note

1. All the excerpts of Julie Callan’s poems are taken from her forthcoming book of poetry — *I Could Be Chinese* — to be published through Culturescape Press (Preston, Lancashire, UK) at the end of 2015.

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A Comparative Study on the Man-Nature Relationship and Its Presentation in Chinese and British Nature Poetry

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Abstract Poetry on nature has always been a sparkling star in Chinese literature as well as in British literature. Chinese and British nature poetry share similar characteristics such as the pursuit of freedom and the attachment of certain emotions to natural sceneries. Meanwhile, they are also greatly different owing to the differences in cultural background, national characters and psychologies, philosophies and aesthetic traditions. This paper aims to explore the differences between Chinese and British nature poetry in terms of their concern with the relationship between man and nature and its presentation. Chinese and British nature poets appeal to different things in terms of the relationship between man and nature. In Chinese nature poems, the poet always pursues the harmony between man and nature, the self being forgotten; while in British nature poems, the scenery is regarded as a symbol of emotions, the self always being foregrounded. Chinese and British nature poetry are also different in their composing principles and methods. Generally speaking, analogy and narration are the main practice in ancient Chinese natural poetry writing, whereas personification and dramatic narration in English. In British poems, since the speaker is narrating, “the sceneries are losing their concreteness and directness with the speaker’s constant intervention” and they are presented in a single line. Chinese nature poems are the exemplification of “dramatic narration.” The sceneries are presented directly to the readers, without the interference of the poet, and with the feature of loose arrangements, multi-

levels and changing perspectives.

Key words Chinese nature poetry; British nature poetry; Man-Nature Relationship

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Poetry on nature has always been a sparkling star in Chinese literature as well as in British literature, but it has gone through different phases of developments. Chinese nature poetry can be dated back to the period of Wei Jin Southern and Northern Dynasties (4th-5th century), and prospered in Tang and Song Dynasties. Representative Chinese nature poets, namely, Tao Yuanming, Xie Lingyun, Meng Haoran, Wang Wei, Li Bai, Du Fu, Bai Juyi, Su Shi and Lu You had written a substantial number of brilliant nature poems. British nature poetry appeared in the Renaissance, and prospered in the Romantic Movement. The representative poets were Spencer, Pope, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron and so on.

Chinese and British nature poetry share similar characteristics such as the pursuit of freedom and the attachment of certain emotions to natural sceneries. Meanwhile, they are also greatly different owing to the differences in cultural background, national characters and psychologies, philosophies and aesthetic traditions. This paper aims to explore the differences between Chinese and British nature poetry in terms of their concern with the relationship between man and nature and its presentation.

I

Chinese and British nature poets appeal to different things in terms of the relationship between man and nature. In Chinese nature poems, the poet always pursues the harmony between man and nature, the self being forgotten; while in British nature poems, the scenery is regarded as a symbol of emotions, the self always being foregrounded. Such difference can be clearly seen if we compare Wordsworth's "Lines Written in Early Spring" with Wang Wei's "The Deer Enclosure" and "The Twitter-Valley." In the first two stanzas in "Lines Written in Early Spring":

I heard a thousand blended notes,

While in a grove I sate reclined,
 In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts,
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did nature link
 The human soul that through me ran;
 And much it griev'd my heart to think
 What man has made of man.

Wordsworth contrasts nature's kindness with man's cruelty. The natural scenery is subsidiary to the speaker's thoughts and emotions. The speaker is not immersed in the intimacy with the nature. Instead, by associating beautiful natural environment with evil social environment, he ponders over the problem of "what man has made of man." For readers, their immediate aesthetic target is the emotion, not the scenery. Similarly, though the west wind, the swift cloud, the wave and the hail in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," and the nightingale, the forest and the night in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" all appear as independent imageries, they carry certain emotions of the speaker or certain symbolic significance. There is apparently a gap between the speaker and nature, where the speaker is clearly aware that man isn't materialized and nature isn't personified. After a temporary communication, man and nature have returned to their respective different world. What Keats felt after the nightingale left is a good example.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music: — do I wake or sleep?

With several "adieu"s, the nightingale's singing flows "past the near meadows," "over the stream," "up the hill-side" until it is "buried deep in the next valley-glades." The speaker suddenly awakens to the reality though he still lingers over

the dreamlike scene. What predominates in him is reason, not fantasy.

In Wang Wei's (王维) two poems, "The Deer Enclosure" (鹿柴) and "The Twitter-Valley" (鸟鸣涧):

The Deer Enclosure

The hills are empty and nobody is sight,
But the human voices can be heard.
The dark woods can't hide the late sunset,
Which shines onto the green mosses on the ground.

The Twitter-Valley

Idle man can hear the fall of laurel flowers,
Quiet night can make spring hills empty.
When moon comes out it startles the hill-birds,
Which twitter and twitter in the vernal valley.

the poet creates a serene atmosphere where only the nature is seen. By now, the poet has rid himself of the burdens of all sorts of thoughts. He seems to have forgotten about himself, only contemplating the current scene, without any intellectual interference. It is under such circumstance that he acquires special hearing and eyesight, and is able to hear the unheard and see the unseen. With the sensitiveness, he obtains the breath of the universe and feels the rhythm of the nature, thus combining the subjective with objective. At the moment, the "self" doesn't go into the nature, while the nature doesn't enter the "self." The nature and "I" are intermingled. The self is negated(no self), meanwhile it is acknowledged, because the individual is immersed into the universe, the self is made immortal.

Lines like this in Chinese nature poetry are numerous. For example, "The sparse shadows of its branches are slant across the clear shallow water, / A slight fragrance of its flowers floats with wind under moon in twilight", from Lin Hejing's (林和靖) "To the Plum Blossoms in a Garden" (山园早梅), is an image of the plum in early spring. Seeing its lonely shadow in the water, the fragrant plum feels sad, yet admires itself. Vague and sparse, it is ignored by people, but wins the heartfelt appreciation of the poet. It is a plum, but it is more like a human being, a noble person isolated from the world and enjoying spiritual satisfaction. This is exactly the image of the poet himself who has been secluding himself in Gushan Mountain of Westlake. The imagery produced from the unity of the self, and the nature is neither a metaphor nor a symbol, but describes a state

when the heart seems to have ceased beating and the self is released from the body to blend with the myriad of things in the universe. The poet has transcended the reality by obtaining great freedom in spirit and coming to the highest stage in aesthetics.

The different relationship between the self and the nature reflected in Chinese and British nature poetry is closely related to the different natural views.

In China, the prevailing idea is the harmony between man and nature. The formation of this idea is associated with the Chinese way of living and their living environment. As early as the New Stone Age, the farming economy had been established and for several thousand years, the self-sufficing economy was stable and prosperous. Therefore, people greatly relied on natural environment, and were sensitive to any delicate changes in the natural world, as they were desiring for the intimacy with the nature. In Chinese philosophy, although there was preaching of “the division of man and nature” and “man’s conquering of nature”, what dominates the mentality of common Chinese people is still the idea of harmony between man and nature, the communication between man and nature. This idea is embedded in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Therefore, it becomes an integral part of Chinese natural view and promotes the formation and development of their aesthetic awareness of nature.

The flourishing of Chinese nature poems and the formation of leading ideas are closely related to Taoism. The core of Laozi and Zhuangzi’s philosophy is “Tao” (道), which is the law of the universe and the cause of all changes in the universe. The highest spiritual state is the unity with “Tao”, that is, through cultivating the vacancy and stillness of the mind, the subject obtains a mind free from affectation and all world value judgments. To observe everything in the universe with this natural mind, “I” coexist with the universe and everything and “I” are a unity, the object mingling with the subject’s mind.

There are similar ideas in Confucianism. The Confucianists argue that the essence of the nature exists in human mind. Man in the ethical sense echoes the nature, the source of ethics. They advocate “Troubled, improve yourself; valued, improve the world”, that is, one should live in poverty and seek comfort in poverty, which also implies the idea of “obeying nature.”

The Buddhists advocate refraining from the earthly world. They hold the view that the sublime state of life is the emptiness and purity of the mind, which is a returning to the nature through practice of meditation. According to Zen Buddhism, experiencing a moment of awakening in this life is of central importance. It is at this moment that one gets his eternity. Therefore, freeing themselves from the

captivity of language, words, concepts and thoughts, Zen Buddhists express those that are supposed to be unspeakable in an intuitive way.

From different perspectives, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism all expound on the idea of the harmony between man and nature. This idea is deeply rooted in the mind of ancient Chinese intellectuals, particularly exerting great influence on nature poets' aesthetic and artistic views. When the poets try to express their affection towards the nature, the self and the nature are harmoniously mingled with each other.

In western philosophy, because of the influence of scientific rationality and humanistic ideas, the relationship between man and nature is relatively estranged. Ancient Greeks were used to posing natural beauty as something opposite to themselves, and attempted to analyze it in an objective way. The Melisian School broke the shackles of mythology and tried to explain the formation and development of everything in the natural world in terms of matter and rationality, but they seldom touched upon the relationship between man and nature. Later on, Protagoras put forward the proposition that "man is the measure of all things", placing man as the core of the universe, thus started the tradition of humanism. Idealists such as Socrates and Plato regarded nature as the embodiment of God or concepts. They argued that man can only know the surface of the nature while its inherent laws belong to the other world. Aristotle saw nature in a mechanical materialistic way. Nature to him is an intellectual world which can be understood, but it's hard to be experienced emotionally. In the Middle Ages, western culture was dominated by Christianity. According to Christianity teachings, man should believe in God, indulging in the nature would affect the perfection of the soul. Ever since Renaissance, the beauty of nature has been receiving more and more attention. The waves of "the discovery of man" had washed away the mythological remains covering the nature. The brilliant beauty of nature was a shock to people in the modern west. The practice of praising the nature was temporarily replaced by Neoclassical rationality in the 17th century, but the enlighteners in the 18th century declared that "we should return to the nature". With the advent of the Romantic Movement in the 19th century, nature became an independent target of aesthetics and had an important position in literary works. However, nature poets often appreciate natural beauty from the relationship between thinking and being, focusing on exploring the nature of everything in the universe. They tend to explain the diverse and mysterious natural phenomenon with monism, as a result of which for them, the subject is relatively independent from the object. This explains why the mind resonates with the nature and the self and the nature intermingled

harmoniously in Wang Wei's poems on nature, while there's much reasoning and thinking in Wordsworth's poems.

II

Chinese and British nature poetry are also different in their composing principles and methods. Generally speaking, analogy(拟物主义) is the main practice in ancient Chinese natural poetry writing, whereas personification (拟人主义) in English. Chinese nature poets tend to be impersonal. Things exist not because of "the self", but the inherent laws. Therefore, the truth and beauty lie in the existence. Both the things and "the self" can be either subjective or objective. British nature poets tend to be more personal or subjective, explaining the world with "the self" and abstract concepts. The value of their poetry lies in the ontological level, as a consequence of which there is always the color, the emotions and values of "the self" involved and there is a clear-cut division between the subjective and objective.

For instance, Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark" and Du Fu's "A Quatrain" both present the image of birds. In "Ode to a Skylark", the speaker addresses the skylark in apostrophe: "Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! / Bird thou never wert, / That from Heaven, or near it, / Pourest thy full heart / In profuse strains of unpremeditated art." Here, the skylark is imagined as a creature that understands man and stands right in front of the speaker, listening to him. It is the embodiment of pure happiness and can sing heavenly hymns which remind the speaker of the past old times where there was no pain, no sentiment and full of laughter. The skylark is personified.

In Du Fu's (杜甫) "A Quatrain" (绝句), analogy is used: "Two golden orioles sing amid the willows green; A flock of white egrets flies into the sky. My window frames the snow-crowned western mountain scene; My door says often to east-going ship goodbye." A beautiful picture is painted in the first couplet: the thatched cottage is surrounded by willows, on the branches of which a couple of orioles were singing and a flock of white egrets is flying in the sky. Both singing orioles and flying white egrets bring energy and happiness. This quatrain was written by Du Fu when he returned to his thatched cottage in Chengdu after the An Lushan-Shi Siming Rebellion and caught sight of such vibrant views in front of him. In this poem, the poet is just like a painter, without interfering with the picture and the sceneries are not personified. But reading the lines, readers may feel the poet has become a singing oriole or a flying white egret. This is the analogy is Chinese poetics. The scenery serves as a mirror to the mind.

T. S. Eliot once made a distinction between "narration" and "dramatic narration" in poetry. "Narration" is a top-down metaphor of the material, is

a subjective projection of the material; “Dramatic narration” is an objective projection of feelings. Such a distinction is proper to be applied to tell the differences between Chinese and British poems on nature. In British poems, since the speaker is narrating, “the sceneries are losing their concreteness and directness with the speaker’s constant intervention” (Ye Weilian 89) and they are presented in a single line. To explain this, Mr. Ye Weilian gave an example of Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey.” He pointed out that three quarters of this poem is the explanation of how the outside world affects the mind, or the explanation of how the mind and the nature feel and supplement each other. Nature is the “babysitter, mentor and parent” of his moral being (Ye Weilian 88). Meanwhile, the way the speaker presents the sceneries shows that he is directing the readers to get in touch with the sceneries following his eyes, not interweaving time and space, which is quite similar to the one-way transparency in western painting. Either the readers or the poet is separated from the nature and is not able to merge into the nature.

Chinese nature poems are the exemplification of “dramatic narration”. The sceneries are presented directly to the readers, without the interference of the poet, and with the feature of loose arrangements, multi-levels and changing perspectives. For example, in “On the West Stream of Chuzhou” (滁州西涧) from Wei Yingwu (韦应物) in Tang Dynasty: “Alone I like the riverside where green grass grows / And golden orioles sing amid leafy trees. / When showers fall at dusk, the river overflows; / A lonely boat athwart the ferry floats at ease”, all the images are independent of each other. There isn’t a sure logic relationship or a fixed order among the “green grass”, “riverside”, “orioles”, “showers”, “ferry” and “boat”. They come into readers’ view alternatively, free from the interference of the speaker’s feelings. Meanwhile, these seemingly irrelevant images form a complete picture in readers’ mind and evoke their aesthetic pleasure. The readers’ interpretation can be accomplished from every possible perspective and without the limitation of time and space.

There are various factors leading to such differences between Chinese and English nature poems. This paper will focus on the following two factors. First, in terms of aesthetics, the principle of “vitality infusion” is always followed in appreciating and composing a piece of artistic work in the west, that is, the subject has to infuse vitality into the aesthetic object. Kant maintains that we should “transfer our reverence for the object to the nature” (Qtd. Wu Lifu 563) in his *Critique of Judgement*. Hegel holds a similar view that “natural beauty is merely a reflection of the beauty in mind, an incomplete and imperfect state”(Hegel 3), its perfection could be reached when infused vitality by human mind. That’s why

Hegel maintains that “artistic beauty is above natural beauty”. Influenced by Kant and Hegel’s ideas, German aesthetician the Vischers and Lipps put forward the notion of “empathy.” Empathy is the projection of emotions on the outside world. Aesthetic empathy, in Lipps’ words, is “infusing vitality into reality” (qtd. Zhu Guangqian 624). As we can see, either in Kant and Hegel’s aesthetics, or in Lipps’ notion of empathy, the focus is always the subject, while the object is completely passive. With such aesthetic view, personification is generally employed by British nature poetry writing. The nature is personified and what is foregrounded is the image of “I,” who directs readers to observing nature.

It is a different picture in Chinese nature poetry writing. In Chinese aesthetics and philosophies, life of everything is always thought to originate from nature; everything in nature resonates with human breathing. The aesthetic practice is not only on the projection of their emotions, but also the bilateral communication between nature and themselves. This can be achieved by a technique in the ancient Chinese poetry writing — Bi Xing (比兴). “Bi” is to attach certain emotions to things; “Xing” is to trigger certain feelings when seeing things. “BiXing” lays emphasis on the bilateral communication between the subject and the object, never separating the person from the thing he attaches emotions to. By employing this technique in poetry writing, it is possible to connect several imageries, which share similarities to a certain extent. For example, in Ying Yang’s “On Departure”: “Clouds float above the ocean at sunrise, / over the mountain at sunset. / Soldiers at war miss their hometown, / but words of sorrow can’t be said.” “soldiers at war” are compared to “floating clouds”, their homesickness being foregrounded. Imageries connected by “Xing” are not necessarily connected with each other, as “By riverside are cooing / A pair of turtledoves” and “A good young man is wooing / A fair maiden he loves”. It is the technique “BiXing” that has made the juxtaposition of imageries possible in ancient Chinese poetry.

Second, in terms of the features of the language and characters, ancient Chinese language is loosely structured in grammar, with a flexible part of speech; while there are strict syntactic rules in English language, with changes of part of speech, number, person and tense. This is one of the important reasons leading to the different ways of presenting imageries in different structures in Chinese and British nature poems.

As in Meng Haoran’s (孟浩然) “Passing the Night on a River in Jiande” (宿建德江): “I guide my boat to mooring by a misty islet, / With the setting sun, a traveler’s sorrows revive. / Wilds so vast, the sky stoops to the trees; / The river so clear, moon close to man.” The original Chinese word “xin,” “di” and “jin”

can be used as adjectives as well as verbs. When “xin” is an adjective, “ke chou xin” means the traveler feels some new sorrows; when “xin” is a verb, it means “his sorrows revive”. When “di” is an adjective, “tian di shu” means the sky is lower than the trees; when “di” is a verb, it means “the sky stoops to the trees”. When “jin” is an adjective, “yue jin ren” means the moon is “close to” man; when “jin” is a verb, it means the moon approach man. When used as adjectives, these words show a static beauty; when verbs, dynamic. Meanwhile, some prepositions and conjunctions are omitted to vague the connection between imageries, leaving great space for readers to imagine. In the original Chinese version, there is no “by” between “moor” and “a misty islet,” and no conjunctions between “ye kuang” and “tian di shu,” “jiang qing” and “yue jin ren.”

There are quite different features in English language. The strict syntactic rules and the use of various modifiers set boundaries among imageries, as a result of which they are developed and presented in a linear way from a certain perspective. For example, in the first two lines of Wordsworth’s “My Heart Leaps up,” “My heart leaps up when I behold / A rainbow in the sky,” “in” connects “a rainbow” and “the sky,” indicating the constraint. “When” connects “my heart leaps up” and “I behold a rainbow,” indicating the reasons of hearting leaping up. When there is such a clear and strict boundary between imageries, the independence and objectivity of the sceneries is invaded, which is helpful to produce ambiguity and visual effects.

In the early 20th century, English poets started to learn from ancient Chinese poetry, and have developed some similar techniques. The typical example is Imagism. However, even in Pound, who very consciously imitates Chinese poems, we find concerns and perspectives quite different from his Chinese counterpart. This question will be further discussed in other papers.

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The Ethical Representations and Enlightenments of “Peach Blossom Spring” in Contemporary Literature

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Abstract *Peach Blossom Spring* has always been the ideal paradise for all the Chinese writers for thousands of years. The image of “Peach Blossom Spring” has become the collective memory of Chinese people. Many writers use “Peach Blossom Spring” as a prototype to express their pursuits and dream of ethical values. Shen Congwen is one of the outstanding representatives. He creates a beautiful and harmonious world called Xiangxi (West Hunan) for the readers, and the beauty of nature and humanity demonstrated in that world become the ethical representations of *Peach Blossom Spring* in contemporary literature. Generally, this article aims to analyze the functions of “Peach Blossom Spring” from the perspective of ethical literary criticism. It intends to explore new insights into the ethical representations of “Peach Blossom Spring” in contemporary literature and to further discuss its enlightenments to the current society.

Key words “Peach Blossom Spring”; *Border Town*; nature; humanity; ethical representations

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The utopian ideal for a better life is a universal theme both in the eastern and western literature. “The idea of utopia suggests the vision of an alternative and better society beyond reality, and it implies some degree of discontent with the status quo and its critique, therefore the utopian vision invariably presents itself as a social commentary, an allegory of the desire for change and transformation” (Zhang 1). The ideals of utopian society can be found in the western literature such as the biblical Garden of Eden, Plato’s *Republic* and so on. The most famous version in China is put forward by Tao Yuanming in his *Peach Blossom Spring*. As an outstanding poet of the Six Dynasties, Tao Yuanming’s influence has pervaded the whole history of Chinese literature and he has been characterized as “the paragon of all hermit poets, past and present.” His *Peach Blossom Spring* become the representative work expressing people’s yearning for a better life.

Nie Zhenzhao states that “the main purpose of literature is to express the ethics and morals of the author and the age” (Nie 8). In this sense, every literary work is related to ethics and can be interpreted from the perspective of ethical literary criticism; *Peach Blossom Spring* is no exception. “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 8). *Peach Blossom Spring* makes up a peaceful and ideal society which is in opposite to the cruel reality. “The essential element in utopia is not hope, but desire — the desire for a better way of being” (Levitas 191). Tao Yuanming’s description of a happy life reveals the ethical pursuits and the wishes of the masses.

1. The Origins of *Peach Blossom Spring*

“Tao Yuanming’s thought is not formed by a certain single factor, it is influenced by the combination of his unique character, social backgrounds and the essence of various academic schools” (Liu 202). Therefore, the origins of “Peach Blossom Spring” are not out of the fancy, or the fabrication of Tao Yuanming. It takes shape on the basis of social backgrounds, ethical environment of that time and Tao Yuanming’s own expectations.

1.1 The Social Backgrounds of *Peach Blossom Spring*

Tao Yuanming lives in a turbulent time with frequent wars, dark politics and heavy taxes. People suffer a lot in the predicaments. Involved in the period of great turmoil, Tao Yuanming sees no hopes of achieving his ambition of salvaging his people and country and he feels the darkness and corruption of politics only get farther and farther into the swamp of awkwardness. “He has no ability to put wrongs to rights or to associate with evil trends” (Liu 202), so he chooses to withdraw from the society and live in solitude. Experiencing the harshness and toughness of the farm work, he decides to find out the outlets for the impoverished masses and imagines an ideal “Peach Blossom Spring” without exploitations or oppressions. This ideal society forms a striking contrast to the dark society of the time, which enables people to further realize the hideous social reality. “Peach Blossom Spring” refers to the most beautiful and wonderful paradise in the world. “Sealed from the vicissitudes of history, the inhabitants have preserved their ingenuous mode of life in which all work in readiness and harmony” (Kwong 50). With this regard, Tao Yuanming in *Peach Blossom Spring* expresses his condemnation of the depressive society and his desire for a better society, as Yim-tze Kwong says: “the poet’s endorsement of such a hermetic society only reflects his anguish at the inaccessibility of what should be universally accessible, and it is not without a twinge of sadness that he expresses a wish to become an inhabitant of this ideal land” (Kwong 50). Although the wonderland depicted in *Peach Blossom Spring* is impossible to exist, the tranquility and happiness of that ideal society provides a hopeful shelter for all the miserable masses.

1.2 The Ethical Environment of *Peach Blossom Spring*

The origin of “Peach Blossom Spring” is not only related to the social backgrounds, but also is closely related to the ethical environment of that time. Six Dynasties are indeed an era of political upheaval on the one hand; on the other hand, it is also an era of thought liberation. The fusion and integration of different nations promote the communication and the spread of various ideas. As the representative of intellectuals, Tao Yuanming makes up his own ideal society by means of absorbing the essence of previous thoughts and ethical spirits of his time. Tao Yuanming is an extremely wise thinker who does not just stick to the traditional ideas. He reads various books and makes contact with various people of different academic schools. He is under the deep influence of the multiple ideas, including both Confucianism and Taoism.

Tao Yuanming’s ideal society has certain similarities with the Great Unity

Society advocated by Confucianism: “men loved not only their own parents nor fostered their own children, but ensured that the aged were provided for, the able-bodied employed, and the young brought up. Widowers, widows, orphans, childless people, as well as the disabled, robbery and disorder never occurred, so that outer doors need not be closed” (Kwong 51). This corresponds to the descriptions of the carefree life in *Peach Blossom Spring*: “There was an expansive plain scattered with orderly houses, lush fields, beautiful ponds and clumps of mulberry and bamboo trees. Footpaths crisscrossed the fields, where the crowing of cocks and the barking of dogs were heard within distance. The men and women working in the fields were attired in the same manner as the people living outside; both old and young enjoyed a happy life” (Tao 163). In this sense, we can see Tao Yuanming has generous visions of making everyone happy and in the Great Unity Society.

Besides Confucianism, Tao Yuanming is also influenced by Taoism. One remarkable feature of “Peach Blossom Spring” is its complete isolation from the outside world. This is similar to the idea of “keeping the country small and population sparse” advocated by Laozi who is the representative of Taoism. Just like Tao Yuanming, Laozi also lives in a turbulent era. In pain and despair, he tries hard to seek his utopia by establishing an isolated world. “The rustic community in Tao Yuanming’s story does bear considerable resemblance to the utopian vision in Chapter Eighty of the *Daodejing* (attributed to Laozi) in that an ideal state should be small in size, simple in organization, its inhabitants living happily in ignorance of and isolation from the rest of the world” (Chiang 115). The ideal society advocated by Taoism can be articulated in details: Reduce the size of the state; Lessen the population. Make sure that even though there are labor-saving tools, they are never used. Make sure that they look upon death as a weighty matter and never move to distant places. Even though they have ships and carts, they will have no use for them. Even though they have armor and weapons, they will have no reason to deploy them. Make sure that the people return to the use of the knotted cord. Make their food savory, their clothes fine, their houses comfortable, their lives happy (Ivanhoe 202). This description also corresponds to the descriptions in *Peach Blossom Spring*, the villagers “told him how their ancestors had arrived at this remote corner of the world together with their wives, children and fellow villagers in order to escape from the tyrannous rule of the Qin Dynasty, and how they had settled down here, cutting themselves off from the rest of the world. When the fisherman asked them what dynasty they were living in, they were ignorant of the Han Dynasty, let alone the Wei and Jin dynasties” (Tao 163,165). Taoism again strengthens Tao Yuanming’s determination of finding a harmonious and pure

paradise in the troublous time.

In addition to the influence of Confucianism and Taoism, Tao Yuanming inherits from the theory of “no monarch” as well, for without rulers everything falls into place; without officials every matter proceeds in order; with rulers oppression arises; with officials robbery comes about. Tao Yuanming’s assumption of the ideal society has nothing to do with monarch or hierarchy, but presents a nice scene that everyone is equal and lives peacefully.

1.3 Tao Yuanming’s Personal Expectations of *Peach Blossom Spring*

Tao Yuanming’s expectations of *Peach Blossom Spring* derive from his love for nature. For Tao Yuanming who is claimed as “the son of nature”, nature not only provides a necessary place to live in, but also a spiritual home which gives humans a sense of belonging.

“I’ve loathed the madding crowd since I was a boy, while hills and mountains have filled me with joy. By mistake I sought mundane careers and got entrapped in them for thirty years. Birds in the cage would long for wooded hills, Fish in the pond would yearn for flowing rills. So I reclaim the land in southern fields, To suit my bent for reaping farmland yields. My farm contains a dozen mu of ground; My cottage has eight or nine rooms around. The elm and willow screen the backside eaves which peach and plum trees shade my yard with leaves. The distant village dimly looms somewhere, with smoke from chimneys drifting in the air. In silent country lanes a stray dog barks; Amid the mulberry trees cocks crow with larks. My house escapes from worldly moil or gloom while ease and quiet permeates my private room. When I escape from bitter strife with men. I live a free and easy life again” (Tao 53). Tao Yuanming shows his aversion to the secular world and his attachment to nature. The beauty of nature presents a striking contrast to the darkness of social realities. It is nature that can make him happy and contented.

“Homeward ho! Why not return now that my fields will go into weeds? Since I took up a position against my will, There is no need for me to lament by myself. I have realized that there is no remedy for the past, But there is still a future lying ahead. It is true that I was not far astray in my way, Realizing that I have turned from wrong to right. My returning boat is sailing swiftly over the water while the gentle breeze tosses my robe. I ask a traveler about the way ahead, Resenting the dimness before dawn. When my house comes into sight, I run towards it in a happy mood. My servants are giving me a warm welcome; My children are waiting at the door. Wild weed have grown on the courtyard paths. But the pine trees and chrysanthemums remain. When I enter the house hand in hand with my young

son, I see that the cups are filled with wine. I pour wine from the jug and drink by myself, Elated to watch the trees in the courtyard. I lean against the southern window in pride, Complacent with the narrow house I dwell. It is a pleasure for me to pace the yard, With the gate closely shut all day long. With a staff in hand, I walk to and fro, Raising my head to look afar from behind the hills; The weary birds know that they should return. When the dim sun is about to set in the west, I fondle a solitary pine and linger around it” (Tao 245). Through the descriptions of the beautiful natural scenery, Tao Yuanming expresses his deep affection for the natural world. Strolling in the paradise of nature, he can be released from the turbulent society and gradually have a sense of inner peace.

For thousands of years, Tao Yuanming’s deep love for nature has caught great attention of the later generations. Luo Zongqiang says: “Tao Yuanming is extraordinary because there is no distance between him and nature. He immerses himself completely in the beauty of nature and becomes a part of nature rather than a spectator, an appreciator, nor a possessor” (Luo 343). To sum up, on one hand Tao Yuanming develops his conceptions of the ideal society by absorbing the essence of various thoughts. On the other hand, he combines his thoughts with social realities and the ethical environment. Therefore, Tao Yuanming’s ideal society concerns about two dimensions of nature and people.

2. The Ethical Representations of “Peach Blossom Spring” in Contemporary Literature

Eaglestone also says, “The study of literature has always had a strong involvement with ethics” (Eaglestone 581-82). For thousands of years, *Peach Blossom Spring* has become a classical symbol of a spiritual home for writers in Chinese literary history. When feeling disappointed and distressed, they usually go to the Peach Blossom Spring to comfort themselves. Besides that, *Peach Blossom Spring* also inspires them greatly in their literary creation. “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 ... It uncovers moral models, both as examples and as warnings. It helps us develop the capacity to think about complex human interactions. The aim of ethical literary criticism is to offer varied experiences, lessons, instructions and inspirations for our learning, teaching and enlightenment” (Ross 14). Therefore, the exploration of the ethical representations of *Peach Blossom Spring* is of great necessity in enhancing the understanding of its significant functions in the current world. *Peach*

Blossom Spring marks the beginning of landscape poetry and pastoral poetry. In Tao Yuanming's works, "the poetic imagery is personified, idealized and artistic; it is the combination of the poet's spiritual world and the poetic world" (Sun 5). Then the subsequent writers like Wangwei, Meng Haoran, Chu Guangxi, Changjian all inherit Tao Yuanming's style. Many descriptions about nature and local customs of the following writers resemble similarities to *Peach Blossom Spring*, and the harmonious relationship between man and nature is also deeply inherited from Tao Yuanming. Tao Yuanming constructs the spiritual world in the pastoral poems, because "there are the more profound taste and permanent values in the natural mountains and waters landscapes" (Sun 26).

Border Town of Shen Congwen is a typical novel under the impact of *Peach Blossom Spring*. Its background is set in a small town called "Chadong" with beautiful sceneries and kind people. The novel demonstrates the goodness of human nature and the purity of human heart through a girl's love story. The readers at home and abroad are fascinated by its artistic charm and vivid depictions. In *Border Town*, Shen Congwen combines the beauty of nature and the beauty of humanity in that tranquil and ideal society, thus creates a harmonious Xiangxi paradise for the readers. "West Hunan's natural beauty and cultural vitality, its 'primitive' nobility and innocence, and its unconventional social mores, open up an imaginary space for his contemporaries to envisage a different kind of China" (Xiao 43). The beauty of nature and the beauty of humanity in Xiangxi paradise are the embodiment of the ethical representations of "Peach Blossom Spring."

2.1 The Beauty of Nature

In Shen Congwen's point of view, beauty is omnipresent, "I love all the living things, because I found beauty in all of them." (Shen 178) This kind of beauty includes the beauty of nature, the beauty of humanity and the beauty of life. He further articulates that "everything depicted in the works of writers should be beautiful. Although ugliness does not necessarily mean evil, it couldn't demonstrate the solemnity of life and make people feel happy" (Shen 363).

Border Town is full of natural beauty with resemblance to the beautiful scenery in the *Peach Blossom Spring*. Shen Congwen is extremely good at imaging and describing beautiful sceneries, "in the beginning of the *Border Town*, he introduces a wonderful place named Chadong to us naturally and skillfully. His descriptions unfold like a painting in front of the readers" (Wang 82). The border town, just like a pair of landscape painting, is indeed the beautiful paradise on earth. "Shen Congwen presents us a natural and enchanting world with his fresh, plain and

enthusiastic language: fascinating landscape, traditional dragon boat festival, delicate stilted building, narrow ferryboat which form a fabulous world.” (Qin 146) The beauty of nature in *Border Town* proves that it is an ideal and holy place for people, to live in “*Border Town* is perhaps Shen’s most idyllic work, paced by the rhythms of the seasons, which are measured out by the annual dragon boat races. The story begins in a seemingly timeless bucolic idyll, where people fulfill their appointed tasks, men are brave and chivalrous, houses are all perfectly placed in harmony with their surroundings, and everyone lived quietly and meditatively, and this silence increased their conception of the power of dreams” (Oakes 104).

2.2 The Beauty of Humanity

The descriptions about the beauty of nature in *Border Town* not only make readers feel delighted and comfortable, but also narrate the pure and virtuous people brought up on that land. “Nature is only the background of people. It is the purity and honesty of humanity which truly inspires and touches Shen Congwen” (Wang 208). As an old saying goes: “each place has its own way of supporting its own inhabitants.” Such beautiful natural sceneries will definitely cultivate and mould people’s temperament. Shen Congwen states that he wants to reveal a kind of life style which is beautiful, healthy and natural. We can find that almost everyone in the novel is upright and honest: loving grandfather, pure girl named Cui Cui, capable brothers and so on. The beauty of nature and the beauty of humanity are in perfect harmony and are the ethical pursuits of Shen Congwen.

Grandfather is a diligent and responsible person whose job is to paddle a ferryboat. He takes up this job throughout his life and never complains about its hardness and laboriousness. Above all, he is a loving grandfather who tries his best to raise his beloved granddaughter Cui Cui. He sincerely hopes that Cui Cui can live a happy life; thus he is preoccupied with one important task which is to choose an appropriate husband for Cui Cui until the end of his life. His deep love for Cui Cui is really touching.

Cui Cui is a pure and simple girl nurtured by nature. “She was as innocent and agile as a young animal. She was as gentle as a mountain antelope, never took thought of cruelty or sorrow, and she was never angry. Whenever she saw a stranger on the ferryboat paying attention to her, she gazed back at him with bright eyes, as if she could escape into the hills whenever she liked” (Oakes 105). Besides that, she is also an independent and courageous girl who shoulder the responsibilities after the death of his grandfather. As for love, she firmly seek for her true love with longing and hope.

The two brothers are diligent and capable of doing business from a very young age, and they never look down upon others for their favorable family background. Later, they fall in love with Cui Cui almost at the same time, but they do not turn against with each other. Rather they truly care about each other and try to find a fair way to win the heart of Cui Cui, which clearly demonstrate their love and attachment to each other.

Jonathan Culler says that “In literary studies, theory was first deployed for thinking about the nature of the critical enterprise and for producing new readings of literary works”(Culler 230). In this sense, reinterpreting *Border Town* from the perspective of ethical literary criticism can generate new ethical meanings for us to think over. So Shen Congwen praises the beauty of humanity in *Border Town*. Through the description of the beauty of nature and the beauty of humanity, Shen Congwen successfully introduces readers to a beautiful and harmonious world in which the residents are sincere and honest and the society is steady.

3. The Ethical Enlightenments of “Peach Blossom Spring”

“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...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 9).

The dream of *Peach Blossom Spring* has always been the eternal pursuit for Chinese writers of almost all generations for thousands of years. With the development of society and passing of time, the “Peach Blossom Spring” has new connotations which still greatly inspire and enlighten people in the current society. Specially, the ethical enlightenments of “Peach Blossom Spring” mainly include two aspects: ecological enlightenment and cultural enlightenment.

Peach Blossom Spring and *Border Town* demonstrate the beauty of nature to the readers. The natural environment portrayed by Tao Yuanming and Shen Congwen is not ruined by wars, not polluted by the development of industries and not overexploited by commerce and trade. Everything is plain and natural, “Human and nature are in perfect harmony with each other. Man doesn’t destruct nature, nature also doesn’t punish human” (Gao 80). The harmonious relationship between human and nature is of vital importance for the development of our society. The main reason for the current global environmental crisis is that the relationship between man and nature is not handled appropriately. Environmental issues are

closely related to everyone in the world, and the worsening of environment greatly influences people's life. Besides that "Peach Blossom Spring" enlightens us that we should keep the balance between man and nature and should not demand too much from nature. "Peach Blossom Spring" not only provides ecological enlightenments to people, but also has profound cultural significance. On the one hand, it offers a refuge for people to isolate themselves from the hardship of reality, as Feng Zikai says: "We know the fact that the *Peach Blossom Spring* is illusory and Utopian, but we still like it for it enables us to escape from the reality temporarily." (Feng 179). Meanwhile, "Peach Blossom Spring" has the function of pacifying human's anxiety and sorrow, which in turn will encourage people to face the difficulties and challenges of reality bravely and calmly.

4. Conclusion

"The only end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it" (Johnson 536). Both *Peach Blossom Spring* and *Border Town* give readers a bright outlook in the life. A society that does not include utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the chances at which humanity is always landing and deprives the possibilities of making progress. Zhang Longxi says: "Utopian vision of an ideal society will lead us on, and that with so much experience of failed projects and frustrated expectations, we may just do it better in the future as we build a more open, tolerant, and humane society respectful of individual rights as well as collective interests, a society that will combine the best of the East and the West" (Zhang 19). With the development of modern society, people blindly seek for material gains at all costs which cause many social problems and people's alienation. People lose their own identify and faith in the materialistic society. Therefore, "Peach Blossom Spring" becomes a symbol of the ethical inspiration and it reminds people of sticking to their own value and belief and making unremitting efforts to fulfill the spiritual pursuit.

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Walking through Crisis: Chiang Yee's Wordsworthian Odyssey in *A Silent Traveller in Lakeland*

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Abstract Chiang Yee's journal *A Silent Traveller in Lakeland* shares intent and features with the poetry of William Wordsworth with regard to the theme of solitary walks used to achieve a degree of solace and resolution at a time of personal crisis. The walks are used to unify fragments of thoughts, feelings, visions, sensory experiences and meetings; patterns of such elements moral philosophers have called "texture of being and personal vision." These fragments are parts that form "fables" of the walking subjects; such fable-making, particularly when created on a journey or pilgrimage, can be seen as a moral and ethical endeavour that offers an alternative model to the "rule-obedience" model. Chiang and Wordsworth embark on journeys to help restore a sense of moral value after committing acts of betrayal.

Key words walk; solitude; imagination; crisis; ethics

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Introduction

In the summer of 1936, Chiang Yee travelled to the Lake District in an attempt to restore his peace of mind. Chiang had left China in 1933 to study at UCL and joined SOAS in 1935. After taking a role in China's civil war on behalf of the Northern Expedition, he had left his family and friends behind in the midst of war and on the brink of the Japanese invasion. Though Britain was peaceful, Europe was not and the Spanish Civil War broke out just prior to his departure for the Lake District. The news from Spain and an increasingly tense Europe reminded him of

the situation in China and of his situation as an exile. Chiang refers to this period in his journal, *A Silent Traveller in Lakeland*, as a form of crisis and the trip to the Lake District as an attempt to resolve it.

A Silent Traveller in Lakeland is an interesting hybrid of a book, it is part travel journal, part poetry and partially a book of painting. It is presented as an outsider's view of an extremely familiar landscape, one that has been the subject of native travellers, journals since at least that other poet-traveller, Thomas Gray's tour in 1769. Chiang approaches the Lake District from a Chinese perspective having absorbed much of the writing of the particular landscape through translation and he acknowledges his greatest debt to William Wordsworth, who he has read most extensively, and who he believes is a poet similar in spirit to the great nature poets of China of the Tang and Song Dynasties (circa. 618–1279 CE). It is the Tang poet, Li Bai, he writes of in comparison to Wordsworth, describing how, as a child, he was taken by his father and grandfather to the Poet's Temple twice a year for a memorial ceremony, and how, as an adult and local governor, he then led the ceremony (Chiang 67). He refers also to the Song landscape painter Li Cheng as another cultural perspective (Ibid 37). Chiang shows us throughout the journal that he is not a detached or naive observer, he is imbued with poetry and painting and travels to the Lake District with expectations drawn from both his own perception of landscape through the "mountains and rivers" tradition of Chinese poetry and painting and through the British Romantic literature he has studied (Ibid 3). It is Wordsworth and his poetry that urged the reader to see differently, to see the familiar and the commonplace in an extraordinary way that Chiang utilises in his approach to such a familiar landscape.

Chiang is also drawn to Wordsworth as the poet who not only wrote in and about the Lake District but who walked through it. The mobile perspective and rhythms of the walker is important in his view of the landscape; as much as possible Chiang's tour is a pedestrian one. It is one that not only further binds him to Wordsworth but to many other poets and philosophers in history, not least the poets of the Tang and Song Dynasties whose walks in the mountains lay at the heart of their poems. Chiang himself grows up wandering the paths of the Lu Mountains near his home, and then later many other mountainous parts of China (Ibid 4). It is as a poet and artist walking through the mountains of the Lake District that will make up the narrative of his journal. The context of the walking tour being the civil war in Spain and increasing political tension in Europe, the civil war in China and the impending invasion by the Japanese, and the abandoning of his young family in China.

He begins his journey with thoughts of Wordsworth and ends it at the poet's home and museum at Dove Cottage, completing a circular tour from Wasdale in the south-west, up to Keswick and down to Grasmere in the south-east. Chiang comments on how people travel to Grasmere and visit Dove Cottage as a form of "pilgrimage" to Wordsworth. They visit to see the material remains associated with the poet. This is not how he sees his tour, he is interested in how the landscape stimulated Wordsworth to write his poetry (Ibid 66). However, his walk is a form of pilgrimage in that it is a journey in which he attempts to resolve a major ethical dilemma, the abandoning of his family in China during a time of war. Wordsworth left his pregnant lover, Annette Vallon, in France after the initial struggle of the French Revolution and just before the outbreak of war between Britain and France. He returned to Britain in order to raise money from the publication of his poetry, only to find his way back to France and Annette cut off by war. It is this personal crisis and the wider geo-political disillusionment of the revolution in France that Wordsworth addresses in *The Prelude* (1805). It is evident that both men felt guilt, depression, sleeplessness and a sense of exile in relation to such events. Wordsworth relates in his poem how walking, friendship and poetry brought about a degree of resolution in his own crisis, and it is evident that Chiang is describing a similar path in his Lake District journal.

Given the nature of such events it is possible to assume that neither man was in a position to return to their partners and children; if so, how can they ethically account for, or justify, their safe position beyond the reach of either war? It is the ethical philosophy of Ronald Hepburn and Iris Murdoch that I find interesting on this point, in particular their writing on "texture of being and the nature of personal vision" (Hepburn and Murdoch 39). They argue that a moral or ethical position can be achieved by the conventional model of "moral judgment as the endorsing of principles, commitment to universalisable policies (rule-obedience)" or by another model which is "a moral endeavour as the realising of a pattern of life or the following out of a pilgrimage" (Ibid 14). It is this latter model that I believe is applicable to the two crisis narratives of Wordsworth and Chiang.

Hepburn and Murdoch suggest our morality can be formed out of fables and patterns of our lives rather than by rules, as fable making is an essential part of human life; "It is very much up to a moral agent how he fashions his character by the culture of his imagination, by contemplation of the noble or debased; and the parables, symbols of ideals and the concatenation of these "fables" may clearly play a large part in this" (Ibid 17). They define this notion of a fable more as a "cluster of personal symbols compounded by childhood memory" (Ibid 15) than

as a necessarily coherent narrative. They write further: “One may look upon the “material” of one’s life, one’s dispositions, station in life, intellectual and emotional resources as they are at any moment “given,” rather as an artist regards his canvas and paint or a sculptor his stone” (Ibid 17). The fables they identify are of the moment, often elusive, always under construction. Wordsworth and Chiang’s crisis narratives are self-fashioning fables. Both are journeys of self-discovery, of finding resolution through walking, through realising unity with the objects and processes of nature; both include visionary and transformative moments. An essential part of this fable-making is the walk, or in the context of a personal crisis, the walking cure. Such a theme is integral to much of Wordsworth’s poetry, not just *The Prelude*, and his development of it will affect the way in which Chiang represents his.

Walking and Wordsworth

One of Wordsworth’s near contemporaries who wrote about the solace of solitary walking and how it perfectly enables thought was the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) whose books *The Confessions* (1770) and *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1778), both detailing his walks and how they became the vehicles of his ideas, would have been familiar to Wordsworth. He wrote in *The Confessions*: “I like to walk at my leisure, and halt when I please. The wandering life is what I like. To journey on foot, unhurried, in fine weather, and in fine country, and to have something pleasant to look forward to at my goal, that is of all ways of life the one that suits me best” (Rousseau 167). As Wordsworth was to do as a young man, Rousseau walked across the Alps from France into Italy, “following in Hannibal’s footsteps across the mountains.” He concluded: “This memory has left me the strongest taste for everything associated with it, for mountains especially and for travelling on foot” (Ibid 64).

Rousseau stressed the solitary nature of the walk, a point made by another contemporary of Wordsworth’s, William Hazlitt, in his essay “On Going a Journey” from his collection *Table Talk* (1821). He argued: “One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself” (Hazlitt 136). Hazlitt’s essay on walking is interesting as he comments on how a walk creates what Murdoch later calls a “texture of being” (Hepburn and Murdoch 39). When describing the ever changing context of the walk and the way the imagination shifts, “capriciously,” from one location to another, he writes: “Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the

texture of our own being only piece-meal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places” (Hazlitt 144). The walk transforms the walker: “One idea recalls another, but at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out single threads” (Ibid 145). Both writers consider their own existence on their walks but their thoughts are also full of the books they have read, the paintings they have seen, the music they have listened to, the people they have met; fragments of conversations, of ideas, of images: “single threads drawn from the whole web.”

Wordsworth’s poetry does not only address his own walks, he writes about other walkers and their experiences. The poems from his collection, *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), include a variety of characters who find little but misery and death on the open road and mountain path. In the poem, *The Female Vagrant* (Wordsworth, 1991, 44), Wordsworth suggests the way of the walker does not always lead to enlightenment or happiness; the subject of the poem is educated and articulate but tragedy leaves her without a family and “no earthly friend” (l. 266, 54), she has no destination and lives upon “the mercy of the fields” (l. 253, 53). Destitution, cold and hunger will form part of a person’s “texture of being” but they are unlikely to generate the type of illumination experienced by the more secure and affluent walker who is a pedestrian by choice rather than necessity. Wordsworth further explores the anguish and isolation of people in such desperate situations; for example in *Old Man Travelling* (Ibid 106), the frail old walker appears deep in thought and vigorous for his age, perhaps the experiencing the reveries of the solitary walker, though when questioned he is walking out of necessity to reach the hospital in order to visit his dying son; in *The Old Cumberland Beggar* (Ibid 205), he depicts the loneliness and poverty of a life-long beggar who the narrator urges us not to disregard or despise but to engage with as an act of sympathy and kindness; in the *Song: For a Wandering Jew* (Ibid 178), the open road and beauty of nature do not seem to offer solace or resolution, “Day and night my toils redouble! / Never nearer to my goal, / Night and day, I feel the trouble, / Of the wanderer in my soul.” (l. 17-20, 178); in *Lucy Gray* (Ibid 161) the subject walks out into to the storm, never to return, drawing our attention to the often random, contingent nature of life on the road; and finally in *The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman* (Ibid 108), the old woman is left to die in the wilds by her companions as they cannot carry her without endangering the rest of the group, the Northern Lights crackle over-head and the wolves move in, here the path is the end of life, an open grave. Wordsworth is not naïve in his love of walking and the power it has to heal and

resolve our troubles, the poems of *Lyrical Ballads* amply illustrate the uncertainty, misery and loneliness that life on the open road can cause. For Wordsworth, the hope of any resolution lies in friendship, a sense of place, poetry and imagination, alongside walking. Perhaps John Donne's metaphor of the pair of compasses, from *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* (1611) is apt here, where the fixed foot sits in the centre, "Yet when the other far doth rome, / It leanes, and hearkens after it, / And growes erect, as that comes home" (Donne l. 30–32, 98). Wordsworth did not always live in Grasmere, though when in trouble he did have his sister, Dorothy, and friend, Coleridge, to return to.

The Prelude of 1805 starts at the end of the journey when Wordsworth arrives in Grasmere, after his visionary climax on the summit of Snowdon, and like Milton's Adam and Eve at the conclusion of *Paradise Lost* when they leave the Garden of Eden, "The earth is all before me ... and should the guide I chuse / Be nothing better than a wandering cloud, / I cannot miss my way" (Wordsworth, 1970, Bk. 1, l. 15–19, 1). The "walking cure" for the grief and disillusionment of his experiences in France is behind him though through his time in Grasmere it is evident that the cure is always being sought, it is a continual process, there is no easy conclusion; the conflicts in France continue and Annette Vallon is bringing up their child, Caroline, in France and requires his support.

Chiang already acknowledges the power of the imagination when walking through mountains, with an eye to poetry and art, it is what he could not resist doing when in China, it is what is already forming the "texture" and "threads" of his life. The choice of not returning to China, if such a choice existed under the circumstances, has been made and now what he has is the "fable-making" of his journey in order to find resolution. Having grown weary of the traffic, pollution and crowds of London, an opportunity for fresh air, silence and solitude in the Lake District is too much to resist. He is tired of the repetition and boredom of work and everyday life, like Wordsworth, he sees himself as a "captive ... coming from a house / Of bondage, from yon City's walls set free" (Ibid. l. 6–7). Part of the fable-making is to compare himself with Wordsworth and to draw in his experiences, however, Chiang makes it clear his walk will be from a Chinese perspective as well. He comments that people from China do make a trip to Dove Cottage as a pilgrimage, and so it is apt that, as the etymology of the word "pilgrimage" is the Latin word "peregrinus," meaning "from another country," "foreign," Chiang will be the pilgrim who brings his "texture of being and vision" to bear on the familiarity of the Lake District and transforms it.

What follows are parallel readings of Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and Chiang's

The Silent Traveller in Lakeland, in the light of Hepburn and Murdoch's ideas on ethical vision, drawing out similarities and engaging differences that could further illuminate both texts and experiences.

Anxiety and Exile

Both writers convey the extent to which the geo-political contexts weigh upon them and, in disturbing their sleep and dreams, impinge upon their imagination, in a sense creating the idea of helpless flight. Their conscience will not let them escape in the way they have escaped the city.

When Wordsworth was in France after the revolution and the proclamation of the republic, the September Massacres, slaughter at the Tuileries and just before the onset of "The Terror" he sensed how things were going wrong and writes how he could not sleep well in his Parisian hotel, he quotes Macbeth ("Sleep no more.") and writes that "at the best it seemed a place of fear, / Unfit for the repose of night, / Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam" (Wordsworth, 1970, Bk. 10, l. 80-82, 179). When he returns to England, leaving Annette and Caroline in the midst of the chaos, his conscience fares no better:

I scarcely had one night of quiet sleep
Such ghastly visions had I of despair
And tyranny, and implements of death,
And long orations which in dreams I pleaded
Before unjust Tribunals, with a voice
Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
Of treachery and desertion in the place
The holiest that I knew of, my own soul. (Ibid. l. 373–380, 187)

As the Committee of Public Safety tried more counter-revolutionaries and the guillotine began to fall with increasingly regularity, Wordsworth's "sense of desertion" intensified, subsuming all other thoughts. Hazlitt had written that "Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them" (Hazlitt 147). This is far from straightforward when, as Wordsworth states, they lie in your "own soul."

When Chiang arrives at the train station in Seascale, he waits in the rain for his lift "as if I were a wounded soldier from the battlefield waiting for the train to return me behind the lines" (10). As he drives into Wasdale, the valley Wordsworth in his *Guide to the Lakes* argues "is more distinguished by sublimity" than any

other part of the country (Wordsworth 36), he imagines that “bombs destroy the beautiful shapes of crags and trees, aeroplanes break into the solitudes. The horrible word “war” blazed itself upon my mind and destroyed every thought” (Chiang 14). At his accommodation in Wasdale, he says “I slept a little, but in a disturbed way, and woke early in some depression” (Ibid 19). The remainder of his journey is punctuated with further reminders of war be they about China or Spain through newspapers or comments from people he meets. When on a bus tour being driven into Wasdale, Chiang sees a Qing Dynasty bell from China in the Gosforth Church and while he is wondering how it got there, the driver tells the passengers that as Wasdale is so wild a murder could remain undetected. Chiang is unimpressed: “The rest of the party laughed amiably at his remark, but I kept silent and again sickened — after all, why should people be thinking of murders and horrors?” (Ibid 32) An earlier remark from the driver about the last war had already made Chiang’s “heart” sick. He cannot bear to look at a newspaper in his Keswick hotel as it has a headline about Spain (Ibid 39); there is an edition of *The Times* he sees with a headline about China, again he cannot bear to read it (Ibid 53). Chiang rails against the general, impersonal forces that start and sustain war but there is no mention of personal betrayal or desertion.

Wordsworth feels at times like an “inner” exile when he returns to Britain from France after the outbreak of war between the two countries, “no better than an alien in the Land” (Wordsworth, 1970, 10, 193, 182). He finds himself exulting in triumph “When Englishmen by thousands were overthrown”(Ibid. 10, 261, 184), by the French, and refuses to pray in church for British victories, and remains like an “uninvited guest” in his own country (Ibid. 272, 184). He sees himself as an outsider, guilty now of treachery as well as desertion. He writes about how he feels “The ravage of this most unnatural strife / In my own heart; there it lay like a weight” (Ibid. 250–1, 184). For Wordsworth the idea of rejecting your homeland, your place of birth and where your being was formed, is unnatural.

This sense of alienation affects Chiang also. He refers to himself throughout as the solitary Chinese traveller who draws surprised looks from people, for example, as he walks up Scafell in his ill-suited shoes, or as he and his Chinese friend row their boat in a Chinese fashion. He refers to Chinese custom and landscape in comparison to British ones at numerous points in the narrative, sustaining what he calls an “unusual presentation of lake scenery, from the point of view of a homesick easterner” (Chiang 3). While crossing Sty Head Pass, he imagines the walkers going in the opposite direction are surprised to see a Chinese man up in the hills (Ibid 27), he even imagines a horse marking him out as a foreigner (Ibid 35).

Wordsworth writes that he found his way out of his crisis through his friendship with Coleridge and his sister, Dorothy, and through the workings of nature and the imagination: “Nature’s self, by human love / Assisted, through the weary labyrinth / Conducted me again to open day” (Wordsworth, 1970, 10, 921–3, 202). His imaginative realization of nature is achieved through friendship but also solitary walking, and then his experiences are “recollected in tranquillity” afterwards. These create what he calls “spots of time.” It is this route, I would argue, that Chiang uses in his own restoration.

The Solitary / Silent Traveller

Wordsworth’s poetry is that that is seen and observed by the solitary walker, when trying to resolve his crisis following his belief in the betrayal of the French Revolution, in *The Prelude*, he writes:

But much was wanting; therefore did I turn
To you, ye pathways and ye lonely roads,
Sought you enriched with everything I prized,
With human kindness and with nature’s joy. (12, 123–126, 221)

He adds further that “the lonely roads / Were schools to me” (12, 163–64, 222). Wordsworth famously walked the hills composing poetry, the iambic rhythm of the poetry well suited to his gait. It was on these walks that he observed the workings of the natural world and its human involvement. Returning later to transform them through his imagination. Hazlitt wrote also about this while on the road at the end of a day’s walking: “I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and atomise them afterwards” (Hazlitt 138).

Chiang opts for the solitary road, the name he chooses for his book, the Silent Traveller, is a reflection of this. The trip to the Lakes follows a disappointing coach tour to North Wales where, kind though his fellow travellers were, they never gave him a moment’s peace as they felt sorry for him being alone in a foreign land. He enjoys the solitary path when he arrives in Wasdale though soon finds that it is disturbed constantly by other hikers and cars, they bring him back to “town” and out of what he glimpses as “that great tranquillity” (Chiang 14). He walks over Sty Head Pass into Borrowdale, alone for the most part: “After a long time my tranquil mind was stirred to the consciousness of cars upon the main road; I started to walk again” (Ibid 29). However, he returns to his accommodation each evening and composes poems and paints landscapes, as he “recollects them in tranquillity.”

Wordsworth's solitary path is part of the resolution of his crisis, what is also essential is the role of friendship. Chiang meets an old friend in Keswick, Mrs Everett, who discusses painting with him, though the surprising addition to the tour is the chance meeting of a fellow individual traveller from China. He embarks on a number of his walks with this new friend, finding that "it was pleasant to have company to walk with after my long silent days in the Lakes" (Ibid 59). He talks to his friend in Chinese which appears to have the effect of lessening his homesickness and sense of alienation. However, the event that seems to transform Chiang's feelings occurs early in the trip while still in Wasdale. This is another element that finds a reference in Wordsworth's writing.

Spots of Time

In Book 11 of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth presents us with one of the great recurring elements of his poetry, the "spots of time."

There are in our existence spots of time,
Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier and more dreadful weight
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired. (Bk. 11, l. 258–265, 213)

The Prelude includes many of Wordsworth's "spots of time" and they feature particularly in the later books as he resolves his crisis, the most impressive being the "spot of time" that becomes the great visionary moment on the summit of Snowden, in North Wales, when he "sees" through the break in the cloud below: "in that breach / Through which the homeless voice of waters rose, / That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged / The Soul, the Imagination of the whole" (13, 62–65, 230). It is this moment that heals, renews and resolves the crisis for Wordsworth:

Hence sovereignty within and peace at will,
Emotion which best foresight need not fear,
Most worthy then of trust when most intense:
Hence cheerfulness in every act of life;

Hence truth in moral judgements and delight:
That fails not in the external universe. (13, 114-19, 232)

This union of the mind and the external world, this visionary process that binds the eye with the object it perceives, that unites the creative imagination with nature, that defamiliarises the familiar, the mundane, the habitual by recreating a sense of wonder; it is this refreshing force that lies at the heart of romantic poetry. It is also the force that transforms Chiang's feelings of despair in his Lake District journey. He too experiences the "spots of time," as he writes in his introduction: "So happy was that stretch of time that, even now, I often drive back my imagination to the weeks I spent there ... and rewrite some of the verses I roughly composed there, and make sketches from the scenes stored up in my mind. ... I think of those places in retrospect with a certain gilding of romanticism" (Chiang 3). This sounds like he is heavily indebted to Wordsworth, though Chiang does stress the Chinese nature of his vision, and it should be remembered that all of his poems and paintings of the Lake District are in a Chinese style, immediately creating an extraordinary difference to the native poetry and painting of the area. When in Wasdale Chiang comments on the way his culture affects how he sees:

"A Chinese phrase, *ling-lueh*" is a good one for expressing one's reaction if one is trying to analyse one's enjoyment of Nature. "Ling" mean "to perceive or to receive an impression" and "lueh" means "a sketch." These two words put together have the arbitrary meaning "to accept into the understanding," though it is difficult for me to find an exact English equivalent." (Ibid 26)

Chiang presents a number of these "*ling-lueh*" moments; while in his lodgings in Keswick he tries to recollect the details of Derwent Water: "Artists can never hope to paint the real Nature, but only one aspect of Nature reflected in their own eyes. Our Chinese artist tries to paint the Nature in his mind, not the Nature in Nature" (Ibid 45). The impression comes to him as the evening draws on and he paints the Lake. However, the most important "*ling-lueh*" or "spot of time" occurs at the beginning of his tour while he was still in Wasdale, and it is this that ensures the rest of the journey is not marked solely by depression.

He embarks on a walk up Scafell with a stranger though soon decides he wants to be alone and lets the other man walk on, he sits down on the brow of a hill and looks down through the rain clouds to the lake of Wastwater:

“The splendid scene filled me with joy! Before the rain began I had not really noted the differences of colour in sky and mountains, but now I sat to contemplate the immensity of Nature covered by these masses of grey and white particles ... My breath came with difficulty, my eyes were dazzled and my body grew stiff in amazement at the startling power of this mighty manifestation of Nature ... Within a few minutes the scene was transformed into something almost more wonderful than one can imagine ... For the instant I realised myself and my whole existence as a human being to be an infinitesimal part of this mighty Nature.” (Ibid 21–22)

This is Chiang’s great visionary moment when his imagination transforms a common scene into something of wonder; he responds physically to what he sees and how his imagination works or tries to and he recognises his own insignificant self in unity with the rest of the natural world. He does not mind the rain that is soaking him and will continue to do so for the rest of his trip, it is only natural, this is his world. His worries and anxiety will return but not overwhelm him. When he walks over to Borrowdale the following day, he writes: “My mind was quieter now than it had been at all, because I felt myself facing another world where there was no fear and no worry” (Ibid 26). He has passed through a transformative visionary moment, the tone of the narrative changes, he meets and befriends a Chinese traveller and even oversleeps in his hotel. He adds: “Now everything in the past has passed already, and what is to come I cannot foresee. But nature has never changed to me in moving from place to place; she differs only according to my changing states of mind” (Ibid 45). His guilt and depression concerned him throughout the trip but only when stationary or when someone interrupted his reveries.

Conclusion

For Wordsworth, the poem that follows chronologically from the early section of the first book of *The Prelude* is *Home at Grasmere*, and though Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth and not Grasmere, this move to Dove Cottage is a return to the region of his birth and upbringing. Wordsworth’s journey has been a circuitous one and the point that was made above about a sense of place and belonging, alongside the need to keep walking, finds its essence here in Grasmere. One need only read Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Grasmere Journal* to recognise this, where entry after entry includes the clause “we walked ...” along with all they read and all the people they met, chief among whom is, of course, Coleridge. Wordsworth’s poem about their home describes how

Something that makes this Spot,
 This small abiding-place of many men,
 A termination, and a last retreat,
 A Centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
 A Whole without dependence or defect,
 Made for itself, and happy in itself,
 Perfect Contentment, Unity entire. (Wordsworth, 1984, l. 164–170, 178)

It would appear that Wordsworth has found happiness through his “walking cure” though it was only temporary. Life carried on with health and money worries, and the inconsolable grief at the death of his children. His cure is a process, not an end.

The journey is to a degree circuitous for Chiang too and he finishes where he originally set off, with Wordsworth. The final part of his narrative consists of his trip, or pilgrimage, to Dove Cottage in Grasmere. It is a disappointment for Chiang as he mixes with the crowd of tourists also visiting Dove Cottage; the magic is not there in the objects associated with Wordsworth, he is distracted by the crowds he was looking to escape. For him the traces of Wordsworth that really matter are in the hills around: “What interested me most were the surroundings which stimulated the poet to compose his poems and convey his ingenious thought” (Chiang 66). He records how regularly he is brought back to the chaos of urban living by other hikers, cars and tourists, and most directly by newspapers or talk of war. In spite of this, Chiang appears to find solace, however temporary, in his imaginative reveries in these surroundings. There is no “home” for him, he would remain an exile from his homeland. However, the “silent traveller” had only just begun with this journal of his Lakeland journey, many other “Silent Traveller” volumes were to follow; the visionary walk was a process for him too.

Both writers choose a series of walks or journeys to unify the chaos of their feelings, thoughts, visions and sensory perceptions, to provide a degree of coherence, of imaginative unity, the realisation of a way of seeing and creating. Both embark on what Hepburn and Murdoch refer to as “the moral endeavour as the realising of a pattern of life or the following out of a pilgrimage” (Hepburn and Murdoch 14). They use the journey to represent what makes up the self-fashioned “texture” and “vision” of their moral being. They follow a similar path but see across time and space differently. As Murdoch writes: “We differ not only because we select different objects out of the same world but because we see different worlds” (Ibid 41).

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Caverns of the Mind: Exploring the Relationship between Science, Aesthetics and Ethics in Eighteenth-Century Representations of the Underground

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Abstract Throughout the eighteenth century cave science and aesthetics developed in association with each other. Scientific writing was delivered in a subjective narrative, understanding the scientific details of the cave environment and the dynamic interrelations of the elements within it intensified aesthetic responses and entering the cave environment in order to explore it meant an engaged, rather than disinterested, aesthetic. The foundations of environmental ethics, nature perceived on its own terms, can be traced from James Hutton's geological theories of earth processes and deep time further removing humanity from the centre of natural processes and William Wordsworth's radical use of ordinary language in poetry to imaginatively explore the place of common humanity within nature. It is through the many scientific and imaginative responses to subterranean cave space that such traces can be identified.

Key words caves; geology; aesthetics; poetry; ethics

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Introduction

This paper explores the relationship between cave and karst science and poetry engaged with the underground environment and how the two of them merge

to present a subterranean aesthetic that goes some way to defining cave space. Caves as they are a part of the natural environment that remains largely unseen, unvisited and unexplored. This paper also intends to explore to articulate an ethical understanding of the environment that incorporates appreciating nature on its own terms as well as through our experience, our understanding of cave science and our imagination.

The guiding principle behind this view of merging perceptions of the underground is that provided by geographer, Doreen Massey, through her three propositions about the definition of space as a location of change, of continuous and varied processes; firstly, as a process of interrelations between people and their ideas; secondly, as a process encompassing a variety of distinct trajectories, a range of theories, descriptions and representations; thirdly, as a process that is continually under construction, as once prevailing definitions are absorbed or superseded by others (Massey 9). By approaching the development of ideas concerning cave space by way of Massey's propositions, we can assess the variety of explorations during this period as well as the ideas already established. Massey's cultural approach through the concept of process is one that suits the physical, material essence of a cave as well. A cave is, put simply, a space or a gap in solid rock that is formed through erosion and solution that is then subject to the process of resealing through collapse, deposition of sediments and permeation, and further processes of erosion and deposition throughout geological time. A cave is always in the process of gaining and losing existence, the human visitor enters in the relatively brief period of access in the space between rocks and sediment, or between rocks and water. Even within the human experience of time the cave can change through the common occurrences of flooding or catastrophic collapse. Cave space is a wild space, a space that may be visited but always left; approachable, perhaps, but always inhospitable, potentially hostile. The culture and nature of a cave is that of process, of change. A cave is at once a product of the imagination and culture as well as an environment that exists within the bounds of natural forces.

The present writer's interest is in the period when the Enlightenment and the rise of science coincide with the Romantic imagination; when a relatively static, and occasionally catastrophic, Biblical view of the earth's geomorphology is transformed into a dynamic process, when the earth's deep time breaks free from the Biblical clock, when poets urged readers to use their imagination to look beyond the familiar, the habitual and the mundane to see the wonder of the human place within nature, when they pressed us to reject hierarchies and look again at the simple, the overlooked. These are the various trajectories. The work of the

geologist, James Hutton, and the poet, William Wordsworth are two of the essential interrelations. They ensure our perception and understanding of natural phenomena and spaces generates a scientific, aesthetic and ethical way of perceiving the cave environment on its own terms.

Changing Perceptions of the Underworld

The classical and Christian ideas of the underground being the underworld location of Hades, Tartarus, or Hell had been largely dismissed by the end of the seventeenth century, though this did not stop cave visitors and writers from making use of the descent narratives of Virgil, Ovid or Dante; as Henri Lefebvre argued, there was a difference between representational space, where the underworld was Hades, and representations of space, where Hades is a myth that enables us to perceive and understand our fear of the underground (Lefebvre 33). Milton's hell in *Paradise Lost* is an off-world cosmic geode, whereas Tobias Swinden, in his *An Enquiry into the Nature and Place of Hell* (1727), locates it in the Sun, the sun-spots being the portals into an eternity of hell-fire. Possibly the key text at this time (1691) was Thomas Burnet's *A Sacred Theory of the Earth* which had the underworld as the storage place for the waters of the Biblical Deluge, the once smooth surface of the earth, he argued, was broken up prior to the flood and the waters released. When they subsided, they left mountains and caves in their wake. The caves being the conduits for the retreating waters. Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* was one of several grand theories of the earth, such as those proposed by William Whiston (1695) and John Woodward (1696), which relied on the first book of Genesis and the catastrophe of the deluge for inspiration. Of these theories it was Burnet's that endured throughout the eighteenth century. The basic premise of all these theories was that the mountains and caves that remained after the flood were the ruins of a previous world. The earth was young at an estimated 6,000 years and was not subject to erosion. It was not created in order to be worn down; though rivers clearly carried sediment to the sea, this was to create fertile deltas for human cultivation. The earth, according to Biblical authority, would not change until the great conflagration brought about its destruction. It existed in a fixed, steady ruinous state. The geologist and early cave explorer John Whitehurst wrote in 1778: "The mountains in Derbyshire appear to be so many heaps of ruins, the strata lie in the utmost confusion and disorder. They are broken, dislocated and thrown into every possible direction, and their interior parts are no less rude and romantic, for they universally abound with subterraneous caverns; and, in short, with every possible mark of violence" (Whitehurst 51).

Most of the descent narratives of the eighteenth century refer at some point to Burnet: Charles Leigh, Daniel Defoe, George Berkeley, Alexander Catcott, John Hutton and even Samuel Taylor Coleridge who praises his poetic prose style in his *Biographia Literaria*. However, in 1830, geologist Charles Lyell had this to say about Burnet and the other catastrophists: “Never did a theoretical fallacy, in any branch of science, interfere more seriously with the accurate observation and systemic classification of facts” (Lyell, 29). Burnet’s grand theory approach to natural science distorted all the subsequent research and fieldwork, as geologists and geographers tried to account for all their empirical observations by way of the Biblical flood. As far as cave and karst science in particular was concerned, no real development of our knowledge of cave or speleothem formation could take place without an understanding of limestone solution, and this did not occur until later in the nineteenth century (Shaw iv). However, cave passages had clearly formed in all shapes and sizes — and were still forming all over the world. Cave science, and geology generally, had been overlooked in the initial development of science as it was difficult to apply the newly engineered telescopes and microscopes to such study. The study of caves was not easily transferred to the laboratory, neither was it initially a study that leant itself to classification, it was a science that had to develop in the field, in an often challenging and hostile one. John Playfair, the colleague of James Hutton, wrote of geology: “no research is more arduous than this; none certainly where the subject is so complex; where appearances are so extremely diversified, or so widely scattered, and where the causes that have operated are so remote from the spheres of ordinary observation” (Playfair 2). Geology and cave science needed fieldworkers and it was during the eighteenth century that travel, accommodation and time became sufficiently good enough to produce them. Many of the early travellers and explorers wrote up their adventures in journals, diaries or letters to the Royal Society, published in its *Philosophical Transactions*. The Royal Society having devoted many of its early editions of *Philosophical Transactions* to encouraging and instructing travellers how to record accurate measurements and observations on their journeys and, importantly, to share them through publication.

Scientific Configurations and Representations

Descent narratives start to appear regularly in the scientific press towards the end of the seventeenth century. John Beaumont’s lonely descent into Lambs Lear Hole in the Mendip Hills in 1680 is a good early example, he descends where the miners refuse to follow though his description is almost entirely made up of estimated measurements. He records nothing of what the cave was like, or what

he experienced down there. This configuration of the dark, ill-illuminated space is also apparent in Robert Southwell's 1680 account of Captain Sturmy's descent of Pen Park Hole in Gloucestershire in 1669. Sturmy measures his way down the shaft in fathoms, he measures the passages below and the breadth and depth of the subterranean river running through the lower passages. It is here that he undertakes an experiment; it has been said that the cave is connected to the nearby River Severn and that the subterranean river, with high water marks of mud and debris on the cave walls, ebbs and flows along with the tidal rhythms of it. Sturmy descends the hole and waits to observe the ebb and flow in accordance with the tide tables of the Severn estuary: the tide comes and goes with no effect on the subterranean river. This may appear a minor observation though it is a first step in understanding the hydrology of limestone caves. The old underworld interferes with Sturmy's exploration: the miner who accompanies him exits a high passage claiming he has seen an evil spirit there, Sturmy dismisses this as superstitious though leaves with the disturbed miner. Four days later, Sturmy suffers a head-ache, then fever and finally death. Agricola, in the sixteenth century, said demons in caves and mines should be propitiated with fasting and prayer, by the end of the seventeenth century it was with the power of mathematics (Agricola 217). Captain Collins and his team descend the hole in 1682 to further explore the cave and this time they measure every passage they can access in yards; there is no demon down there, and to seal its fate, to disenchant the cave, they produce what is thought to be the first survey of a natural cave in Britain (Southwell 3).

The accumulation of measurements and observations began to change the way the earth was understood. Patterns and associations in beds of rock were recognised, the rock record was established, cave explorers observed incontrovertible signs of erosion, transport and deposition of sediments. John Whitehurst devoted much of his time to exploring the mines and caves of Derbyshire and measuring the proportions and angles of the strata he found there and drew up cross-sections of them. Alexander Catcott observed that streams in relatively small cave passages flowed into much larger chambers that they could not possibly have formed – recognising that other passages must be responsible but are now concealed by debris. He observed that many limestone caves were filled with large sandstone cobbles that must have been eroded from over lying beds and transported into the caves. John Hutton began to understand limestone hydrology by speaking to farmers in Yorkshire and learned where and how subterranean streams sank and rose in Horton and Bransgill Becks, and in Chapel-le-dale. Experimental natural philosopher, Adam Walker wrote how pouring acid onto limestone caused

a chemical reaction, “the effervescence was excessive strong,” and he made an early suggestion as to the formation of speleothems, arguing that the rain soaked through the overlying earth and oozed through cracks in the limestone “imbibing or dissolving fine particles in their descent” leaving the “stony particle” in place as the water enters the cave.

The initial explorers satisfied their curiosity of the underground by limiting their experience and study to the already established “show caves,” for example, Wookey Hole in Somerset, the three caves that were a part of the tour of Derbyshire, “The Wonders of the Peak:” Peak Cavern, Poole’s Cavern and Eldon Hole, Yordas Cave and Weathercote Cave in Yorkshire and, in Scotland, Fingal’s Cave on the Isle of Staffa. As these became commonplace, other caves were found by miners and farmers who recognised the growing interest in visiting them. Experiences started to go beyond the safety and easily accessible boundaries of the show caves, and writing began to reflect this.

Aesthetic Perceptions

These early accounts record little of the nature of the cave space other than its estimated, non-standardised measurements. The measuring and configuring of caves provided a limited understanding of them, such measurements could easily have been applied to another of the “Wonders of the Peak,” Chatsworth House, for example. How could these early explorers really convey the irregularity of cave space with a few measurements? How could they estimate measurement in the darkness, in deep water, in what stretched away into the unknown? During the early years of the eighteenth century this was beginning to change, cave explorers started to describe what they saw and felt, as many of them were writing for both fellow scientists and, increasingly, the tourist and traveller. The accounts they recorded are situation dependent, the correspondent is fully involved with the experience; though observations and detailed measurements are included they are done so as part of subjective narratives. The experience presents a verbal narrative based on the actions of the correspondent rather than a nominal one based on the information. The more objective, nominal non-narrative account of cave exploration and science would start to appear a century later. For now the style and structure of fiction and non-fiction overlapped. The challenging and often alien nature of the subterranean environment would continue to be perceived as unique by eighteenth century scientists and travellers, who would struggle to detach their experience from the observations and measurements they were making. The lines of cave dimensions, the gradients and contours, vanished by candlelight as they attempted to orientate

themselves.

A renewal of interest in theories of the sublime during the eighteenth century, expressed by Shaftesbury, Addison and Burke, among others, started to merge with the scientific configuration of cave space to provide a more engaging representation.

Edmund Burke developed the notion of the sublime aesthetic (1757), which started to find its way into the writings of the cave explorers. Superficially, it provided a suitable discourse to account for the experience of the underground environment. Burke argued that “the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature ... is astonishment. (...) In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it” (Burke 101). Burke makes a distinction between reason and the imagination and in these moments of sublimity, both fail. For Burke, aspects of the sublime include terror, obscurity, privation (vacuity, solitude, silence, darkness), vastness, infinity, sound and loudness, all of which could be found in the cave environment. However, the drawback for cave exploration from Burke’s theory is that he states such an aesthetic appreciation can only come from a position of disinterestedness or detachment. This is understandable when looking at a painting, reading a book or gazing at a mountain or waterfall from a safe distance but much harder for a cave explorer who, in order to see the sublime underground, must actually be in it; to have any grasp of such challenging three-dimensional space, the observer has to be in it, to pass through it, to feel it.

It would appear from a number of writers who recorded their explorations underground that they had read Burke and he gave them the vocabulary and discourse they needed to express their experience. Richard Sullivan wrote of his visit to Wookey Hole in 1780; “Here indeed we might say, that we experienced the whole effect of the sublime and the beautiful.” In Peak Cavern he writes that it had “the appearance of another world, as to form a perspective which the imagination quickly paints to have no end.” John Hutton in the introduction to his *A Tour of the Caves* in 1778, wrote: “Some may be as much entertained with the profound, as others with the lofty; and some may be as much amused with the sublime, as others with the beautiful.” The experimental scientist, Adam Walker, describes his descent into Weathercote Cave: “To a mind capable of being impressed with the grand and sublime of nature, this is a scene that inspires pleasure chastised by astonishment!” While descending into the cave, the 70 yard high waterfall falls close by in a confined space and “confounds and astonishes the most intrepid ear.” How detached is Walker at this point? A sense of danger can add to the sublimity of the

perception, as Walker states: “Personal safety also insinuates itself into the various feelings, where both the eye and the ear are so tremendously assailed.” Sullivan in *Speedwell Caverns* relates how his curiosity “had warped his rational faculties” and that “danger had become familiar to us.” George Catcott’s account of his descent of Penpark Hole in 1779 describes the awesome views down into “yawning caverns,” “dreadful precipices” and “deep water” that are heightened and intensified by a “few faint glimmering rays of light” than if they were obscured by total darkness. Fragments of vision, objects partly obscured, are perceived to have a greater degree of sublimity.

The subterranean space demanded more than a spectator, it demanded a participator and we can see from these early accounts that the travellers did become so. John Lloyd was among the first people to descend Eldon Hole in Derbyshire, lowered down the huge shaft by eight local men: “For the first twenty yards I was let down, I could assist myself with my hands and feet . . . thence down, the breadth was about three yards, and the length at least five or six, through craggy irregular slits in the rock, which was rather dirty, and covered with a kind of moss, and pretty wet.” When he is hauled back up the shaft he cannot easily communicate with the men above who pull him up as quickly as they can: “The rope was drawn into clefts betwixt the fragments of the rock, which made it stick; and my body jarred against the sides, and the rope loosened the stones above my head, whose fall I every instant dreaded.” Adam Walker describes his descent into Weathercote Cave in Chapel-le-dale, Yorkshire, beyond the point of the usual show cave spectator: “On one side you may descend, by crawling from one broken stratum of rock to another . . . and creep many yards horizontally . . . and descend from ledge to ledge in a retrograde motion, through arches of prodigious rocks.” Richard Sullivan in his trip down into *Speedwell Cavern* with local miners also fully engages with the environment: “we forced our way with infinite struggles, through narrow space, between two rocks, and thence getting on our hands and knees, were, for the full distance of a mile, obliged to crawl without ever daring to lift up our heads, the passage being too low. Filled with mud, dirt and a multitude of bits of rocks, our progress was painful indeed.” Later they reach the underground river in the system and “plunged into the river above our waists, we cautiously picked our steps.” Sullivan catches his knee on a rock and exits the cave with great difficulty: “It now became scarce bearable; out however I was to crawl, and that too upon this tortured limb. The retreat accordingly began; but no anguish could surpass the excess of torment I was in.” These descriptions are interwoven with the measurements they record and the observations they make, both scientific and aesthetic. What

they describe is how they felt as their body passed through the subterranean environment.

These descriptions of the cave sublime and actual process of passage within them, take us into what the philosopher, Arnold Berleant, calls the aesthetics of engagement. His reading of Burke's and Kant's notion of the disinterested sublime, which releases the spectator from any distraction from their sense or reason and therefore allows them to appreciate the object or representation, creates a problem with appreciating the natural environment. As the writers above show, they are hardly disinterested in the space they describe as sublime. Berleant writes: "The boundlessness of the natural world does not just surround us; it assimilates us" (Berleant 82). The cave explorers experience the damp, cold and physical contact and pain, when they touch the rock, it touches them. Possibly more than any environment in nature the cave space demands engagement. Berleant argues that such engagement encourages a degree of unity with nature: "the perceived sense of continuity of our human being with the dynamic forms and processes of the natural world is a central factor in the aesthetic appreciation of nature, and it accounts for a touch of the sublime in the feeling of awe that accompanies the occasion" (Ibid 86). This is, perhaps, an attitude that would elude the casual traveller who remained at a distance from the sublime in nature.

These early cave travellers were confronting the unknown and increasingly willing to go way beyond the familiar and safe boundaries, John Hutton wrote about Ingleborough in 1778: "Indeed the whole limestone base of this monster of nature is perforated and excavated in all directions like a honeycomb." Hutton's thinking is now driven as much by what he cannot see, as by what he can. It is not just cave science but imagination too, that is urging them on. To Hutton and his contemporaries, caves were no longer the ruinous legacy of God's wrath, they were now the glorious labyrinths of awe and mystery and a space for empirical understanding.

This empirical, scientific understanding is a knowledge that, according to Allen Carlson, can work to intensify the aesthetic experience of the sublime. Carlson writes that all objects of aesthetic appreciation require some degree of knowledge for the spectator to fully appreciate them. Art, literature and music has form and exist within boundaries and it is knowledge of form within these boundaries that enables the spectator to appreciate and judge the work. As we have seen with all environments, though particularly the cave environment, they have indeterminate form and have no boundaries, however, we can have knowledge of an environment, of its various parts and their dynamic interrelations, and this

scientific knowledge provides us with the necessary focus. Carlson argues that, “knowledge and intelligence transform raw experience by making it determinate, harmonious and meaningful” (Carlson 71). Carlson, along with Berleant, add aspects of aesthetic appreciation to the way in which early cave explorers experienced their environment. Though eighteenth century writers on aesthetics, especially on the sublime, did not articulate such approaches, it is evident that the explorers experienced them and recorded them.

Changing Perceptions in Science

Though Burnet’s interpretation of the Genesis story appeared to be the prevailing earth narrative, it was not the only one. The philosopher David Hume rejected the catastrophists’ theory and presented a gradual approach to change in accounting for the form of the earth. In his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, first written in 1751, though published after his death in 1779, he wrote that evidence can be traced across the globe that much of the surface has been beneath the sea for ages and has undergone great transformations: “matter is susceptible of many and great revolutions, through the endless periods of eternal duration” (Hulme 50). Within the constant changes existed an order that maintained the endless cycle of denudation and renovation. Hume’s theory of the “eternal duration” of the earth was one proposed by Aristotle and Heraclitus, though rejected by the Christian church. It was a position also strongly argued by George Toulmin in *The Antiquity and Duration of the World* (1780) and strongly rejected by the Rev. Ralph Sneyd who argued that radicals like Toulmin should be locked up in “an hospital, under the regulation of men of distinguished piety and learning, where by proper discipline, a lowering diet, and a well-directed course of study, rigorously enforced on all notorious delinquents for a certain time, much mischief might be prevented” (Sneyd 5).

Both the Biblical 4004 BC age of the earth and the “eternal duration” theory were questioned by natural philosophers whose observations suggested limited time but of greater length than the Bible readings. Edmund Halley’s 1713 research into the sea’s salinity suggested a time much greater than 6,000 years, though he could not specify how much. In 1770, Canonico Recupero’s research into the layers of lava from Mount Etna discovered in a well dug at the foot of the volcano, suggested at least 14,000 years. Recupero is embarrassed by his discovery as he tells the British traveller Patrick Brydone: “Moses hangs like a dead weight upon him, and blunts all his zeal for inquiry; for that really he has not the conscience to make his mountain so young, as that prophet makes the world” (Brydone 70).

Around the time John Hutton was writing about his experiences and proposing theories of cave formation, his namesake, James Hutton, was presenting his ideas outlined in his *Theory of the Earth*. Published shortly after the French Revolution in 1795 but researched for decades, it suggested that mountains, caves and the wider landscape as we see them now were formed by erosion, transportation and deposition of sediment and recycled as heat from within the earth generated mountain building over a vastly longer period of time than 6,000 years. He argued that the “the operations of nature are equable and steady” (Hutton, 1788, 10). What we see gradually occurring in caves and the wider landscape in the present is the key to understanding the processes that took place in the past. To observe the erosion of underground streams and the deposition of sediment, to observe the uplift of the earth during earthquakes, is to observe processes that have occurred for what Hutton called an “indefinite” period of time. Unlike the natural philosophers who believed in the eternal duration of the earth, such as Toulmin, Hutton did not give a time for these processes, famously writing that: “The result, therefore, of our present enquiry is, that we find no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end” (Ibid 80). He argued that if you do not know the cause of a phenomena, mark it as unknown until you do.

Hutton’s colleague, John Playfair, rejected Burnet’s theory and all of those that attempted to explain the origin of the earth and championed Hutton’s approach: “if it is settled, that a theory of the earth ought to have no other aim but to discover the laws that regulate the changes on the surface, or in the interior of the globe, the subject is brought within the sphere either of observation or analogy” (Playfair 511). This notion of observing the complex, dynamic interrelations and processes of the natural world we exist in and using this to interpret the rock record of the past, what has since been called “uniformitarianism,” is a revolutionary idea, and radically transforms the way we see the earth and our place in natural processes; they show us how we exist in cyclical processes not in a linear progression. Nothing in nature can be too small or insignificant anymore, it is here, perhaps, we can begin to see the first glimpses of ecological unity.

Releasing the constraints of time is equally transformative, it takes our understanding away from the anthropocentric boundaries of scripture into deep geological time. We begin to see the earth and its dynamic processes more on its own terms, rather than ours. This is intensified, as has been shown by the early pioneers of cave science, through an aesthetic engagement with the environment while attempting to understand the processes that form it. Geologist and philosopher, Robert Frodeman, has written of this: “geologic seeing is poetic

vision constrained by the sobriety of science, a series of daring imaginative leaps disciplined by examination and measurement. Geology is a type of walking meditation” (Frodeman 115). He adds further about the effect of geologic time: “walking the earth and thinking in terms of deep time profoundly affects the way one experiences the world” (Ibid 123).

Changing Perceptions in Poetry

While these revolutionary concepts were being fought over there appeared, in 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge’s collection, *Lyrical Ballads*, which, along with the *Preface*, was equally revolutionary and, alongside Hutton’s theories of deep time and earth processes, further change the way we see the earth. In the *Preface* Wordsworth argued for poetic content to be drawn from simple common life and for the poetic diction to be closer to the language of common speech. His poems addressed people, places and objects that were overlooked, unseen, and imbued them with significance, such as a thorn bush, yew tree or piles of stones. Wordsworth urged his readers to “see into the life of things” (*Tintern Abbey* l. 49). Shelley also encouraged such a way of seeing in his *Defence of Poetry* (1821), where he argues that poetry should “create a new universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration” (Shelley, 2012 52). The poets directed our gaze back to the familiar, the mundane and the habitual in order to see them afresh, as something startling, unfamiliar.

Wordsworth would have read John Hutton’s *Tour to the Caves* as it was added to the appendix of Thomas West’s second edition of *A Guide to the Lakes* (1780), a book he was familiar with. Mountain as well as cave measurements were on his mind in his poem, *Written with a Slate pencil on a Stone, on the side of the Mountain of Black Comb* (1813), Wordsworth presents the “geographic Labourer” surveying with his books, map and instruments who, when darkness falls, is left “blinded” with “unclosed eyes” unable to imagine the mountain he is sat upon. When distracted with measurements, perhaps, we eventually lose sight of what we are actually measuring. He is illuminating on this point when he describes his visit to Yordas Cave, described by Hutton, in Book VIII of *The Prelude* (1805): “He looks and sees the Cavern spread and grow, / Widening itself on all sides, sees, or thinks / He sees, erelong, the roof above his head, / Which instantly unsettles and recedes / Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all / Commingled, making up a canopy / Of shapes and forms and tendencies to shape, / That shift and vanish, change and interchange / Like spectres, ferment quiet and sublime” (l. 715 – 23). Wordsworth presents the struggle with what can be seen and measured in a cave.

What do you measure as your candle flickers in the darkness? For Wordsworth this experience in Yordas Cave is the spark for his imagination, this play of light and shadow in the wildly irregular shape and form of a cave liberates him in to seeing it afresh. The measurements and cave surveys produced by the cave explorers were guides to those who followed but they were not the territory. Poets fired the imagination to look beyond the measured, the very thing travellers like Hutton, Walker and Sullivan were doing. In his poem, *Kubla Khan* (1797), Coleridge presented us with the now famous description of “caverns measureless to man; in *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), Shelley refers to the “bottomless void,” “unfathomed wells,” and “the deep air’s unmeasured wilderness.” This is imagination is shared with Hutton when he ponders the labyrinthine “honey-comb” beneath the slopes of Ingleborough in Yorkshire. Here the visible and the invisible coexist, the cave explorer constantly moves into the invisible, engaged with its dimensions. Hutton describes a moment in Catknot Cave when he stands on the brink and holds back: “Perhaps if we had mustered humility and fortitude enough, to have crouched and crawled a little, we might have come to where the roof again would have been as high as we should have desired” (Hutton, 1970 40). What lies beyond in the dark unknown is always tantalisingly close.

Wordsworth presents us with another “trajectory” of cave space as process, for him it is the source of the imagination, in Book XIII of *The Prelude* he writes: “We have traced the stream / From darkness, and the very place of birth / In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard / The sound of waters; followed it to light / And open day, accompanied its course / Among the ways of nature, afterwards / Lost sight of it bewildered and engulfed, / Then given it greeting, as it rose once more / With strength, reflecting in its solemn breast / The works of man and face of human life” (l. 172–81). The stream leaves the “blind cavern” only to vanish into caverns downstream and then reappear, repeatedly. In his sonnet on Weathercote Cave (*Suggested by Mr Westall’s Views of the Caves*, 1819), also in Hutton’s guide, Wordsworth writes of the profusion of life at the spring, or resurgence, of the subterranean river: “Pure element of waters! Whereso’er / Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts, / Green herbs, bright flowers and berry-bearing plants, / Rise into life and in thy train appear.” It is a process shared also by Coleridge in *Kubla Khan*, where “Alph, the sacred river, ran / Through caverns measureless to man / Down to a sunless sea.” As it flowed through the “measureless caverns” it briefly reappeared as a spring before it “sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean.” Shelley too has the River Arve, in his poem *Mont Blanc* (1817), burst out from beneath the glacier and flow back through caves, on its way down the Chamonix valley; “Where

Power in likeness of the Arve comes down / From the ice gulphs that gird his secret throne, / Bursting through these dark mountains like a flame / Of lightning thro' the tempest" (l.16–19). Though this appears as anthropomorphism, or an associationist aesthetic, such imaginative moments are bound to re-visioning real subterranean environments and though the initial value of the cave is evoked through its association with the human imagination, it does begin to free the underground from hundreds of years of cultural oblivion. Re-imagining the underground and making it once more a human environment rather than the realm of gods, site of death and darkened torments, and, at the same time, a wild, fascinating and ultimately unknowable environment that one yearns to explore is the key achievement here.

Ethical Perceptions

The aesthetic of the sublime and the beautiful that was developed through the eighteenth century had another element as well that appeared to fall between them, the picturesque: a scene with beauty, ruggedness and irregularity. Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* was instrumental in furthering the fashion for the picturesque view of the landscape with his itemising of the preferred "stations" in the Lake District from which to look upon the view through a Claude Glass. Though the traveller is being encouraged to look at the natural environment it is in a fragmented manner; not as an integrated whole but as a careful selected fraction. In a sense, it was like the classification processes of science which looked to identify ever more isolated segments of nature, a process Wordsworth had commented on in *The Tables Turned*: "We murder to dissect," when in fact we should engage with the world around us with a heart that "watches and receives" (Saito 142). In both cases there was, what Yuriko Saito argues, a failure to see nature on its own terms. It is this attempt to see nature on its own terms that leads us to an ethical perspective of the natural environment.

James Hutton's observation of the interrelated nature of natural processes in earth sciences and a recognition of deep geological time had further removed human beings from the centre of creation and made us participants in those processes. As the early cavers had shown, an understanding of science had not removed the sensuous experience of nature, if anything it had intensified the engagement. As Hutton encouraged us to see how natural processes interact, so too did Wordsworth; in *Home at Grasmere* he refers to the place he lives in as: "A Whole without dependence or defect, / Made for itself, and happy in itself, / Perfect Contentment, Unity entire" (168–170). Both writers encourage readers to recognise their existence within place, within nature.

The aesthetic convention of the view from the summit of a mountain was commonplace in the pastoral poetry of the eighteenth century, and even extended to cave systems. James Thomson, in his 1744 poem, *The Seasons*, had imagined the surface of the earth being peeled away to show the caverns beneath: “Oh! Lay the mountain bare, and wide display / Their hidden structure to the astonished view” (1.779–780). This was fine to imagine but the situation in reality always required you to enter, to engage with the environment in order to understand the processes of nature. Thomas Dixon’s poem, *A Description of the Environs of Ingleborough* (1781), has the male protagonist climb to the summit of the mountain and describe all he sees. It is a sublime view that extols the virtues of the area in which he lives and it includes the valley of Kingsdale, partially concealed by the ridge of the mountain Whernside. Dixon describes the caves of Yordas (see above), Gingingling Cove (Jingling Pot) and Routing Chasm (Rowten Pot) as seen from the summit. Though the slopes of the mountain they are in, Gragareth, can be seen from Ingleborough, the caves cannot; it must be assumed Dixon visited them on another occasion and marked their location in his memory. In Dixon’s poem there is no laying bare the subterranean caverns, they remain out of sight: water pours in or out of them, falling rocks echo, their depths are unknown. None, he claims, dare venture in. The caves are in the view but at the same time remain elusive, unless the spectator chooses to become a participator and engage with the subterranean environment.

It is this engagement with the formlessness and disorder in the subterranean space, the freedom of imagination and the discipline of science, the sensuous experience and the rational detachment, that enable us to find value in nature, not instrumental or utilitarian, not as a resource, such as a mine, but through its aesthetic qualities. If we can adapt Aldo Leopold’s epithet, “Think like a mountain,” to “think like being within a mountain,” and, perhaps, Wordsworth’s placing of his imagination deep in the “blind cavern” is a step towards it, then we are generating an environmental ethic that perceives the natural environment on its own terms (Leopold 129).

Conclusion

Using the framework of Massey’s three propositions to help define cave space, it is possible to recognise a number of ideas and processes that, though distinct, are related. The growth of the earth sciences through its fundamental requirement for fieldwork and people able to carry it out, alongside the growth in travel and tourism and greater access to remote mountain areas, is clearly related to the development

of aesthetics, and in particular the sublime. The work of Burnet, as well as Whiston and Woodward, inspired people to visit mountains and caves and to observe natural phenomena, and record what they saw. The great breakthroughs in geological understanding by James Hutton were aided by the fieldworkers writing up their observations and measurements in journals such as the *Philosophical Transactions*. The work of Addison and Burke, in articulating an aesthetic that addressed the wild and remote landscapes of mountains and caves, established a discourse that was engaged with and expanded upon by the early cave explorers and poets alike. These ideas generated through the eighteenth century on aesthetics and earth sciences, in regard to the underground, and conveyed to us through descent narratives and poetry, have laid the foundations for a contemporary environmental ethic.

There is no conclusion, as Massey argues, the space is constantly undergoing construction. The natural philosophers and poets of the period did not create the ecology movement, Darwin's contribution was still to come. However, during this period something very exciting began to occur, Judeo-Christian humanity took another step back from their perceived central position in the natural world and in so doing began to see the natural world on its own terms. The spatial and temporal context of our lives took on a fresh meaning. I would argue that one of the essential elements to this change in consciousness and discourse came through our engagement with an overlooked, though crucial, region of the earth: the underground. If, therefore, there is no conclusion, no clear certainty, only the "simultaneity of stories so far" (Massey 9), let us end where we began with Thomas Burnet's *A Sacred Theory of the Earth*: "The subterraneous cavities that we have spoken of hitherto, are such as are visible in the surface of the earth, and break the skin by some gaping orifice; but the miners meet with many more in the bowels of the earth that never reach the top of it: burrows, and channels, and clefts, and caverns, that never had the comfort of one beam of light since the great fall of the earth ... We do not know when and where we stand on good ground" (Burnet 96).

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