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# 世界文学研究论坛

2017 年第 3 期




香港·西拉法叶

# Forum for World Literature Studies

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Special Thematic Issue

## The Local and the Global

Edited by Jonathan Locke Hart

Knowledge Hub Publishing Company Limited
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# 世界文学研究论坛

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本土性与全球化研究

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**Abstract** Dorothy M. Figueira (Email:figueira@uga.edu) is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia. She has published extensively in the field of comparative literature, whose books include *Translating the Orient* (1991), *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest* (1994), and *Otherwise Occupied: Theories and Pedagogies of Alterity* (2008) and *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Cross Cultural Encounters with India* (2015). She has served as the Editor of *The Comparatist* (2008–11) and is currently editor of *Recherche litteraire/Literary Research*. Prof. Figueira is an Honorary President of the International Comparative Literature Association, and has served in the past on the boards of the American Comparative Literature Association and the Southern Comparative Literature Association. She has held fellowships from the American Institute for Indian Studies, Fulbright Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She has been a Visiting Professor at the University Lille (France), Jadavpur University (Kolkata), and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (New Delhi).

**Key words** Ethical Literary Criticism; Comparative Literature; critical theory

**Interviewer** **Li Jing**, Ph.D. in English language and literature, is Associate Professor at Zhongnan University of Economics and Law (Wuhan 430073, China). She specializes in contemporary British and American drama, ethical literary criticism and feminist literary criticism. Jing is the in visiting scholar in Department of Drama at University of Michigan (Ann Arbor). She is recipient of awards and scholarships from The Ministry of Education of Humanities and Social Science project, the Chinese Scholarship Council, Hubei Provincial Ministry of Education and Zhongnan University of Economics and Law.

**Li Jing (hereafter Li):** Professor Figueira, thank you very much for accepting this interview about Ethical Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature. Could you introduce the main arguments of your keynote speech at 6th International Conference of the IAELC "Ethical Literary Criticism, Comparative Literature and World Literature"?

**Dorothy M. Figueira (hereafter Figueira):** "The Ethics of Reading the Other" began with a discussion of why religion and literature (including the study of ethics in literature) never became as popular as other interdisciplinary configurations that one historically found in Comparative Literature (such as literature and philosophy, literature and the law, literature and cinema, etc.). I attribute this disinterest in the study of religion and literature to certain trends in literary studies in the US, particularly New Criticism and the manner in which a Protestant worldview consistently influenced literary studies in America. I next questioned how and why ethical judgments which one would think inform literary study, particularly with its current interest in alterity, are not more central to our theoretical concerns. Since ethics involves both the Self and the Other, I then give an historical overview of the employment of the Other in literary theory (from the Greek classics, through Romantic hermeneutics, phenomenology, existentialism and colonial discourse analysis). Finally, I offer a blueprint for how we might ethically conceptualize our readings of the Other. I base my proposal on the historiographical work of Michel de Certeau, Paul Ricoeur's work on narrative, and Emmanuel Levinas's reworking of a Heideggerian concept of Being. I propose a middle path approach between the critical consciousness approach that views encounters as acts of intellectual and cultural mastery and hermeneutical consciousness that seeks to engage the Other. This middle path, championed by Ricoeur, permits us to recognize that we are confronted by ideological distortions, yet posits the possibility of recovering a text's lost message while maintaining the necessary suspicion aimed at demystifying it.

**Li:** As the title of your speech indicates, "The Ethics of Reading the Other," what do you mean by the "Other"?

**Figueira:** The Other is not some new-fangled post-colonial concept. It has existed in Western consciousness since Plato and in India since the Rig Veda. It plays a key role in the history of philosophy and is of particular interest for literary studies in the work of Schleiermacher and Dilthey. More recently, the Other is historicized in the master-slave dialectic of Hegel, fetishized by Marx, relativized by Husserl, and viewed by analogy and reduced by existentialists such as Heidegger and Sartre. In the wake of the Holocaust, philosophers such as Levinas felt a reassessment of

the Other was warranted as was a revaluation of the transcendent subject. So there is a significant discourse on the Other before Identity Studies and postcolonial criticism. I do not view the Other as does Fanon (as a phobic object), Freud (as a fetish), Lacan (in terms of subject formation) or as Bhabha (almost the same, but different). I also feel that postmodern approaches focus on psychologizing modern fantasies of alienation and they can be situated in a pathologization of the classical era as the origin of a climate culminating in nineteenth-century imperialism. Many poststructuralist constructions of the Other tend to view it only as a translation of European familiarity with the Self. The Other, for me, is more akin to the object one seeks in the hermeneutical encounter — where one goes to seek one's own in the alien. It is a site of excursion where the spirit moves to the strange and unfamiliar, finds a home there or recognizes what was previously perceived as alien as one's genuine home. The Other is something one seeks in order to know oneself better. The Self is suffused with the Other. We should recognize and seek a reconciliation of our own understanding and that of strangers through a fusion of horizons.

**Li:** And then warmly congratulations on the publication of the Indian version of your book Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing Authority through Myths of Identity, which is a timely reissue of an American edition (SUNY Press, 2002). In Section Two, "Who Speaks for the Subaltern?" is a tangential answer to Gayatri Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," which in the field of South Asian historiography is a primary concern for Subaltern Studies intellectuals in the postcolonial framework. Put the risk of over-generalization, would you please give a very brief introduction to your counter arguments or responses to Spivak's subaltern studies?

**Figueira:** I do not actually offer counter arguments to Spivak. My position is quite clear, "subalterns" have always spoken, just not so much in the English and French language where the critic has been looking for them. Their voices are even available, not just in English and French publications or metaphorical archives, but in actual archives. When I was doing research in India, there was plenty of unpublished archival testimony of figures such as suttees, the paradigmatic subaltern females that Spivak evokes. So it is a political posture and instance of posturing to say that such figures have no voice and then presume to speak for such disenfranchised individuals. The whole gimmick regarding the voicelessness of the "subaltern" was, I felt, a cynical ploy so that critics could usurp a voice and make of it what they wished. If "subalterns" cannot speak, it necessitates the critic using the language and strategies of Western theory to "speak for" them. It is a question of self-designated spokespersons illegitimately usurping the native voice. I have a problem with this

critical and political stance. Historians and sociologists are well aware that such "voices" exist. But most theory is grounded in an understanding of the world that English professors possess and such knowledge is really quite limited. It is only the hegemony of English Departments in many universities that allows its professors to think that they have the capacity to make authoritative pronouncements regarding concepts in other fields in the humanities and social sciences (history, anthropology, sociology, etc.), when their knowledge of these fields is partial and fragmentary (and often translated).

**Li:** As David Damrosch cogently observes "world literature is the quintessential literature of modern times…can usefully continue to mean a subset of the plenum of literature" (4). Do you think in the era of digital media, film studies can be classified as part of the world literature to study? Or what's your opinions about world film/cinema studies?

**Figueira:** Of course, digital media and film studies can be classified as World Literature and world film/cinema should be a part of World Literature. But do not forget that World Literature, in its American configuration, is the study of the world's cultural production as it is translated into English. So, I do not know how much depth we can hope to find in a study of dubbed films.

**Li:** In 1993 Susan Bassnett declared that "Today, comparative literature is in one sense is dead" (47), she saw it destined to be subsumed within translations studies. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in Death of Discipline surveys the fields of comparative literature, culture studies and ethnic studies, and criticizes their insularity and cultural conservatism. She advocates disciplinary collaboration to establish institutional bridges to respond more appropriately. Do you think Ethical Literary Criticism is such an effort of building institutional bridge?

**Figueira:** It is very easy for someone who does something else (like Translation Studies, in the case of Bassnett) to talk about the death of Comparative Literature. So much theorizing these days is careerist self-posturing. "X" is dead; "Y" (what I happen to do) is better and can take its place. In the case of Spivak (and others), there is a tendency to claim that something is the case when it is not. Comparative Literature as I know it is not so monolithically Western-centric and it certainly does not lack cross-disciplinary perspective. Once a "problem" has been discovered – real or not – the critic, once again, stands at the ready to position herself to step in and rectify it and, in the process, make a place for herself. I am really quite mystified by what people (Spivak and Bassnett) who are basically English scholars trained and

based in the West, presume to say about the global practice of Comparative Literature. In China and in India, comparatists seem to be mapping out their own course.

As for Ethical Literary Criticism (hereafter, ELC), I see it as a school based in China, proudly originating in China and exporting itself quite aggressively abroad as an indigenous Chinese counter to Western theory. In theory, the ELC general thesis is that there is a deficit in ethical engagement in Western theory. From this conference and the foundational articles on ELC, I see it more as a Chinese version of the new Western trend in World Literatures. ELC is institutionalized and exported by the IAECL and it tied to academic journals, The Forum for World Literature Studies (published out of Purdue University in India) and Foreign Literary Studies (published in China). I understood that the IAELC was founded in 2012 by Professor Nie Zhanzhao expressly as a counterweight to Western literary studies and its focus on linguistic and formalistic research (such as narratology) and sociological approaches (such as the discourse on power relations, postcolonialism, gender studies, feminism) which were thought to impede the contributions of non-Western original points of view. ELC's thesis, not an unreasonable one, is that there is a deficit of ethical engagement in Western theory. Its principle theorist claims that the main function of literature is moral judgment and that such morality is not the purview of the critic. It is imposed from some other source. If humans do not obey a certain type of ethical order, they receive due punishment. According to Nie, the teaching of the literature of the world (and even here, as with American WL, the canon is almost exclusively English and American literature) should contextualize the taboos formed by human rationality as opposed to emotions (primary of which is free will) which are seen as primitive.[1] In short ELC imposes a rigid and strict function on our reading of literature. It demands our submission to some trans-individual ethical power.

The Chinese vision of WL is actively propagated abroad through journals (particularly the one even published in the American Midwest), international conferences, and cooperative relationships.[2] While theoretical schools in the West

1 See Nie Zhenzhao, "Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism: Its Fundaments and Terms," *Foreign Literary Studies* 32.1 (2010):12-22. For a Western interpretation of ELC, see Juri Talvet, "What is Ethical Literary Criticism: Some Reflections on the Lady Called Filosofia in Dante Aligheri *(Interlitteraria* 19.1 (2014):7-21.

2 The ELC met this year in Tartu (Estonia) and plans to meet at the University of London next year. The Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association is scheduled to go to Shenzhen in 2019. The Chinese hosts proposed the theme of WL. It will be interesting to see how CL is done there.

are playing identity games, the Chinese have come in and are making a concerted effort to insert their vision (through ELC) into global literary studies.

**Li:** Ethical Literary criticism in the humanist tradition seemed to "disappear" from the Anglo-American academia of literary study in the 1960s and 1970s, and until toward the end of 1980s did it reemerge. The so-called "ethical turn" in the field of literary studies was brought about by the profound intellectual development in humanities and social sciences. Against such cultural and philosophical background, Ethical Literary Criticism has gained a series of new perspectives and methods. Tracing its trajectory of development, it may be detected by two schools, which is the Neo-Aristotelian and the Deconstructive. Each of the two camps has its own understanding of such crucial concepts as text, other and reader, and proposes unique approaches to literary works accordingly. The first camp inherits Aristotelian ethics and poetics, valuing moral and ethical education through reading literature, while the second camp does ethical criticism by drawing from poststructuralist theories, emphasizing readers' reading experience as well as the ambiguity of textual meaning. What do you think about the two schools?

**Figueira:** I cannot really speak of the Ethical Literary Criticism of Anglo-American literature scholars because I am not an Anglo-American literature scholar. Nor can I see what you term Neo-Aristotelian or Deconstructive schools of criticism as articulations for ethical criticism. I come from a background in theology and the history of religions. So, perhaps, I have a different understanding of the notion of "ethics." As in my paper, when I think of ethics and literary criticism, I think of thinkers like Ricoeur, Levinas, Certeau and their formulations of the text, the Other, and the reader. You ask me what I think of an Aristotelian vision of literature. My training in Classics and my schooling at the University of Chicago have conditioned me to see things in Aristotelian terms. My early career in the heyday of Deconstruction (not the late Derrida of the ethical turn) made me leery of its marginalization of a hermeneutical consciousness approach in favor of the critical consciousness method or its hermeneutics of suspicion. I came to the study of literature late and try to avoid dogmatic tendencies that one finds in theories as they succeed each other.

**Li:** Since the 1980s, Western cultural theoretical study has entered into a relative period which is labeled "After Theory" by Terry Eagleton. In his view, the phrase "After Theory" does not mean that theory is now over, and that we can return to an age of pre-theoretical innocence. In your opinion, does the "ethical turn"

corresponds to what Terry Eagleton's claim of "After Theory"?

**Figueira:** If there is anything more disturbing than institutional theory, it is what passes for After-Theory. Once again, I do not see this as an ethical turn. There is no need for a turn. Ethics has always been present in theory, just devalued, denied or occluded. But even in these instances, it was always there. The ELC group seems to have latched onto this notion of an ethical turn to set itself apart and justify what it purports to do.

**Li:** Against such cultural background of "After theory" and "ethical turn," do you think ethical literary criticism realizes the pre-theoretical innocence Terry Eagleton has called for?

With the passage of time, Ethical Literary Criticism catches increasing attention from the world, which are evidenced in several journal special issues, such as "Ethical Literary Criticism: East and West" in arcadia: International Journal of Literary Studies 50.1 (2015), "Fictions and Ethics in Twenty-First Century Fiction" in CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 17.5 (2015), and "Ethical Literary Criticism" in Universitas- Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture 42. 4 (2015), as well as a long commentary from TLS: Times Literary Supplements on July 31st, 2015. What's your opinion about the oriental voice of Ethical Literary Criticism?

**Figueira:** Eagleton is totally readable and enjoyable. But one has to see his notion of After Theory or a call for a pre-theoretical innocence in light of Marxist historicism. If you cannot follow this perspective, then such concepts are not very useful. ELC claims that moral enlightenment is the main function of literature, but according to my understanding of it, it does not believe that critics have the right to make moral judgments themselves. The question then becomes: if critics should not pursue ethical judgments, who and what are the authorities that establish the ethical order that we should seek in literature? ELC not only discounts the aesthetic component of literature, but it calls for a historicist approach without any recognition that historicism has its flaws and has been seriously challenged. According to the papers I heard at the IAELC conference in Estonia, the ELC seeks to contextualize taboos formed by what its proponents call human rationality, as opposed to emotions (such as free will) which it deems primitive. In short, ELC negates the value of aesthetics and emotion and does not address the ambiguity of the ethical dilemmas that literature might pose. Rather it seeks to impose upon our reading of literature a rigid and strict function. Yet, who and what establish these ethical rules? The answer to this question is not directly addressed, but it is nevertheless quite clear.

ELC claims that Western literature presents humans governed by desire (seen a

negative) and not reason (viewed as a positive). It deems the expression of free will as "animal" as opposed to what it champions as a more "human" will dictated by reason. The ethics that ELC promotes amounts to the suppression of what it deems "animal" desire. In essence, ELC demands our submission to some trans-individual ethical power. What might that be? What is the source of the rules? Who imposes them? The State, perhaps? We are only left to surmise.

I do not think this quest for reason and the "textualization" of taboos is really the purpose of literature. It is certainly not why I read and teach literature. I am not enamored with Western theory's focus on linguistic-formalistic research or its fixation on sociological discourse's endless meditation on hegemonic violence. I actually believe there is a middle path between hermeneutics and the critique of ideology and that this middle path is certainly not the harsh imposition of some different new (and significantly non-Western) restrictive ideology.

**Li:** Prof. Figueira, thank you once again for this interview.
**Figueira:** Thank you for asking such good questions.

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# The Local and the Global: Poetry, Philosophy and History

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**Abstract** In literature, the fictional worlds of William Faulkner, Margaret Laurence and others are about local places but seem universal to readers of different places, cultures and later times. The poetry of Homer and the Greek tragedians like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides are rooted in their time and place, but have had a "universal" appeal in the West despite all its changes in culture, beliefs and language. Homer wrote about heroic Greece, and Socrates and Plato questioned his universal appeal, his knowledge, his wisdom, partly because of mimesis or representation or imitation. Though he agreed with Plato that philosophy is more universal than poetry, Aristotle analyzes the work of Greek tragedy and epic poetry and also discusses history; he finds poetry inferior to philosophy precisely because poetry is more particular. Not only William Blake, but also many literary critics from the 1960s onward in the West, have rebelled against universals and, in an age of globalization, have often sought particulars or a rhetoricization or historicization of philosophy and poetry to try to act against grand narratives, universals and idealism. Jean François Lyotard is a case in point. By analyzing the relations among poetry, philosophy and history, this article will examine the ground of this dispute between the local and the global, the particular and the universal, and will show the importance of both.

**Key words** local; global; poetry; philosophy; history

**Author** **Jonathan Locke Hart,** is Chair Professor, Creative Writing, Comparative Literature, Theory, and Literature in English and Director, Centre for Creative Writing and Literary Translation and Culture at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. He is also Core Faculty in Comparative Literature at Western University and Life Member, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, he is a poet, writer of other genres, literary scholar and historian who studied at Toronto and Cambridge and has held visiting appointments at Harvard,

Cambridge, Princeton, Toronto, the Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris III) and elsewhere. The author of many articles and over twenty books, including *Theater and World* (1992), *Northrop Frye: The Theoretical Imagination* (1994), *Representing the New World* (2001), *Contesting Empires* (2005), *Interpreting Culture* (2006), *Empires and Colonies* (2008), *Shakespeare: Poetry, History and Culture* (2009), *Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (2010), *Literature, Theory, History* (2011), *Fictional and Historical Worlds* (2012) *Textual Imitation* (2013), *From Shakespeare to Obama* (2013), and *The Poetics of Otherness* (2015). He has two books under contract and a number of articles or chapters on Ted Hughes, comparative literature, world literature, translation, poetics, theory and other topics. His most recent book of poetry is *The Burning Lake* (2016).

**Introduction**

When William Blake speaks of seeing the world through a grain of sand and about "minute particulars," and asserts that "To generalize is to be an idiot" (Blake, *Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses,* Erdman 630), he is flying in the face of a universalism that is at the foundation of Western philosophy, planted by Socrates, cultivated by Plato and consolidated by Aristotle. Blake's *Auguries of Innocence* begins: "To see a world in a grain of sand, / And heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, / and eternity in an hour" (ll. 1-4, Erdman 481). Blake speaks about the minute particular opening world, heaven, infinity and eternity. In *Jersualem*, Blake writes: "He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars; / General good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, and flatterer: / For art and science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars" (Blake Ch. 3, plate 55, line 60; see Erdman). For Blake, the particular is good, the general, not. Blake also says: "To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit — General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess" (Blake, *Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses*; Erdman 630). These lines amplify his view and particulars and generalizations. This article assumes that Plato and Aristotle on the one hand and Blake on the other can be combined in another insight: the particular and the universal are like the local and the global, and we need both to know and to thrive. We know through our local time and place and generalize from that into something more global and universal, something that helps us to understand but something that is fraught with dangers, as Blake warns.

In literature, the fictional worlds of William Faulkner, Margaret Laurence

and others are about local places but seem universal to readers of different places, cultures and later times. The poetry of Homer and the Greek tragedians like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides are rooted in their time and place, but have had a "universal" appeal in the West despite all its changes in culture, beliefs and language. Homer wrote about heroic Greece, and Socrates and Plato questioned his universal appeal, his knowledge, his wisdom, partly because of mimesis or representation or imitation. Though he agrees with Plato that philosophy is more universal than poetry, Aristotle analyzes the work of Greek tragedy and epic poetry and also discusses history, although he finds poetry inferior to philosophy precisely because poetry is more particular. Not only Blake, but also many literary critics from the 1960s onward in the West have rebelled against universals and, in an age of globalization, have often sought particulars or a rhetoricization or historicization of philosophy and poetry to try to act against grand narratives, universals and idealism. Jean François Lyotard is a case in point.

It may be, then, that as a reaction against the Enlightenment, which often held up general truths, and against European expansion and industrialization — important to globalization — Europeans and European descendants in other places turned to the local, the individual, and the historical specifically to challenge Western universalism. By analyzing the relations among poetry, philosophy and history, this article will examine the ground of this dispute between the local and the global, the particular and the universal and will show the importance of both.

Mimesis, imitation or representation are creative and active, not a reflection of the world. Interpretation is part of that mimetic process or imitation[1]. Poetry travels from location to location, is transcultural and transnational[2]. Aesthetic and ethics are dimensions of this debate over imitation, of the particular and the universal, of the true, the good and the beautiful as represented by philosophy, according to the Platonic Socrates, as opposed to the poetry of Homer. Book 2 of Plato's *Republic* stresses the ethics of representation[3] Misrepresentation is the lot of Homer and the poets, so their universals are false. In Book 8 of *Republic,* Socrates refers to the poets of tragedy as not being admitted to the city as they sing the praises of tyranny (568B). In Book 10, Plato has Socrates view poets as beautiful liars who appeal to passion and not reason, and whose imitation is at several removes from reality.

Reality in *Poetics* is apparently more empirical. Aristotle's mimesis involves copying and creating. *Poetics* spends a good deal of space on genre or types of

1 See Hart, *Textual Imitation* 2 and Halliwell.

2 See Ramazani.

3 Plato, *Republic*, 601A–B.

poetry even if, with Plato, Aristotle considers philosophy the most universal way to truth. Aristotle discusses the particulars of history even if it is less universal. Aristotle seems to give the poet a place in knowing that Plato had denied him.[1] In addressing Plato and, perhaps, the likes of Stephen Gosson, Philip Sidney defends poets against the charges that poetry is not universal; he actually elevates poetry above philosophy because it is concrete and not abstract and is images can move the reader to virtue[2]. Still, Sidney, like Aristotle, places historians behind philosophers and poets because historians are particular.

England or Europe, for the English and various Europeans, respectively, was the local in a globalizing world. Recognition or *anagnorisis*, as Aristotle had discussed it in *Poetics*, was important not simply in tragedy but also in the encounter between cultures, as in the voyages and settlement of Europeans in the Americas and other parts of the world[3]. This recognition could also be a misrecognition amidst changing expectations, from the fantastic that endured from antiquity. Cannibals and Amazons persisted from works such as those of Herodotus, Pliny and others. Elements of imitation travel over space and time. The particular becomes the universal, and the local and the global are closely intertwined.

Locally and globally, texts represent and misrepresent and are read and misread, interpreted and misinterpreted, often at the same time. In some ways, an exploration of the local and the global is an exploration of the ways that texts misrepresent, show misrecognition or reveal the dangers of representation. Exploration and interpretation are related to theory, which is linked to sight — vision, recognition, blindness, myopia and misrecognition. These terms are connected to the Greek root of *theoria*, a way of seeing[4]. The expansion of Western European powers to various parts of the globe intensified from 1415 onward.[5] Local views could seem global, particulars universal. The uncovering or "discovery" of the New World involved misrecognition and recognition, and this nexus also applied to coming across other cultures across the globe. The individual soul affects his local place as well as elsewhere. Admonishing against greed, power and poetry for the soul of the person and the republic, Socrates recommends the knowledge and reason of philosophy. Michel de Montaigne thought it would have been better had the ancients discovered the New World, but instead, the Spanish conquest of the

1 See Aristotle, and Hart, *Textual Imitation* 27–32.

2 See Sidney 102.

3 See Pagden 10.

4 See Hart, *Textual Imitation* 103.

5 See Said, Todorov, De Certeau.

New World descended into avarice, violence and lust. The person affects politics, the private the public, the local, the global.

The Europeans found that their local identities underwent change when they encountered peoples from other cultures. Their universals might be particular and their absolutes relative. The indigenous peoples of the Americas were from cultures that the Europeans did not know, their very existence challenging European identity at home and in the western Atlantic, and making the Europeans attempt to fit them into their familiar, home or local frameworks[1]. Columbus, in his first contact with aboriginal peoples in the New World, was an aspect of an intricate representation, interpretation and response. In part, Columbus was receptive to tales that seemed to corroborate ancient expectations of Amazons and cannibals[2]. Another instance is the debate between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda over the treatment of the indigenous peoples in the New World. Las Casas and Sepúlveda represented two ways of coming to terms with the New World, that is, for Europeans to try to grapple with the otherness of the discovered lands. For Las Casas, the contact and conversion of the "Indians" fulfilled Christian universal history. Sepúlveda wanted to see the Spanish monarchy and empire augmented while not considering the Natives to be entirely human and so not apt for conversion. Las Casas defended the humanity of the Natives while Sepúlveda applied Aristotle's theory of natural slavery to them. Montaigne also criticized European abuse of the Native peoples in "Des Cannibales" ( "Of the Cannibals"); he compared the aboriginals and Europeans and questioned the stereotype of barbarism[3]. Oviedo, Thevet and Hakluyt in Spain, France and England, respectively, used this connection between European and indigenous peoples to define identities, national and imperial, so that self and other, home and away, the local and the global constructed each other[4]. Ancients and moderns imitated examples, negative and positive, in texts and cultures, and this affected notions of identity and otherness, of here and there, now and then.

## I

William Shakespeare imitated classical examples and was not entirely local. He did not follow the dictum of creative writing classes to write from what he knew. There are no plays and poems about making gloves with his father or walking by the River

1 See Elliott, 48–59.

2 See Trigger; Hart, "Images of the Native."

3 Montaigne I: 405, Livre 1, ch. 31.

4 See Hart, "Strategies of Promotion," "Portugal and the Making of the English Empire."

Avon to fish, or strolling to the Arden house in Wilmcote (his mother's family), or a quick visit to Anne Hathaway's cottage. Nor did he write about his neighbourhood in London by Blackfriars or in Southwark, where his younger brother, Edmund (1580–1607), lies buried in the cathedral, or about the stews and bear-baiting pits that were in the area of the Globe Theatre. Shakespeare's local may have been his keen eye for people and for nature in all his plays and poems, a paradoxically universal performance across time and space, a globalization of the local.

Shakespeare wrote of the classical world in his narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, the first about a goddess in love with a mortal from Greek mythology, and the second about the last Roman king who raped the wife of one of his nobles and was expelled, thus creating the Roman republic. Shakespeare's comedy is often romantic comedy derived from the New Comedy of Plautus and Terence, and some have classical locales like *The Comedy of Errors*, in which Shakespeare multiplies the twins from his model, Plautus's *Menaechmi,* and *Troilus and Cressida* represents an aspect of the Trojan War in a manner far more comic than in Homer's epic rendition in *The Iliad.* Shakespeare also goes to Plutarch as sources for *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, about the fall of the Roman republic and the rise of the Roman empire, plays that complement the earlier Roman history of *The Rape of Lucrece. Coriolanus* rounds off the Roman plays and, in *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare represents relations between imperial Rome and its colony in Britain. *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens* are tragic and mythical visions, and *Pericles* a comic representation of classical stories, *Titus* being inspired by the closet drama of the Roman philosopher Seneca in its theatre of blood or, to adapt Artaud's term, theatre of cruelty[1]. Shakespeare's classical world is epic, comic and tragic, so he moves across genres as he moves across time and location. Like Columbus and Montaigne, Shakespeare looks back to the classical world, but does so in his own vernacular and in the context of his own culture.

One example from these Shakespearean texts with classical subjects should provide a sense of how Shakespeare, who knew Latin and Greek, chooses to use Thomas North's translation as a way into his sources for *Antony and Cleopatra*. Rather than give the whole of Enobarbus's speech about Cleopatra, I shall provide the breathless opening only:

> I will tell you.
> The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
> Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;

1 See Artaud, *Le Théâtre, The Theatre.*

Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion – cloth-of-gold of tissue –
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature: on each side her
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did. (*A&C* II.ii.)[1]

Shakespeare uses North's translation to make a moving example of Cleopatra, exotic and erotic, outdoing even the goddess of love, Venus herself. Cleopatra is Egypt whereas Antony is Rome, the Orient and Occident. Shakespeare uses an English translation of a classical Greek text (Plutarch's *Lives*) to yoke past and present, home and away, in the representation of the meeting of East and West, as recounted by Enobarbus, a Roman captain. The translation of study and of empire occur through the translation of language and literature. The double vision or typology of here and there, now and then takes the exotic rhythms of the Nile and puts them into English to be spoken and staged on the banks of the River Thames. Self defines other and other self, and Shakespeare via North makes Plutrarch's Cleopatra, represented in Greek, his in one of Shakespeare's two homes, his two locales, London (Stratford being the other, where he was born and would later be buried). There are pasts recalled and possible futures (see Lyne, Barret). Shakespeare's mimesis, imitation or representation depends on North's translation (1579) of Jacques Amyot's French translation of the Greek of Plutarch (1559–1565), which he used to portray Cleopatra. Shakespeare takes the biographical work of Plutarch and dramatizes it, makes the drama of his prose into the dramatic poetry of a theatre teeming with people in the audience.

The exotic is a way to make the local reader or audience yearn for difference and otherness, partly as a way of expression of their selves, themselves. Shakespeare does this in many places, but two will suffice here to make this point: a speech Othello makes about the Anthropophagi and one Caliban makes about the

1 All quotations and citations in Shakespeare are from the online MIT edition.

island. Travel literature can bring the exotic, the strange, the other home. Othello is a Moor in Venice, a general in the great city that fights the Turks and trades and acts as a go-between between East and West. Once more, Shakespeare, who rarely devised his own plots or stories, went to a source, but this time in the original, "Un Capitano Moro," in *Hecatommithi* or *Gli Ecatommiti* (1565), a collection of stories by Cinthio (Giovanni Battista Giraldi), so that Shakespeare turns this Italian prose fiction into English drama. Another travelling text, which relied on translation, was also a possible source for Shakespeare's *Othello*, written by Richard Hakluyt's friend John Pory, who translated the English edition published in London in 1600, *A Geographical Historie of Africa written in Arabicke and Italian by John Leo a More*..., a translation of a text published in 1556 by Hasan Ibn Muhammad Al-Wazzan Al-Fasi, known in the West as Leo Africanus. A Moor from Granada, as Michael Graves-Johnston has noted, Leo Africanus travelled in Western Africa between 1512 and 1517 before being captured by Christian corsairs in the Mediterranean. Presented to Pope Leo X, Leo became a Christian (taking the pope's name) and wrote his *Description of Africa* sometime in the 1520s. Ramusio first published this work in Italian in 1550, and it was issued as *De totius Africae descriptione*, *libri IX* in Antwerp in 1556. The book, as Graves-Johnston says, went into many editions and was a standard treatise [1]. Even if Pory's translation of Leo Africanus is more part of a context for *Othello* or reflects the interest in African and Moors at the time rather than a direct source, it also shows the importance of translation in Europe and England, and how translating helped to form local and national identities through texts and literature. As with Hakluyt, with Shakespeare we can observe the building of English and English identity through translation and explorations of travel and the exotic. Between the local and the global lies the national.

The exotic and unknown are part of Othello's speech and character in Shakespeare's play. Speaking to the Duke, Othello says of his wife, Desdemona:

> Her father loved me; oft invited me;
> Still question'd me the story of my life,
> From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
> That I have passed.
> I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
> To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
> Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,

1 See Graves-Johnston; see Black.

Of moving accidents by flood and field
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the insolent foe
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
And portance in my travels' history:
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven
It was my hint to speak, – such was the process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence:
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'ld come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse: which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively: I did consent,
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story.
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used: (*Othello* I.iii.)

Othello, in the tradition of Herodotus and Pliny, speaks a story of travel and

natural history, his exotic diction calling up cannibals and Anthropophagi. The very rhythm of the speech, the breathlessness of the syntax, is like Enobarbus's speech about Cleopatra, in which the hearers within the report or those listening to it are caught up, if not seduced, by the words. Once more, Shakespeare imports the exotic for his English stage, translating translated prose into arresting theatre in the English tongue. Travel and otherness come home to help create a local theatre in London, which, being the centre of England, becomes a national theatre. Like Hakluyt, Shakespeare uses translation to forge a national language, culture and literature. The localization of the global creates the national. The national mediates between the local and the global. All three circulate and overlap in their interplay. Agrippa and the Duke, like Antony and Desdemona, are seduced by Cleopatra and Othello, respectively. The expansion of England overseas at that time also meant a redefinition of what England and Englishness meant[1].

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare combines a classical Virgilian echo of an island in the Mediterranean with allusions to Bermuda, to the New World, where there was a shipwreck on a English ship, *Sea Venture*, en route to the fledging colony in Virginia. Shakespeare travels to the classical Old World and the contemporary New World in his comedy, a play with epic and travel in it, a gesture toward past and future in a vanishing present of identity. The otherness of the past, Rome, and the future, English America, helps to define London and England, the local and the national, in this theatre. Once more, Shakespeare transforms other genres, alluding to the poetry of Virgil in *The Aeneid*, and to prose in the pamphlet by William Strachey about the shipwreck, which Shakespeare may have seen in manuscript. Not only did Shakespeare employ Strachey's account of Bermuda but he also associated with members of the Virginia Company like Christopher Brooke, Dudley Digges, Southampton, Pembroke and others.

In this play, Shakespeare's language includes the exotic as a way of stretching and making English in this London stage and national theatre. Caliban shows ambivalence over the gift of language on this once vacant island in the Mediterranean (just as Bermuda had been empty of people). He says to Prospero: "You taught me language; and my profit on't Is, / I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (I.ii.). Thus, this gift of language from the dominant magician who is an exiled Duke is a means that the subjected Caliban can use to swear and to fight back against what he perceives to be his oppression. Even though the island is in the Mediterranean, it has, owing to the allusion to Bermuda (to what Ariel calls "the

1 On *Othello*, see Bassi, Kerrigan, Kuzner.

still-vex'd Bermoothes"), also been interpreted as a colony. Edmund Malone was apparently the first to mention utopia and the New World in regard to commentary on *The Tempest*[1]. In this anti-imperial and postcolonial reading, which seems to have begun with Daniel Wilson's social Darwinist interpretation in 1873 and W. T. Stead's analysis of empire and indigenous peoples in 1904, Caliban, the colonized, has learned the language of Prospero, the colonizer, and uses this weapon against him (Kermode lxxxi). This colonial and postcolonial reading gathered force from the independent movements of period after the Second World War, most especially from the late 1950s[2], England had become the English Empire, then Britain and the British Empire, and then, after the decolonization of its empire, began to shrink back to itself. After the Brexit side won the referendum on whether to remain in or leave the European Union, in which Scotland and Northern Ireland (along with London) voted to remain, England might end up on its own or with Wales (as the Tudors brought England and Wales closer together). The local, national and global (international) are all unstable and in flux.

Caliban's ambivalence occurs not just in his expression of learning to curse but also in the beauty of his speech about the island on which he lives. He tells Trinculo and Stephano:

> Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
> Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
> That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
> The clouds methought would open and show riches
> Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,
> I cried to dream again. (*Tempest* III.ii.)

These noises, instruments, voices, riches and dreams animate Caliban and reveal his poetic soul, complicating any notion that he is simply a monster to fear, abhor or subject[3]. Nor is Caliban alone in his utopian dreams. Gonzalo speaks a well-known speech that is even more explicit on this theme of Utopia. The play is more than about animals and humans (see Raspa). To Sebastian and Antonio, he begins his

1 See Orgel 31–36.

2 See Brockbank, Hulme, Nixon.

3 on ecological aspects of the play, see Martin.

speech (and I will not go into the whole speech here):

> I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
> Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
> And use of service, none; contract, succession,
> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation; all men idle, all;
> And women too, but innocent and pure;
> No sovereignty;– (*Tempest* II.i.)

The ideal commonwealth or utopian land echoes earlier work, showing once more Shakespeare's intricate way of creating identity from otherness and difference, a London and an English theatre or perspective from many sources, English and foreign, present and past. Gonzalo's utopian speech here (II.i. 145–162 in Kermode's Arden edition of *The Tempest*) is a case in point. Two prominent editors, Kermode and Orgel, in the Arden and Oxford editions, respectively, note that this speech comes almost verbatim from John Florio's translation of Montaigne's "Of the Cannibals" and echoes Renaissance thought on the connection between Europe and the New World. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* presents many contesting visions of the island and of how it was originally. There are, then, many opposing views on the island's state of nature or what its politics might be, as well as about general notions of the political, expressed in the views of Prospero, Miranda, Ariel, Caliban, Gonzalo and others. This local island has symbolic or allegorical meanings in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic as well as the island of Utopia that Thomas More described in his eponymous work. The Virgilian echoes and the site of colonization and revolt against that coexist. This island is local and global and has implications for the nation — England.

Shakespeare also writes about the local and the national, places in England and England itself. The comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, is located west of London in the environs of Windsor –town, park, and castle – and the name of the place is repeated more than a dozen times throughout the play[1]. The local is a famous locale, and Shakespeare transports Falstaff and his friends from the Boar's Head Tavern in *1* and *2 Henry IV*, English history plays, into this comedy. Shakespeare

1 On ecology in this drama, see Martin.

wrote the history plays backwards, writing the first tetralogy of *1*, *2*, *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* before the second tetralogy of *Richard II*, *1*, and *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*, representing the end of the story of the War of the Roses before the beginning. The history plays — as John Heminge and Henry Condell, friends and co-sharers in the King's Men with Shakespeare, classified them in the *First Folio* (1623) — were plays only about the past of England, and not of Scotland, Britain or any other country. The suffering hero of these histories, as well as those of *King John* and *Henry VIII*, is England. The locale in *Merry Wives* is a location of national significance, but in these history plays, the national, the story of England, as if in an epic, is the key.

In *Richard II*, John of Gaunt, speaks of England with a kind of personification that imbues the land with a power as his nephew, Richard II, is sapping the country of its very life:

> This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall,
> Or as a moat defensive to a house,
> Against the envy of less happier lands,
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England, … (*RII* II.i.)

This paean to his native land is old Gaunt's warning against the decline of England from a happy land to a miserable kingdom, sapped and riven. England is a place that nature has made as a fortress, and it is many things, including an "other Eden." In this catalogue, Shakespeare represents England in comparison but also in terms of itself. The focus is on England and not on Greece, Rome, Egypt, Italy or any other distant or exotic land. These history plays are a national epic and thus suggest that Shakespeare could shift among the local, national and international or global depending on the situation. These plays were about the kingdom where Shakespeare lived, a country that had not yet formally joined with Scotland, although James was king of both realms.

Shakespeare mixed the local and the national, as can be seen in the figure of

Justice Robert Shallow, who is a character who appears in Windsor at the start of *Merry Wives*, but who had been at his house in Gloucestershire, in III.ii., the heart of this history play, *2 Henry IV*. Shallow also appears at his house and orchard in V.i. and V.iii. In III.ii., Shallow, despite being in a play about national history, gives a most detailed and local speech with an appeal to the memory of his youth at the Inns of Court:

> By the mass, I was called any thing; and I would
> have done any thing indeed too, and roundly too.
> There was I, and little John Doit of Staffordshire,
> and black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and
> Will Squele, a Cotswold man; you had not four such
> swinge-bucklers in all the inns o' court again: and
> I may say to you, we knew where the bona-robas were
> and had the best of them all at commandment. Then
> was Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to
> Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. (*2HIV* III.ii.)

These are specific friends from long ago, part of Shallow's own private world, another indication of Shakespeare bringing together the great theme of private and public, individual and state. As much as Gaunt's prophetic paean to England, Shallow's nostalgic personal reminiscence makes the nation. Just as England is defined in comparison to other places and with its expansion to empire in an expanded globe, so too does this nation find that it is made up of different locales or discrete places. Paradoxically, the very local flavour of England as expressed by Shallow, and even the patriotic mood that was built up by Gaunt, through their very power to evoke, make Shakespeare more global and universal. Through the local and national as well as through the very power of his poetry in English, Shakespeare appeals internationally. As England expanded, so did English, and by now English is global and so too is Shakespeare.

All this Shakespeare did in helping to create a powerful London and English stage. None the less, he also combined local, national and global or international elements in his non-dramatic poetry. Earlier, I alluded to the classical nature of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, which are epic in scope. Here, I wish to emphasize their dedications. They are rare instances of Shakespeare locating himself, taking personal care over publications, addressing someone he knows by name. Speaking of *Venus and Adonis,* Shakespeare dedicates his "unpolished

lines" "TO THERIGHT HONORABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLY, EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TICHFIELD." Talking of *The Rape of Lucrece,* Shakespeare also dedicates his "untutored lines" to Southampton. Despite the classical themes, or perhaps because of them, Shakespeare addresses his friend and patron, his own unpolishedness and untutoredness helping to forge an English poetry, whose debt is to the classical world for theme and poetic technique, but also a rival to that ancient treasure. In the Sonnets, a form that owes its existence in English to Wyatt and Surrey, who translated and transformed Petrarch from the Italian, and also owes something to the work of French sonneteers like Du Bellay, Shakespeare speaks to a young man (who might or might not be Southampton) and a dark lady (whose identity is also a mystery) in an exploration of love, lust, time, death and many other themes in a locale that is not local, national or global in any specific way. The specifics of the poetry may have reached a global audience, but there is no sense of any location like Shallow's house in Gloucestershire or Gaunt's England as an "other Eden" or any kind of forest, castle or town in Windsor. It is another way to create English identity through character, language and action. In Shakespeare, the local, national and global mix in various ways in different genres or works, in the theatre or in non-dramatic poetry. Shakespeare borrows from ancients and moderns inside England and out to represent the universals of the particulars of English history, or the peculiar psychology of love and lust in the sonnets, narrative poems and comedies.

**II**

Like Shakespeare, Ezra Pound and Ted Hughes also bring together the local, national and international (global). Even within a language or culture in English, there are local, intercultural and transnational aspects. Pound and Hughes can illuminate this point. Pound was an American poet who lived in England for a time, and Hughes was an English poet who lived in the United States for a while. Both were influenced by those experiences. Both Pound and Hughes also benefitted from translating poetry from other cultures, so they took themselves out of the local within the Anglosphere and across cultures, literatures and languages.

T. S. Eliot, whose *Waste Land* benefitted from Pound's editing, wrote an important introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems* in which he says that Browning and Yeats, and not Whitman, an English and Anglo-Irish poet respectively and not an American poet, were "the first strong influences upon Pound" (Eliot 8). Then Eliot, himself an American who became British, says the next influences were the English poets, Swinburne and William Morris. Other influences on Pound are,

in Eliot's view, Dowson, Lionel Johnson and Fiona (Eliot 8–9). Eliot shows how Pound innovated verse in English: "One of Pound's most indubitable claims to genuine originality is, I believe, his revivification of Provençal and the early Italian poetry" (11). It is the other or the foreign that Pound, like Hakluyt and Shakespeare, uses sometimes to remake English culture, language, literature, what we now say in English rather than English. Eliot is perceptive in seeing the universal in the particular, which is one of the main points of my article, and that echoes William Blake's idea of seeing the world through a grain of sand. Choosing between universals and particulars, as in Aristotle's ranking of philosophy, poetry and history, may, in some ways, be beside the point. In fact, there are many permeations of the universal and the particular, and, more specifically, in the relations among the local, national and international or global, as I have been arguing. Eliot says of Pound that he sees Italy and medieval Provence "as contemporary with himself" and that "he has grasped certain things" in them "which are permanent in human nature," being much more modern, for Eliot, when he treats of them "than when he deals with modern life" (Eliot 11)[1]. Thus, Eliot sees in Pound's earlier poems the influence of poets in English and in Provençal and Italian. Quite rightly, Eliot thinks that these influences prepare the way for Pound's version of the Anglo-Saxon poem, "The Seafarer," and what Eliot calls in Pound's *Cathay*, "the paraphrases from the Chinese" (12). Speaking of Pound as a translator, Eliot has high praise: "And good translation like this is not merely translation, for the translator is giving the original through himself, and finding himself through the original" (13). The self defines the other, the other the self, the original and translated poem defining each other in a new light.

When discussing Pound, Eliot has much to say about translation that is germane to the notion of local culture and the transcultural as they are expressed in literature: "As for *Cathay*, it must be pointed out that Pound is the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" (Eliot 14). Eliot addresses illusions about translations; for instance, when a foreign poet is well translated into the idiom of our language and time, we think the translation gives us the original. The Elizabethans, according to Eliot, thought they got Homer through Chapman and Plutarch through North, but "we see that Chapman is more Chapman than Homer, and North more North than Plutarch, both localized three hundred years ago" (14). Eliot predicts that Pound's *Cathay* will be called magnificent poetry from the twentieth century more than a translation, something I have also said about Pound's Chinese poems. For Eliot,

1 On Pound and Provençal, see Capelli.

Pound invented Chinese poetry in English for his generation, and Eliot says that each generation needs to translate for itself and that Pound's poems and translations should be considered as one accomplished whole, all of which makes good sense. (Eliot 15) [1].

A few examples from Pound show the range of his creation and translation from within English and from without, from the local beyond the national to the international or global and back. The opening lines of Pound's rendition of "The Seafarer," from the Anglo-Saxon, a language that is a stranger unto modern English, although its ancestor, suggest that Pound's ear for poetry brings us lines of beauty that are not the original but that will lead us to enjoy them for themselves and perhaps seek the original, as we did in university: "May I for my own self's song's truth reckon, / Journey's jargon, how I in harsh days/Hardship endured oft" (Pound 77). The inversion of word order, alliteration, assonance and consonance all contribute to a sense of the Anglo-Saxon of the original while being poetry of high order itself. The "harsh" and "hard" echo with a difference that moves but builds the sense of the toughness of the journey.

In *Cathay*, Pound calls Li Bai ( 白 ,Li Po, Li Bo, Ri Haku), by the name Rihaku. Pound's poetry is great in and of itself, making the reader wonder about the greatness of the original Chinese, but never being identical to it or its equivalent. The opening of "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" is a case in point: "While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead / I played about the front gate, pulling flowers" (Pound 129). There is nothing strained in these lines, reaching for the original in such a way as to turn the English from itself. Pound uses plain English, an analytical word order, and, through this simplicity and directness, achieves poetry. In "Leave-Taking Near Shoku," Pounds also creates lyrical lines in his rendition of the Chinese: "The walls rise in a man's face / Clouds grow out of the hill / at his horse's bridle" (Pound 136). The assonance of "a" in "walls" "a" and "man's" and the consonance in "walls," "rise," "man's," and "face" and the internal off-rhyme of "rise" and "face;" the play of assonance and almost assonance of short and long "o" in "Clouds grow out of;" the consonantal off-rhyme of "walls" and "hill" (although one is plural); the alliteration of "hill / at his horse's" (including the assonance in the first part); the buzz sound of the plural "s" in each of the three lines from "walls" to "his;" the short and long "i" sounds from "rise" to "bridle" all bind the lines together with a music of which the reader may not be conscious. Pound weaves this apparently simple English with a formal mastery. The poetry of Pound, as Eliot says and as I have said to audiences and classes, works as poetry

1 On Pound's relation to Homer, see Flack; on his *Cantos*, see Pollack.

even if some call it translation. It is not an easy thing to write fine and enduring poetry, so if the Chinese original inspires Pound to do so, then he has done his job. Like Eliot, I urge us to remember that translation is something that allows us to gain as well as lose, but that it also can never attain the original. Pound takes the "local" Anglo-Saxon or the regional Germanic realm of that language of his ancestors and mine, but also takes the Provençal, Italian and Chinese, the intercultural or transcultural and transforms English poetry. He may transmogrify the poetry of England, but Pound also goes beyond the national to the United States and all places that are Anglophone or study literature in English, even in the space of comparative literature and world literature, and takes poetry in English into a new space over time. As soon as other literatures, including those of France, Italy and China, are considered in relation to texts by Pound, then his poems transform them as they did his, so that text and context find themselves in ever-new configurations. The local, national and global (international or intercultural) act on one another and transform one another.

Like Hakluyt and Pound, Ted Hughes was keen on translation. Hughes saw translation as vital to expanding English poetry, as can be observed in his work on Miroslav Holub, Zbigniew Herbert, Vasko Popa, Yehuda Amichai and Samuel Beckett[1]. Daniel Weissbort and Hughes edited the first ten issues of *Modern Poetry in Translation* (1965–71)[2]. When Seamus Heaney reviewed Hughes' *Wodwo* in 1967, he commended Hughes for the "quest for the father country of the mind" ("Book Review" 50–52). Heaney also regarded Hughes as being like W. B. Yeats because they both connect people to the land through feeling and myth as the creators of the ancient Greek dramas had done[3]. Hughes tried to use translation and crossed cultures in his work in drama. For instance, in 1959, Hughes worked with the composer Chou Wen-chung on a libretto of the *Bardo Thödol*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Hughes also adapted Seneca's *Oedipus*, which, in 1968, Peter Brook directed at the Old Vic Theatre in London. In 1971, Hughes also collaborated with Brook to create *Orghast*, a dramatic representation of the Prometheus myth for a festival in Iran. The language of *Orghast* is a new language that Hughes invented to explore transnational or transcultural mythology. Hughes wrote a great deal for the theatre as a powerful translator and adapter of poetry and drama, ancient and modern[4]. In his later years, Hughes translated Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*,

1 See Roberts 81–82.

2 See Weissbort 7–14.

3 See Heaney, "The New Poet Laureate" 46.

4 See Bassnett 82.

Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, Racine's *Phèdre*, Aeschylus's *The Oresteia* and Euripides's *Alcestis*, so that this very English poet was, paradoxically, given to translation and to expanding the boundaries of his poetry and of English poetry with this intercultural and international exchange past and present.

The letters of Ted Hughes suggest that this figure who became the poet laureate of Britain was immersed in the local, national and international or global. Some of that range can be found in his interest in ecology. As a child, Hughes had a sense of place in Yorkshire and later settled in Taunton in Devon, and his sense of nature, whether he was at Cambridge or on London or in the United States or western Canada remained. His relation to nature and the ecosphere or biosphere grounded Hughes in the local, made him cry out to the nation to seek a clean environment and to engage with nature in Britain and North America. The natural world imbues Hughes' poetry and concerns his prose.

The Calder Valley, where Hughes grew up, appears in his letters, for instance to Fay Godwin, in which he said: "What grips me about the place, I think, is the weird collision of that terrible life of slavery—to work, cash, Methodism – which was an heroic life really, and developed heroic virtues — inside those black buildings, with that wilderness, which is really a desert, more or less uninhabitable" ("To Fay Godwin," 4 July 1976, *Letters* 379). Later, Ted Hughes recalled his "early experience of Methodist puritanism in the Calder Valley" ("To Nick Gammage," 7 April 1995, *Letters* 681). To Glyn Hughes, Ted Hughes referred to his own *Moortown* as "my Calder Valley book" after thanking Hughes for his own book about the region in *Best of Neighbours* (1979) ("To Glyn Hughes," [November 1979] *Letters* 430). In April 1997, Hughes was diagnosed with cancer. In his letters afterward, he revisited familiar themes and places, including the place of his childhood: "And where are the foxes of the wild Calder Valley?" ("To Keith Sagar," 15 August 1997, *Letters* 690). In writing to Herbert Lomas about his book of poetry, *A Useless Passion* (1998), about the death of his wife, a volume Hughes admired and with which he saw parallels in his own book of poems, *Birthday Letters,* about the death of his wife Sylvia Plath, Hughes said, referring to his favourite painter Cranach, "Calder Valley foliage always seems to me the model for Cranach's" ("To Herbert Lomas," 1 October 1998, *Letters* 732). Here nature and art connect between the local and the universal of mimesis. In one of his manuscripts, Hughes wrote about the lifelessness and acidity of the Don River, in the heart of the coal belt (Add Ms. 88918/6/12 Unbound 4074A, p. 44, British Library). Dennis O'Driscoll asked Seamus Heaney whether Ted Hughes and his fishing friend, the painter Barrie Cooke, had an influence on Heaney concerning environmental issues, and Heaney

replied thus: "Pollution, especially of rivers, was an obsession with the pair of them, and it was something I myself knew about from childhood. […] So I was an apt pupil" (O'Driscoll 336)[1]. Ted Hughes's concern about nature is something local, national and global.

In addition to Pound and Hughes, there are other instances of the mixing of the local, national and international in the realm of culture, something discussed briefly in what follows. At some point, there seems to be no local and global culture, but a mixture of the two in some liminal space, sometimes within the same person or writer. Sometimes the local and the global can complicate or even occlude the national through transnational or transcultural instances or examples that are dual or multiple in culture, what we sometimes call multicultural now. Asia and the Asian are also keys to the local, national and global.

Here, I shall speak briefly of Western contacts with China about the time of Shakespeare or the Renaissance, and two writers of Asian background writing in North America, one in English in Canada and the other in Chinese in the United States. Nicola Trigault and Louis Gallagher translated Matteo Ricci ( 利瑪竇 , 利玛窦 Lì Mǎdòu, Li Ma-tou, Li Madou; 西泰 Xītài), an Italian Jesuit who lived in China and studied the culture even as he represented the church in Rome. Father Ricci was a Jesuit who cofounded the mission in China with Father Valignano. He wrote his diary in Italian, and it was translated into Latin and published in 1615 by Father Nicola Trigault. It was Trigault brought from Macao to Rome, along with an account of the death and burial of Ricci. About three hundred years after Marco Polo, Ricci was responsible for reopening the door to China. In the years following this publication, the work had four Latin editions; three in French; one each in German, Spanish, and Italian. Excerpts appeared in English in *Purchas His Pilgrim* in 1625. Three centuries after Ricci's death, Father Tacchi Venturi published the original diary in Italian. In 1953, Father Louis J. Gallagher's more complete English translation of the diary of Trigault's Latin version appeared (see Hart, *Poetics of Otherness* 73–82).[2] Ricci was of both Italian-Latin cultures and of Chinese culture, and was himself translated across languages and cultures. Actual and cultural translation play a key role in making one locale global, in the meeting and changing of cultures. He was a go-between or mediator who explained one culture

1 On related themes in Hughes, see Gifford, Armitage, Whitley, Wormald.

2 In Ricci, see Gallagher, "Translator's Preface," xvii–xviii. The "Foreword" is by Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, written 1953, ix–x. "Trigault to the Reader," dated January 14, 1615, from Rome is on xi–xv. Gallagher's "Translator's Preface" is on xvii–xxii. Ricci's main text begins on page 3.

to the other, but also rekindled a cultural exchange between Europe and China that changed each sphere.

All local cultures become global in some senses and all global cultures are rooted in the local. Two writers, Joy Kogawa and Bei Dao, also show a duality or multiplicity of places, times and cultures. Kogawa's lyric poetry represents the moment, which can never just be itself. In *Jericho Road* (1977), Kogawa uses a title that alludes to Jericho, which God promised to Joshua, but the road was that of the Good Samaritan, and this collection of poetry has a typology of then and now, here and there, a natural and supernatural road. On this way, strangers turn out to be friends and the unexpected happens, so identity and otherness, the local and the world beyond define each other[1]. Japan is the other place in Kogawa. The different locale also exists for Bei Dao (Zhao Zhenkai), a Chinese poet, who creates local and faraway places in his lyric moments. In translation, we also experience a movement from the location of Chinese to the world of English. In *The Rose of Time: New and Selected Poems*, Eliot Weinberger presents a bilingual edition, including translations of poems from 1972 to 2009 by Bonnie S. McDougall, Weinberger and others. Bei Dao, in English translation, gives a vision of Asia and America, something that Kogawa also evokes in her poetry[2]. Comparative literature is open and encourages comparison, such as of these poets and their multiple worlds[3]. Asia and the world encounter and change each other, and Asian countries developed a diaspora globally, including an important one in North America. The local seeks a new locale. Across the globe, people bring their local cultures to new places. The particular becomes universal, the local, global, and each affects the other, so the universal is made of particulars and the global of different local cultures

**III**

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle all valued universals, but did so from the particular vantage of Athens of their time. Paradoxically, the success of their argument for the universality of their philosophy and its precedence over poetry or what we might now call literature spread to Rome, and then to modern Europe and beyond with the expansion of western Europe to the New World and globally. Greek philosophy became Western philosophy and, in some ways, a significant strain of world philosophy. So this very local Greek philosophy of this polis was used for state or national and imperial means on a European and then a global scale. Plato and

1 See Ricci; Hart, *Textual Imitation* 121–133.

2 See Kogawa; Dao; Hart, *Textual Imitation* 133–136.

3 See Bessière, "Comparative Literature," *Qu'est-il arrive;* and Rorty.

Aristotle were also keys to the development of Christian theology, and Christianity was the religion of European states and empires, including the Russian Empire. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, found Aristotle to be a principal source for his thought. Thus, from a secular and religious point of view, these Greek philosophers spread from a city state to empires and states or nations.

In *Poetics*, Aristotle placed philosophy above poetry and both above history because universals were more important than particulars. Ironically, Aristotle was analyzing tragedy, epic and other genres of poetry in Athens and Greece, which were culturally and temporally bounded, but valued universality above the specific historical context. What Plato and Aristotle talk about as keys to language, literature and others subjects is mimesis, imitation or representation. The Platonic Socrates seeks to displace Homer as the centre of Greek education, seeing in the poet and his poetry an imitative way that is at three removes from reality, unlike philosophy which considers reality and the balance of soul and state in terms of beauty, justice and truth. Homer, however, has stuck around and was part of literary and rhetorical training from the Greeks to the present in Western culture, and that spread globally with the expansion of the European nations and empires. The rivalry of different disciplines such as philosophy, literature and history has not gone away, although it can often be counterproductive as fields overlap. Aristotle was used to argue that the indigenous peoples of the New World were natural slaves and not quite human. Sepúlveda took this position and Las Casas argued against it, showing the contention or *agon* of ideas beyond the original contests within Athens. Montaigne also criticized the Spaniards and Europeans for their abuses in the New World. Philosophy and poetry could, through modes of interpreting mimesis or other ideas, be abused within European nations and beyond with globalization, but this abuse was also resisted. Interpretations varied and vied.

Shakespeare represents the local, national and intercultural (transnational) in his poems and plays. He imitates and reconfigures the classical world of Greece and Rome, revisits their history and stories in different genres of epic, tragedy and comedy. In the history play, as well as in the comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare stages the local and the national, that is, England. In the *First Folio*, his friends Heminge and Condell had decided to call histories only those plays about the nation, and in Shakespeare's day that was England and not Britain, Scotland or anywhere else. Like Hakluyt before him (as Hakluyt's *Discourse on Western Planting* was completed in 1584 even if it was not printed until 1877) and Pound and Hughes after him, Shakespeare used translation and other cultures to help to make the identity of English and England. The exotic could remake the local or

national culture. Shakespeare blends Englishness with otherness to make something new, as Pound and Hughes did. Like Homer, Shakespeare became a centre of his people's education. Shakespeare became the heart of English literature and then of literature in English, and with the spread of British and American power, of Comparative literature and world literature.

Pound, an American, and Hughes, an Englishman, help to make literature in English even more international and, to use Pound's dictum, make it new. Poetry, for Pound and Hughes, cannot be sealed from the world and finds enrichment with other European and Asian cultures. Through Matteo Ricci, Joy Kogawa and Bei Dao, I briefly suggest that there is a whole vast field concerning the local, national and global in relation to European contacts in Asia and Japanese and Chinese writers writing in Canada and the United States (and elsewhere in English, French and other languages). The particular and the universal are like the local and the global, and we need both to know, and sometimes they are mediated through states and nations and even, in the past, empires. The movement can be both ways because we know through our local time and place and generalize from that into something more global and universal, but the operation can be mutual. In other words, the local and the global modify each other. In fact, they are often bound up in a dynamic operation over time and space that involves an intermediary polity, often the state or nation. The local, national and global are often inextricable and to favour one over the other is to miss that inextricability, which can be seen as much through literature as though philosophy and history. We write and read locally, nationally and globally as we are specific and general beings in thought, imagination and action.

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# The Dialectics of Interculturality: Aleš Debeljak's Cosmopolitanism

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**Abstract** In the present, the concepts of *local* and *global* are being used in sundry circumstances, which is why they have acquired many meanings. They may mean much and, precisely because of that, very little at the same time. The question appears even more evidently when applied to culture, which can be neither limited to nor contained within national or state borders. In this article the author attempts, on the basis of the literary and essayistic work of the late Slovenian public intellectual Aleš Debeljak, to delineate a novel approach to this question, namely to reintroduce a concept of cosmopolitanism, for which Debeljak and others opted. Debeljak, a child of the former Yugoslavia, developed as a poet in its last plentiful and relatively happy decade, the 1980s, and in addition to Slovenia, adopted the broader country as his own. When he moved to the USA to earn a doctorate in social thought, the USA became his third home base. With his opening towards the world, Debeljak also connected his idea of belonging, that is, the concept of identity. This article discusses the juxtaposition of the concept of identity with the positions of local, global and in-between.

**Key words** Local; global; Aleš Debeljak; cosmopolitanism; identity

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To my dear friend Aleš Debeljak (1961-2016)

**Introduction**

When thinking about the concepts of *local* and *global,* we usually consider them in opposition to one another. They have anchored themselves in our consciousness as representing rather contrary perceptions: the local as turned inwardly, self-absorbed, and exclusive; the global as outwardly, open, and inclusive. In a parallel way we also perceive their values: local pertains to something small, limited and domestic, and consequently, also less important, whereas global resonates as spreading, far-reaching, worldly and significant. While such comprehension seems plausible in terms of, for instance, politics and economy (we can credibly claim the existence of global economy, trade and travel), it is much more difficult to unequivocally maintain the same for culture. The opposite stance, if one looks deeply enough, can be found already in the Bible: "The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going" (John 3:8). Needless to say, any effort to limit and fence in the culture should raise doubts.

It is precisely in the nature of culture that it is both or, better yet, everything at the same time: local in its nature, yet global in its presence; faithful to idiom, yet eager to take on new conversations. Culture, despite what has been claimed since the Romantic period, appears to be rooted in human activities much more locally than nationally. Yet the question of why we cling to concepts that segregate culture, such as nation and nationality, remains (disregarding their linguistic differences) basically unanswered. The distinction, it appears, between local and global cultures rests on their quantity, intensity and distribution, not on their respective quality. It is therefore possible and even necessary to imagine structurally different concepts of understanding and living a culture, those in which there is no isolation or separation but only integration. The elucidation of one of the examples of this integration is the topic of this article.

The case in point is the work of the late Slovenian poet and essayist Aleš Debeljak, which energetically defends a different understanding of merging of and mingling among cultures, that of interculturalism. Even though the present-day popularity of the concept gives everybody the right to take a stance on the subject, it is only those individuals who have truly experienced multiculturalism, a theory based on the presumption of utter equality among cultures, who may voice an informed opinion about it. Debeljak's is a perfect example of a lived interculturalism: he was born in Slovenia (which was still part of Yugoslavia at the time), began publishing all over Yugoslavia, and went on to the USA to earn a doctorate in social thought. Along his way through the three *topoi*, he was exposed to and absorbed various cultural influences; after having come to terms with them, he developed a simultaneous existence in all three. Instead of separating them, he created bridges among them, which again proved the superiority of cultural inclusiveness over its opposites. Obviously, only such an attitude could enable the formation of Debeljak's rich cultural (intellectual and artistic) identity. He called this attitude *cosmopolitanism*.

Nevertheless, exactly at the time when Debeljak was engaged in his *cultural masonry*, in other words, in establishing his cosmopolitan identity, the catastrophic disintegration of Yugoslavia occurred, and with that, his main identity pillars crumbled. As a consequence, the tragic sinking of a once-multicultural country drove home Debeljak's desperate understanding as a cultural orphan, somebody without a foundation on which to base his identity. In Debeljak's distraught mind, this devolution dredged up a telling analogy: that of Yugoslav Atlantis (cf. *Tihotapci* 171), with its former mythical splendor and its consequent disappearance. Many inhabitants of the former Yugoslavia would agree that its foremost qualities were its peoples and their respective cultures. For Debeljak, this was an extremely painful realization that even if the human spirit may hover over geographic and temporal distances, it is nevertheless that one place from which one's roots really grow. With that also comes its curse: the impossibility for some of seeing their own source as equal, consequently leading to numerous national(istic) conflicts. Here, Debeljak realized, even cosmopolitanism cannot be of help because, first, one has to believe in cosmopolitanism, and second, even cosmopolitanism cannot thrive without its roots intact. In the case of Yugoslavia, "The world is falling into crumbs like dry bread" (*Somrak idolov* 34). Bloody nationalistic conflicts unnecessarily took many lives. Many of those who remained alive by fleeing became completely uprooted involuntary refugees and found themselves caught between the Scylla of the local and the Charybdis of the global, viciously torn away from their realities, which instantly became memories that could never be relived again. Continuing to believe — despite the obvious

— in the humaneness of humanity and the primarily cultural interaction among people, Debeljak and others like him, émigrés without a homeland, became caught in the past of Yugoslavia that overnight turned into a Yu-ghost-lavia.

**Culture as *Cosmos***

The *global culture* syntagm does not stand for cultural goods that belong to humankind as it has been portrayed by its proponents, but rather amounts to revealing the dominance of one cultural realm, of one global civilization over all others. In our concrete sense, globalization does not mean the simultaneous ubiquitousness of all world cultures — because this simply cannot happen — but rather the dominance of Western culture. Since globalization reveals qualities similar to the mathematical process of rounding different fractions to one common denominator, the largest numerator — which, today, is the contemporary American walk of life — essentially influences the outcome. Because of their sheer quantity, these examples do not even have to be enumerated. Since our concrete globalization is a monocultured endeavor, the question arises as to the true, ideally cultured *globalization*. Such concept, because of the inherent differences among cultures, can exist only as their parallel omnipresence, a vast cohabitation of cultures.

Our factual globalized reality, despite having created a pleasant and complacent feeling of the concurrent existence of assorted cultures, supports the competitive predominance of singular significant cultural traditions. It is interesting that the same, although to a much smaller degree, can be said for the lesser cultures because they seldom mingle. Therefore, the real question appears to be: how do cultures in fact co-exist?

Regardless of the answer, the only true position that can take advantage of more than one cultural tradition seems to be consequently the *in-between*: the position *inter* cultures or, put more plainly, the intercultural perspective, the one that, by sitting on the fence, enables a perfect perspective on both (or more) sides. It is not the familiarity with or immersion into one big *global* culture, but rather an equidistant placement outside of it, a position in-between that permits a more realistic, fair and comprehensive, even if distanced, perspective. Thus if the most convenient metaphor of one/national culture is an island, interculturalism could be best represented by a bridge, a structure connecting two equally important shores.

Even though in the contemporary world many, if not most, countries embrace more than one (dominant) culture, it is not unusual to claim that the relationships among cultures could have reached its highest points in the multi-ethnic countries — there were some even in the course of modern human history, such as Aus-

tro-Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Canada, whereas among the most recent attempts is the creation of the European Union. An almost rhetorical question is whether it will meet a similar fate to its predecessors. In the past, such national conglomerates were more numerous; yet, after Romanticism and its emphasis on the idea of nations, the successful continuation of these states became increasingly challenging. Needless to say, in more than one such case, states (empires) absorbed by national liberation movements disintegrated in pitiless conflicts. These multicultural political formations fell apart mostly because their multiculturalism never was truly practiced, and their singular national aspirations understandably took the upper hand since the "Siren's songs" (a metaphor frequently used by Debeljak) of nationalism have always been simpler, easier to grasp and to follow, and therefore more easily intelligible to the general public.

However tenaciously such nationalisms keep reappearing, there has always been a steady trickle of individual voices raised against this collective *madness* and in favor of the *unity in diversity* (to use a Leibnizean slogan borrowed for the EU motto in 2000). The task of this idea that they, too, support is to make differences count and to make the cultures, as sources of those differences, rise to equal levels, in other words, to account for every cultural idiosyncrasy and acknowledge its intrinsic value. Since a greater part of the populace chooses the easier path, listening gleefully to and following national myths, a much more demanding task is left for those who manage to avoid the simplistic appeal of national appurtenance and instead choose the path of acceptance, tolerance and understanding of other cultures.

Among the very few people who sincerely believed in and truly lived such multiculturalism was the Slovenian poet and essayist Aleš Debeljak. Born in 1961 in Yugoslavia, he entered his twenties at a time of unbelievably open, politically relaxed social conditions, when it was truly possible to believe in the ideals of equality among the country's peoples, and when civil society — at least in Slovenia — had an almost unbelievable influence on the twists and turns of the political life. All across Yugoslavia, Aleš Debeljak started making his name as both a sharp-minded essayist and an influential poet with a clear, decisive voice. From the outset, his works were published in all parts of the country, from Macedonia and Montenegro to Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia. By having taken part in the intensive creative wave of young intellectuals in the 1980s, Debeljak managed to weave a web of distinct connections and friendships that helped open the rational borders of his native Slovenia and seemingly suspended him, without destroying his roots, in the space above them. It is this hovering that changes the necessarily limited *frog's* perspective and turns it into a profoundly liberating multicultural experience. Intrinsically

embracing other cultures usually proves, not cumbersome and arduous, but on the contrary, intellectually, artistically liberating and creatively invigorating. The term Debeljak used for such an open existence was not, as one would have expected, *multiculturalism,* but instead *cosmopolitanism,* as he overgrew the *Blut und Boden* approach to culture and substituted it with its predominantly urban understanding (as compared with Cicero's *civis totius mundi*). He found his artistic "godfathers" much less among Slovenian canonical writers, but in numerous intellectual figures from other parts of Yugoslavia, such as Miloš Crnjanski, Ivo Andrić, Meša Selimović, Danilo Kiš, David Albahari, and many others. One sole exception to this was the work of a Slovenian émigré to the US before the World War II, Louis Adamič, who for Debeljak admirably embodied cosmopolitanism(cf. 2005, 12 *et passim*). Debeljak's growth into the multiple cultures of Yugoslavia helped him develop his unique artistic voice, define his cosmopolitan creative self, and launch him into the orbit of Yugoslav intellectual life. Debeljak thus entered the proverbial Yugoslav Tower of Babel that numerous peoples inhabited. Having left the suffocating straitjacket of exclusive nationalism, something Slovenians in general were traditionally quite reluctant to do, he donned a colorfully creative robe of multicultural co-existence.

Assisting in his description of existence in that realm was Debeljak's seminal theory, which bolstered the development of his multicultural ways: his ideas of national and intellectual identity. In addition to various contemporary definitions of identity formation, including the mathematical notion of the union of two or more sets, Debeljak adopted a perception of identity that takes on the shape of waves rippling out in concentric circles. These "concentric circles of identity" (cf. *Tihotapci* 146, 237), as he frequently called them, take their source from the individual's self and follow the ceaseless spreading of his intellectual, artistic, and creative involvement. His innermost self belonged to the Slovenian background, which he, as it will become obvious, did not renounce. Yet, with his intellectual potential he adopted other cultures with which he managed to form and maintain a delicate equilibrium. Hence, in line with his *elective affinities*, he became, following his writerly influence D. Kiš, a true cultural inhabitant of Yugoslavia, as he had already been a legal inhabitant.

For Debeljak, his determined existence *in-between* meant nothing less than residing on top of the bridge arch spanning between two locally rooted cultures. This did not *per se* mean the abandoning of his native culture and uncritical acceptance of globalization, which *nota bene* also tempted him. Rather, by wholly accepting both the culture from which he had grown and the new cultures with which he had come in contact, he became an ardent apologist of cosmopolitanism. Debeljak,

though stemming from a small, not to mention fringe, culture, intellectually became a citizen of the world.

**Local: Slovenia**

Debeljak entered the local cultural realm by publishing both poetry and literary essays. From the outset these writings were given different roles, which he maintained for the remainder of his life. In his essays, Debeljak's infatuation with the *big world* and its influences regularly came into relief, while his poetry — even with its numerous worldly influences — remained emotionally conditioned, even lyrical. Debeljak published eight books of poetry, all but one of which were translated into several languages.

For Debeljak, understanding poetry was less than sacrosanct. This was not in the sense that he had not believed in its power and its capacity to influence anyone who would come into contact with it, but rather that it was meant for everyone and was everywhere. Poetry belonged to all places through all times. Through this understanding, he equipped his intensely reflexive yet delicate poems with an abundance of chronotopic *paraphernalia* such as "seemingly unimportant information, data, dedications, dates, locations, etc." (Kušar). This "poetic or lyrical archeology" (Kušar)[1] also lends itself perfectly to application to Debeljak's theory of identity circles. Throughout his literary career, his poetry remained mainly associated with his primary locus, Slovenia or, even more precisely, his hometown of Ljubljana.

In the era of Postmodernism, with its deviation from firmer values and absolute concepts, Debeljak's earlier books of poetry, *Zamenjave, zamenjave* [*Exchanges, Exchanges*], *Imena smrti* [*The Names of Deat*], *Slovar tišine* [*Dictionary of Silence*], and *Minute strahu* [*Anxious Moments*], turned to the emotionally charged rendition of both the world and the self in it. Three of his first four books of poetry, carrying in their titles such weighty concepts as death, silence and fear, exude a sentiment of anxiety, a trembling mood of insecurity, and a gently melancholic sensitivity. It was only in the collection *The City and the Child* (1996), following the birth of his first child, a daughter, that stronger, more affirmative sentiments entered his creativity. Though it ostensibly figured in his title, the city was not specifically identified. The sole geographical defining element in the entire collection was the Karawanks (a range of Slovenian limestone Alps) while other localities – for instance, the names

1 See *In memoriam: Aleš Debeljak. Vse, kar je napisano, je naše*. Kušar, Meta, editor, 30. 1. 2016, <www.ludliteratura.si/esej-kolumna/in-memoriam-ales-debeljak-vse-kar-je-napisano-je-nase/.>

of cities such as Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Belgrade, or simply "at home and abroad" (*The City and the Child* 22), were added only to the poems' dedications.

The city's local topography became a more dominant presence in his poetry at the turn of the millennium. After having conquered the world — he was broadly published both in Europe and in the USA — he obviously felt the need to return to the oldest part of his cosmopolitan bridge and the innermost circle of his identity: his hometown of Ljubljana. In *Nedokončane hvalnice* [*Unfinished Hymns*], Debeljak predominantly reveals his emotional states, and sentimental ruminations permeate the subject's memories, dreams and literary and broader cultural associations. Nevertheless, he manages to smuggle in a few specific pieces of information that help locate the geographical points of reference. One poem bears a note that it was written in Piran, a coastal city in Slovenia (*Nedokončane hvalnice* 13). Three others bear witness to romantic Ljubljana locations such as Tromostovje (*Nedokončane hvalnice* 17), the Dragon bridge (*Nedokončane hvalnice* 21) and the Stari trg street (*Nedokončane hvalnice* 63).[1] Despite the focus of this collection on inner reflections, the few *external* stipulations refer to the nooks and crannies of his home city. This fact reveals that Debeljak's deepest emotions and poetic self-definition, as expressed in his poetry, sprang from his innermost identity circle, the first that every individual, according to Debeljak's own theory, acquires and which remains his most defining one. It is neither the country at large, nor even his compatriots, but rather, the urban tissue with which he feels most connected and to which he relates with the deepest understanding.

Debeljak's later poetry books, such as *Pod gladino* (2004) and *Tihotapci* (2009), also feature geographically chiseled poems. The first, which could be translated as *Under the Surface*, devotes a poem to Debeljak's native Ljubljana with its romantic corners (9-10), Mestni trg street (30) and other locations familiar to him. Meanwhile, in the latter, translated into English as *Smugglers* and published in 2015 by BOA Editions in Rochester, the city as both the source and the locus of the author's poetic imagination rises again. This book offers a perfect insight into the poet's topically emotional renditions of the proximate world. He himself called it "the mapping of the time" (Kušar)[2], even though every second or third poem is preceded by a location descriptor such as, to name just a few, "Tesarska street, Ljubljana" (*Tihotapci* 11), or "Yildiz han, Karlovška street, Ljubljana" (*Tihotapci* 25), or "The Railway Station, Ljubljana" (*Tihotapci* 97). It bears no importance for Debeljak

1 See *Nedokončane hvalnice* (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2000).

2 *In memoriam: Aleš Debeljak. Vse, kar je napisano, je naše*. Kušar, Meta, editor, 30. 1. 2016, <www.ludliteratura.si/esej-kolumna/in-memoriam-ales-debeljak-vse-kar-je-napisano-je-nase/.>

whether these places are secretly romantic or evidently mundane, since they render his created personal, experiential map of the city visible. They function as simulacra of the real geographical space, with its historical and social connotations, on the one hand, and on the other, as an imaginative *house of curved mirrors* opening itself to the poet's wanderings and musings. Hence, even though the existential components of the city remain recognizable, it is with surprise that the reader follows Debeljak through the meanderings of its instantaneous life. In this last book, however, this de- and re-familiarization process has been given a rather provocative twist: the poem *The Insomniac Society* is set on Slavko Grum Street, named after a seminal Slovenian playwright in the period before World War II whose texts were predominantly in the decadent vein, but this street does not exist in reality. With even so logical a name, the location tears open a completely unknown space, one that plays on the reader's gullibility, only to pry open another realm for imagination to wander in. The seeming reality initiates the imaginative undulation only to impose itself onto the real one.

Debeljak's last published book, *How to Become a Human* — its working title was *Abeceda otroštva* [*The Alphabet of Childhood*] — contains lengthier single paragraphs in which he traces the entangled meanderings of his childhood memories. With it, Debeljak once again returns to the closest *well of memory* in order to expose his locally individual history and elevate it into his cosmopolitan realm, comparing the local and the cosmopolitan with the rest of his global existence. Debeljak returns to his home in order to start constructing the bridge to the world at large and perpetuate his hermeneutic circle of identity.

Regardless of whether space definitions in Debeljak's poetry belonged to the real or unreal sphere, there is no question as to the nature of those places: the vast majority belong to the metropolitan sphere. It is therefore not difficult to fathom Debeljak's innermost circle of identity: he was doubtlessly an *urban animal*. In *Non-lieux: introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité,* Marc Augé exquisitely describes the idiosyncratic character of contemporary cities, where *no-places*, modern-era shopping malls with their atomized, anesthetized and almost spellbound masses, stand in utter opposition to the *human* city. From its ancient beginnings, the city meant something completely different: it stood for an assemblage of different people, for their tolerant coexistence, and for the exchange of their patchwork individual cultures. What the city has always symbolized are connection instead of disconnection, tolerance instead of narrowmindedness, sophistication instead of vulgarity. It is arguably the most abundant gathering of different individuals and, traditionally, the most bountiful nexus of their cultural habits, their ways of life and

arts of existence, best described by the eternal, albeit unfortunate, metaphor of the Tower of Babel. Despite man's encroachment upon the Creator's rights, the Tower of Babel belongs to the most human of all our creations.

It is no wonder, then, that Debeljak perforce chose such a conglomerate for his intellectual cradle, the crux of his existence as a human being, a poet and a thinker. There could be no other way for Debeljak's self-comprehension than the very turf of the riches of the urban rhizome, whereas the self-absorbed fanfares of nationalism remained as strange and distant to him as ever. Debeljak did not identify with *one and only* perception of the world; he, most of all, did not need the seemingly firm foundation of a collective mentality in which the individual is subjected to the ideals of the (national) group. Even though he acknowledged more distant *identity circles* such as those of a nation, these were less influential. In his essays, Debeljak frequently discussed the load of the national inheritance, which necessarily leaves its marks on each and every one of us and, through that, unavoidably defines us. He did not repudiate, let alone negate, this fact and yet, in his opinion, this was (and should be) possible only to a degree. He defined this in the introduction to his collection of three essays geared towards understanding the individual through national culture, *The Individualism and Literary Metaphors of a Nation* (1998). In these essays, he tried to "surpass the provincial narrowness of the national cultural tradition while simultaneously resisting the seductive sirens of illusions about a kind of 'freely hovering' internationalism" (*Individualism* 9). Even more explicitly, he stated the connection of the two in a subchapter of the aforementioned essay: "The national culture as the source of cosmopolitanism" (*Individualism* 41). For Debeljak, culture, both individual and national, was tantamount to the bridge, as well as the fundament on which it stood. His bridges, obviously, necessarily permitted bidirectional traffic. Without going away, there would be no coming back, and without coming back, one could never leave again. Yet, the movement was the most important thing. Without this to-and-fro progression, one would become numb, paralyzed and self-contained. Debeljak's existential modus scintillated through his poetry and permeated his essayistic texts. Rarely, if at all, in present times has Slovenia had such an intellectually and artistically compelling thinker as was Aleš Debeljak.

**In-Between: Yugoslavia**

As we have seen above, Debeljak returned to his national geography later in his creative life. In the 1980s, however, when he tried to reach for the firmament, his focus was the *distant shores.* Hence, the ripples of his cosmopolitan identity spread only incrementally. The closest shores to which he could build bridges were the cultures

of his country at the time, Yugoslavia. The local appeared to be too limiting and served him only as his springboard in his quest for true cosmopolitanism, while the global at that point did not yet seem close enough. This process of rippling circles is easy to spot in his incipient collections of essays such as *Melanholične figure* [1][*Melancholic Figures*] and *Postmoderna sfinga: kontinuiteta modernosti in postmodernosti* [*The Postmodern Sphynx: The Continuity of Modernity and Postmodernity*].

His homeland, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, encouraged him to make his early steps into the world of poetry, and assisted in creating his engaged, intellectual public presence. In his later texts, he frequently returned to those formative years and admitted to having been forever influenced by the lived experience of multiculturality.

Debeljak is one of the few thinkers who not only have experienced, but also lived, the immanently contradictory contingency of local and global, domestic and foreign — in other words, their synchronous combination. In particular, he was not able to follow the blindly automatic response to (nationally) familiar as well as (internationally) foreign and ascribe positive and negative values, respectively, to them. For him, Slovenian nationality and its language did not *per se* already present a sufficient foundation for affirmative collective identification; contrarily, he did not understand numerous examples of the cultures in Yugoslavia as intrinsically foreign and therefore negative. The only trigger of his judgment was the cultural heritage of those nations, with which they notably abounded. Whether the former Osmanli architecture of either Sarajevo or Skopje, or Austro-Hungarian vestiges in Croatian and Slovenian cities, the profoundly sorrowful tunes of Bosnian *sevdah*, the Serbian folk melodies performed on one-strings or the Dalmatian bands' upbeat fishermen songs, Debeljak developed a profound sympathy for them and adopted them as very much his.

It seems true that in multinational states, one can develop a feeling of the phenomenon in which something may appear foreign and familiar at the same time. A similar phenomenon occurs when, for instance, citizens of the same country meet in an utterly unexpected place: a feeling of appurtenance or even closeness to a completely unknown person occurs. Debeljak, too, described his meetings with total strangers who carried the same passports and were nevertheless more or less familiar with the others' provenience and culture at large. In Yugoslavia, we used to be strangely familiar with each other without really having any closer notion or idea of each other. Although this may sound unusual, there was a liberating sensation in this feeling. We felt as if foreign people, places, books and songs belonged to us, and as

1 See *Melanholične figure* (Ljubljana:Univerzitetna konferenca ZSMS, 1988).

if we belonged to them, even if they stemmed from quite different cultural codes. This belonging together made us richer, opened up barriers among us and relegated individual existential fears to the background. For Debeljak, who built his allegiances on a higher level or broader scope — on those of culture — it is at this point that the conventional terms of *local* and *global*, by losing their static positions, lost their traditional meanings. In his understanding they were uprooted and could switch positions, with the local becoming global and vice versa. At the same time, his theory of the concentric circles of identity may be perceived differently, not from the traditional perspective: the closest circle does not contain one's national definition but, rather, one's most important cultural stimuli. It can consist of other factors such as good novels, exquisite poems, or exciting dramas, which in fact all prove that what appears distant may sometimes be closer to one's mind and soul than what sits next door and speaks the same language.

Thus, in his indirect response and in opposition to Peter Handke, an Austrian Slovenian writer, whose *Eine winterliche Reise zu den Flüssen Donau, Save, Morawa und Drina oder Gerechtigkeit für Serbien* [1996; *A Journey to the Rivers: Justice for Serbia*][1] used the imagery of Macedonian long-haul truck drivers as a symbol of the peculiar connection among the people of the former Yugoslavia but took the side of the main culprit in its devolution, Debeljak brought into relief precisely the astonishing realization that even what is totally foreign to one's own upbringing and lived experience may indisputably belong to the closer circles of one's identity: "Even if we differed from one another in clothes, language, faith and the music we liked we had one trait in common: we were each other's unknown acquaintances" (*Somrak idolov* 21). Admittedly, there is an exceptionally liberating feeling in this notion.

Debeljak, raised in the 1980s in the slowly dimming but still phenomenally open cultural conditions of Yugoslavia, managed to ontologically grasp, internalize and bring into life this aforementioned contradiction. He had to realize — albeit not without grief — its reverse stance as well: "therefore what is familiar appears the most foreign" (*Somrak idolov* 24), as he later wrote in his embittered collection of essays, *Balkanska brv* (*The Balkan Footbridge*).

**Global: USA**

In the 1980s, the gruesome outcome of Yugoslavia's internal strife was not to be predicted. At the same time he entered the Yugoslav literary scene, Debeljak's en-

1 See Handke.

ergetic and curious intellect had set a new goal. Following other Slovenian authors, Debeljak set his goals more broadly: he, too, was mesmerized by the USA. He thus made a decision to enter academia and earn his doctorate from an American university. Even though he later returned to the United States as a Senior Fulbright Scholar at the University of California at Berkeley, the Roberta Buffet Professor of International Studies at Northwestern University and on numerous poetry tours, it was this period that appears to have been the most influential for him. In addition to his scholarly endeavors such as his PhD in Social Thought from Syracuse University, Debeljak took advantage of these years in order to both broaden his experience and position himself as a poet there. Thus, he established the largest concentric circle of his identity: the global. In both realms, he performed exceptionally well. In fact, he was so successful that, for various reasons, both professional and personal, he ended up calling this new circle his "second homeland" (*Na dnu predala* 133).

He began his bridge-building efforts as soon as he arrived in his new environment. In addition to numerous poetry publications, following in the footsteps of his fellow Slovenian poet Tomaž Šalamun and thus bringing his Slovenian/Yugoslav pedigree to the fore, his efforts were directed to linking both cultural *shores*. Even before he finished his education in the United States, Debeljak put his efforts into introducing American culture to Slovenians from his very personal, even poetic point of view. The result of this effort were two collections of essays: *Temno nebo Amerike* [*The Dark Skies of America*] and *Pisma iz tujine* [*Letters from Abroad*] published in 1991 and 1992, respectively.

*The Dark Skies of America* was his continuation of a tradition started in the early 1970s by the Slovenian essayist and playwright Primož Kozak. After having spent a semester at the University of Iowa's creative writing programme, Kozak wrote the essay *Peter Klepec in America,*[1] which developed a novel perspective on Slovenia through American eyes. Debeljak's attention, in contrast to Kozak's restrained ruminations, was devoted to different snippets of American life: from the historically unwavering institution of the academic campus to the vim and vigor of American intellectuals, from diverse forms of intellectual life to serious questions about the mass media, from the intriguing appeal of television evangelists to the growing notion of a new religious consciousness. Debeljak finished *Dark Skies* by juxtaposing both cultures: grandiose, cathartically dynamic and liberatingly uprooted America and self-absorbed, incessantly anxious and overpoweringly immobile Slovenia. Yet, regardless of the differences between both of these cultural milieux, and the consequent seducingly persuasive dominance of the former, Debeljak could

1 Primož Kozak. *Peter Klepec v Ameriki* (Marlbo: Obzorja, 1971).

not bring himself to renounce the latter. He remained loyal to both of them, thus creating conditions for his true cosmopolitanism.

The second collection, *Letters from Abroad*, continued the first volume's comparison of America and Slovenia. Debeljak seemed not to have come to terms with all the incentives the new continent provided. He broadened his interests to include world politics and sociology, literature and music, art and creativity as such, masterfully interweaving them so that none existed on its own but unavoidably branched into others. Hence, music assumes social connotations (Bruce Springsteen), momentous literariness (Bob Dylan, long before the Nobel Prize announcement) or almost religious prophesying (Lou Reed); while literature (Jay McInerney) turns into ruthless, naked reality, and poetry collections (Christopher Merrill's *The Forgotten Language*) become historic renditions of long-lost languages. In the form of letters, Debeljak chooses an even freer mode of expression with even fewer constraints on his fascinatingly restless imagination. In one of those letters, "The Meaning of Artistic Cosmopolitanism," Debeljak touches upon what became the *fil rouge* of his creative instinct, the question of intellectual belonging. Even though both books were primarily devoted to the culture of the USA, one can, unfailingly, realize his choice: it is through the experience of the other that one can really assess one's own culture. Only through the comparison between oneself and the others obtained through self-imposed "voluntary exile" (*Pisma iz tujine* 140) may one correct one's necessarily myopic nationalistic perception. It is precisely the "experience of searching and existential risk" (*Pisma iz tujine* 142) that develops the individual self in all his/her aspirations. These essays quite clearly set the tone for Debeljak's subsequent writing: in these works, he interweaves his succinct, brainy and intellectually astute observations with the expressions of his emotional reactions, thus creating an intricate combination of piercing thoughts and warm-hearted emotions.

Even if in his first two collections on America, Debeljak appears to have squared accounts with this incomprehensibly vast and continuously astonishing country, any presumption that finishing his doctorate, which he received in 1993, and moving back to Slovenia would diminish his fascination with America could not be more mistaken. Once he had opened up his identity to include the USA, he embraced the basic trait of a cosmopolitan: to turn back and start introducing his "new" country and its culture to the Slovenian public. His third book on the USA appeared in Ljubljana in 1998 and was entitled *Atlantski most* [*The Atlantic Bridge*]. In contrast to the first two collections, Debeljak now devoted his attention to the idiosyncrasies of American literary metafiction. In his introductory chapter, *The Road across the Atlantic Bridge*, Debeljak explains the meaning he bestowed on this the-

oretical composite: "Cultural tradition namely 'covers' a broader space from what civic identification or ethnic origin may comprise" (*Atlantski most* 7). Enchanted by his great new country, he sees the Atlantic during the period after World War II "not only as an ocean of separation but that its waters and worlds, which they wash, in an increasingly unavoidable way take part in the rites of invigorating rapprochement and customs of mutual fertilization" (*Atlantski most* 9). The United States of America, for Debeljak, was not only an economic, political and military, but also a cultural powerhouse. Understandably, overcome by the intensity of his experience, Debeljak followed the popular vision of Europe and its contemporary culture as the stale, sterile, limited and self-absorbed expressions of an "elderly lady" while the United States spurted its youthful creative energy with few limits. Hence, Debeljak writes, "the bridge arches across the Atlantic and the Channel, invisible, yet ever so real bridge across which from one end to the other pour innovative energy and aptitude for social ascent, literary bestsellers and smart stylistic expressions, attention for the complex human destiny and enthusiasm for attractive labyrinths of the genre discipline" (*Atlantski most* 8-9).

Regardless of countless impulses, the most profound traces were left by the literary endeavors of Henry James, John Ashbery, Paul Bowles, Bret Easton Ellis, and Raymond Carver on the one hand and Ivan S. Turgenyev, Anton P. Chekhov, Albert Camus, and Tomaž Šalamun on the other. It is quite logical that *The Atlantic Bridge* was dedicated to the aforementioned American authors, since most of them had recently reached the zenith of their fame. This was also the time when Postmodernism was becoming influential in academia. Debeljak, too, became one of its most ardent adepts, as seen in his very popular book *Postmoderna sfinga*[1], which was one of the earliest and most spirited presentations of the new literary current in Slovenia. Each rendering of the artistic jewels of one culture into another means adding a brick into this bridge and with each elucidation, increases comprehension of its achievements, strengthened with additional mortar. When this process rests on the individual conception buttressed with artistic taste, it opens up, not a path, but a road between peoples, cultures, and civilizations.

Despite Debeljak's infatuation with American literature, it must be stated that he never went off balance to completely embrace only one side. Even though he concedes that the Atlantic bridge provides Europe with "jets of restorative juice, vitalistic enthusiasm and revelation in excesses of body and soul" (*Atlantski most* 9), he does not leave his national and cultural wellspring behind. In this book he eru-

1 See his *Postmoderna sfinga: kontinuiteta modernosti in postmodernosti* (Salzburg:Wieser, 1989).

ditely acknowledges the qualities that the continent, despite its occasional slips into (self-) destruction, always managed to bring up: refined twists of cognition, breath-taking pinnacles of intellectual endeavors, enviable breadth in the grasp of tradition, together with its irreplaceable, soft and mellow irony. It is also those qualities that the representatives of the American "Lost Generation" between the two World Wars managed to perceive and take advantage of. What Debeljak sees as the most fruitful in this "traffic" between or among cultures is precisely the meeting and/or crossing of two or more of them: as he states elsewhere, it is the tension between the local and the foreign cultures that yields the most abundant crops. For him, this was the way in which true cosmopolitanism was created: belonging to no particular place means belonging to all places simultaneously. This elusive existence does not convey narcissistic superficiality and selfish gratification. It does not stand for an escapist existence that only runs away with the automatic feeling of cerebral and cognitive superiority. On the contrary, stepping on Debeljak's bridge establishes merciless expectations, requiring hard intellectual work and painfully honest self-critique: only then can one improve and make progress in one's endeavors: "The Atlantic bridge makes thus the open two-way road of creative and spiritual exchange possible" (*Atlantski most* 10).

**Culture of Chaos**

After this extensive description of the realization of his cosmopolitan identity based on the Goethean cultural *elective affinities*, it is probably easier to understand Debeljak's despair during the 1990s, in which the country he idealized fell apart before his eyes. For Debeljak, the devolution of Yugoslavia, by destroying the spaces he identified with, likewise annihilated hopes for the culture as a credible basis for identity. It proved all of his conjectures, even his identity premises, wrong. If previously, Debeljak understood Yugoslavia as a given, with most of the interesting authors living in every corner of the country, this country was now devastated and turned into a multicultural wasteland. What was once Yugoslavia was now Yu-ghost-lavia.

It was at this point that Debeljak truly became aware of the importance of the mixture of peoples and their cultures that influenced him so. His pain took literary form in his most open and hurting essay on the devastation of his ideal, *Somrak idolov*, which was immediately translated into English and published in the United States as *Twilight of the Idols: Recollections of a Lost Yugoslavia* [1]in 1994. It was received with wide acclaim at home, in Europe and overseas.

1 See his *Twilight of the Idols: Recollections of a Lost Yugoslavia* ( Fredonia, NY:White Pine P, 1994).

Later still, towards the end of his life, Debeljak returned to this topic, showing that it remained a source of anguish. He published *Balkanska brv* [*Balkan Footbridge*] in 2010 and devoted it largely to the displaced people or, rather, his numerous friends who had lost their homeland overnight and sought refuge in the countries that benevolently accepted such orphaned existences. Debeljak planned another book, which he never completed.

There is no doubt that the *Twilight of the Idols* was Debeljak's most sorrowful text about the new conditions of his world. It was originally published in 1994, when the bloody armed conflicts in the former republics of Yugoslavia, together with the unfathomable and cruel siege of Sarajevo under the auspices of such uber-nationalistic politicians as Slobodan Milošević and F. Tuđman were in full swing, only ending in February 1996 after 44 months. Debeljak's book was among the very few voices in the former Yugoslavia that voiced the mourning of its disintegration. Unlike many writers and intellectuals from the southern parts of Yugoslavia who had to flee their brutally ravaged country, Debeljak was fortunate enough to remain in Slovenia, only to witness the disintegration of literally everything he stood for, reminiscent of Odysseus helplessly listening to "the Sirens of the inherited mythological archetypes, the Sirens of tribal tradition" (*Somrak idolov* 10), the poisonously sweet nationalistic tunes others were fiercely dancing to. The curse of those spellbinding songs is that they must be sung in unison, thus cutting off disparate, diverging, perhaps even opposing voices: "Where the collective memory […] takes over, everybody thinks the same. Where everybody is thinking the same, nobody is thinking at all" (*Somrak idolov* 17). Consequently, "the experience of living in the draught of cultures" (*Somrak idolov* 19) is mercilessly suppressed. Arguably even more painfully, the rationale behind enlightened, cosmopolitan existence is destroyed. This is hurtful particularly to those who venture out and manage the courage to think (and create) independently from any mainstream ideology. It is those individuals who truly lift their personal engagement to the heights of art.

In this text, which in fact crystallizes his views on identity, cosmopolitanism, and the value of culture, Debeljak rendered an account of his most important intellectual inspirations. Hence, in addition to Marcel Proust, Sigmund Freud, André Gide, and Rainer Maria Rilke, he also mentions I. Andrić, Josef Brodsky, and Czeslaw Milosz, together with many other authors who were the epitomes of independent imagination.

Roughly a decade and a half later, Debeljak published *The Balkan Footbridge,* in which he once again returned to his favorite topics: Yugoslavia, its peoples and literatures, and the authors displaced by the ravaging of their country. Even though

Debeljak had previously written about his main literary inspirations, here he bows to those who placed the literatures of the Western Balkans on the map. In addition to the already mentioned Bosnian/Yugoslav writer and Nobel Prize winner I. Andrić, Debeljak also acknowledges the influences of Andrić's compatriot M. Selimović, and devotes his full attention to two Serbian authors, M. Crnjanski and D. Kiš.

Crnjanski, a long-time émigré, figures as a precursor of the forcefully displaced people of the present day. In his youth, Debeljak viewed Crnjanski's writing from the perspective of emigration, which at the time functioned in a strangely liberating fashion since it offered the "unbearable lightness" of foreignness, of belonging nowhere, and of not-being-forced-to-fit-in state of mind on the one hand, and an unavoidably solitary existence with one's roots undercut on the other. Debeljak later came around to this view.

Kiš, on the other hand, was considered one of the best Yugoslav novelists. In his writing, he unfolded the polyvalent and multi-centered experience to which he and his family had been subjected. For Debeljak, Kiš's advantage was in his "creating at the crossroads of the Habsburg, Byzantine and Ottoman legacy" (*Balkanska brv*, 144-45), which necessarily meant insights that transcended the national. In addition to that, Kiš's writing reflects elements of Ahasverus, the Wandering Jew, and the perspective of an émigré, as he too was Jewish and had moved from Belgrade to Paris. As Debeljak admits, Kiš, especially his *A Tomb for Boris Davidović* or *Garden, Ashes*, in fact opened for him the prospect of intellectual appurtenance, the possibility of becoming a citizen of the Republic of Letters and thus choosing spiritual citizenship over the national. In Debeljak's words, he "found support for the belief that it was possible to remain loyal to the primary landscapes of personal geography and history, and simultaneously cultivate links with global cultural movements" (ibid., 145). Here, Debeljak made his first steps towards understanding cosmopolitanism: here were laid its foundations after he had become aware that the "concentric circles of identities [did] not spring from the community after all, but from the individual's self, rippling through the layers of local, national and regional cultures" (ibid. 146).

Yet, when Debeljak initially correctly identified a steady stream of (literary) émigrés, beginning with Ovid and ending with D. Kiš and others, he did not realize that his generation would be among the most heavily-hit. In the 1980s, emigration—as in Crnjanski's case —appeared full of "promises of fresh perspectives and adventures, precious experiences and realizations about the sense of existence" (ibid., 175), while the 1990s became the Yugoslav *Apocalypse Now*. A decade later, all Debeljak could do was collect distressed individual existences scattered around the

globe, like tumbleweed across the desert, in what became a state of permanent exile, such as those of David Albahari, Aleksander Hemon, and Igor Štiks, all remarkable (formerly) Yugoslav writers. All three of them chose North America as their safe haven, and some traded their native languages for English while others, such as Albahari, did not. It is in their cases, too, that Debeljak reassured himself anew of his experientially broad and intellectually profound cosmopolitan stance, which after the Yugoslav tragedy acquired a new dimension. In this case it is a question of the disappearance of a country's symbolic realms, in which all three writers used to live. This existence ended abruptly with no prospect of reemerging. Suddenly their lives, too, violently collapsed and took with them the gist of what they represented, a part of their identities. Debeljak shares Albahari's realization that there is no escape from history and that it is ingrained in our selves. What happens if history is brutally ripped away from us and our own identity becomes void? Is it possible to maintain a cosmopolitan existence without a foundation to recline against?

Debeljak's answers to these questions are established in all of his arguments, spread through his numerous books of poetry and essays. He holds the firm belief that the answer lies in individual creation: in art. It is through art that the human being reaches her/his highest potential by opening her/himself to the world.

In a peaceful world — if there is such a thing — a world with no violent outbursts nor cruel consequences, among the more difficult paths to self-realization is that which transcends one's national preconditions and spreads its wings to the four corners of the world. In this situation, there usually are no external reasons for emigration, and exiles reflecting personal choices may be predominantly self-imposed. The period after World War II abounds with such examples, including Brodsky, Kundera, and Miłosz. In any case, the possibility of returning to the departure point generally exists. The ideal identity that Debeljak exemplifies is precisely of this kind. The possibility of going to and fro between local and global, and the ability to stop at any point along this route, creates the conditions for a person to build and develop her/his individuality and enrich her/his identity. This is the process that enables us to experience true cosmopolitanism, which reveals itself as the identity of no single place and all places at the same time, as a constant movement from one source to the other.

Yet the true tragedy occurs when this open world comes to an end. One can, following Debeljak, ask the survivors the identity question: if their history and their past have been ferociously torn away and the wells of culture they drank from disappeared, what happens when one survives the destruction of the past? What may the orphans of history do? Where is refuge for those who do not want to return to

the local shouting of nationalistic chants, who cannot switch to the global by uprooting their selves?

True cosmopolitanism may exist only if all the arches of its bridges stand firmly on the ground. In other words, it is nigh-on impossible to live a truly cosmopolitan life without sapping juices from the various singular cultures simultaneously. When one of the legs is undercut and suspended, the individual's perception becomes disabled and her/his agonies abound.

According to Debeljak, "He who does not know what he lost, did not lose anything" (*Somrak idolov* 31). Needless to say, in the destruction of his Tower of Babel, he experienced the devolution of all of his ideals, of the sense of life he thought had been the only one worth living. He realized with despair that regardless of the height that the human spirit attains, there are always instinctive reactions that overpower and drag the human race down. The feebleness and unsteadiness of the human spirit was probably his biggest disappointment. Yet, in his words, "hope in human life is not a luxury but a necessity" (*Balkanska brv* 252). Following his legacy, one should, regardless of circumstances, rise to the task and construct new bridges, new connections among cultures. One should concern oneself with the acceptance of otherness, with tolerance of separateness, since this is the only existence truly worth living.

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# Local and Global Contexts: Some Aspects of Neo-Latin Poetics

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**Abstract** David Porter argues for the inclusion of neo-Latin, as a transnational language, in the corpus of world literature. He discusses two poems by the sixteenth-century Northern humanist Jacobus Susius, Francis Paget's nineteenth-century Lucretian poem, Sol Pictor, in comparison with Pope Leo's epigram on the art of photography and finally an elegiac satire Adolf Eichmann by Harry C. Schnur in order to show how Latin literature was adapted to divergent contexts and milieus and functions both as part of a specific local and historical context and as part of an established literary tradition. Emphasis is placed on these works of well-known but technically accomplished poets in order to highlight the large corpus of neo-Latin works available and their critical neglect in non-specialist literary studies.
**Key words** Neo-Latin, Translation, Poetics, Epigrams, Classical Tradition
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## Introduction

Anyone now writing in Latin is no longer writing in the *lingua franca* of science, theology, education or an international language of correspondence, but it is impossible to write in Latin without being aware of that tradition. Although Latin's presence in common discourse and education has diminished, it has, at the same time, become astonishingly easy to access and read even rare or obscure works in Latin. Numerous volumes of older works, free from copyright, have been digitised

by such projects as *Google Books* or *The European Digital Library,* and are now freely available. There are in addition a number of specialised projects dedicated to different areas of Latin studies, such as the *Library of Humanistic Texts* (Sutton), which provides hypertext editions and translations into English, mostly of poetry and plays from Great Britain between the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, or *CAMENA: Latin Texts of Early Modern Europe* (Kühlmann), which stores numerous texts related to early modern Germany. Twenty-first-century readers of Latin have numerous resources and online communities in which to share their works. Scholarly editions and critical studies of post-classical, medieval and neo-Latin texts are appearing in increasing numbers. What is also needed for the appreciation of later Latin literature is a drive towards its (re-)acceptance in the broader canons of world literature. In light of the ongoing critical evaluation of the vast corpus of Latin tests, it is necessary for more non-specialist readers to consider seriously, first the Latin works of multilingual canonical authors (if necessary, with the help of translations) such as Joachim du Bellay, George Herbert and Giovanni Pascoli, which often rival their vernacular compositions, and second to reclaim the works of once internationally-acclaimed authors such as Johannes Secundus, George Buchanan, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski and John Owen (Audoenus). Surveys and anthologies of western and world literature should consider more of post-classical Latin than the usual snippets of medieval Latin lyrics and Thomas More's *Utopia,* which are often all that are included, to represent a literary tradition that has had a central place throughout most of western history.

Latin is a global, or at least an international language, and in the interest of maintaining that function, its discourse risks accusations of uniformity or artificiality in contrast to so-called "living" vernacular languages. For that reason, Latin vitality and connections to various local contexts in time and place often require reclaiming. In the preface to his study of English literature of the sixteenth century, having to grapple with neo-Latin works with which he was not entirely sympathetic, C.S. Lewis wrote:

> Where I have quoted from neo-Latin authors I have tried to translate them into sixteenth-century English, not simply for the fun of it but to guard the reader from a false impression he might otherwise receive. When passages from Calvin, Scaliger, or Erasmus in modern English jostle passages from vernacular writers with all the flavour of their period about them, it is fatally easy to get the feeling that the Latinists are somehow more enlightened, less remote, less limited by their age, than those who wrote English. (VI)

On the one hand, it is perhaps the privilege of Latin authors to appear "less remote." Lewis's style of translation highlights the tension between a seeming agelessness of Latin and the connection between individual compositions and a fixed time and place. Although not an immutable language, the Latin of the sixteenth century resembles the Latin of the twenty-first century in a way that the language of the Elizabethan poets does not resemble our own. The benefit of Lewis's approach establishes a parallel linguistic divide to English, but only through subverting the intentions of Latin authors, who were choosing Latin, in part, for its distancing from the inconstancy of vernacular writing. Written texts reflect where they are created, but the strength of Latin is that it extends that into less temporally restricted and often broader trans-national contexts. The complexities and tensions involved in that endeavour require exploring, not obscuring.

**Jacobus Susius and Northern Christian Humanism**

Jacobus Susius (also Jakob Suys and Jacques De Suys, 1520–92)—not to be confused with the Flemish Jesuit Jacobus Suys (1590–1639)—was lord of Nederveen, Tolsende and Greysoord, and studied law at Leuven in the years 1537–41. Born in Zierikzee, where he later served the city council and then was mayor, he went to Mechelen in 1552 and settled in Liège by 1590.[1] He was known as a Catholic humanist and manuscript collector, with extensive connections in scholarly circles of the Low Countries, but he published little, save a small volume of poetry released near the end of his life in 1590, which, as the title suggests, contains poems on both sacred and secular topics. The collection begins with a prefatory letter to a friend:

> D. Iano Dousae Toparchae a Noortwiick, Viro incomparabili.
> Mitto ad te V[iri]. Cl[arissimi]. ut tandem lucem videant Carmina mea aliquot interdissipatas schedas nuper a me reperta, prout horum superiorum exulceratissimorum. Ea quaeso te nunc hilari fronte accipete digneris, Amicitiae inter nos mutuae perpetua ac luculenta futura pignora. M. Manilio tandem aliquando manum admovebo: quem tibi cum Arato Germanici Caes. quam emendatiss. propediem daturum recipio, una cum Iconibus Astrorum perantiquis, si quidem peritum sculptorem per te nactus fuero. Vale amicorum

1 On these and other details of Susius's life, see Bostoen, Binnerts-Kluyver, Hattink and van Lynden-de Bruïne.

integerrime.
Lugduni Batavorum, Kalend. Augusti: An. M. D. XC. Tuus ex Animo. Iacobus Suys.

To Janus Dousa toparch to Noortwiick, man with no equal:
I send word to your most illustrious self that at last some of my poems, which I recently found scattered about on various scraps of paper which were previously festering away, might see the light. I now beseech you to accept, with a light-hearted disposition, whatever pieces you deem worthy as enduring and bright pledges of our mutual friendship that will continue between us. At some future time, I will send to you a copy of Manilius and with it Aratus with the accompanying translation by Germanicus Caesar, which I endeavour soon to furnish with emendations, along with some very ancient drawings of the stars, if at last I shall receive a skilled engraver from you. Farewell most virtuous of friends. Leiden, August 1590 Yours in spirit, Jacobs Suys. (Susius 3–4)[1]

The addressee is Janus Dousa (1545–1604), statesman and scholar and then librarian at the University of Leiden. The offering of verse in a depreciating manner is conventional, but the letter serves to publicise the connections between the senior scholar and Susius's own academic endeavours. The promise to send Dousa copies of the works of the ancient poets Manilius and Aratus advertises his personal ownership of these manuscripts and generosity in sharing his library, a virtue not universally upheld in early modern circles. These manuscripts in fact survive: the Aratus is now in Leiden University Library, and the Manilius in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I at Brussels (Bostoen et al.). Anthony Grafton has described Susius's labours in copying Manilius as "painfully slow-working" (I. 190), but in his lifetime, Susius's erudition was well-respected amongst his wide network of friends. Susius's book of poetry includes two satires and an elegiac poem lamenting the destruction of the Spanish wars, various psalm paraphrases, epigrams, and short translations from Greek. The publisher was Franciscus Raphelengius (Frans van Ravelingen), then professor of Hebrew at Leiden University, and individual poems are dedicated to various well-known scholars, including the aforementioned Janus Dousa, the printmaker Arnault Nicolai, Justus Lipsius, Abraham Ortelius, and Hadrianus Junius, who died prior to publication in 1575. These dedications assert the author's connections to well-known Low Country humanist scholars,

1 All translations are my own.

establishing his credentials in the "Republic of Letters" in general and more specifically as part of the circle of scholars connected to Leiden University (then becoming one of Europe's leading universities), where Dousa was librarian and Lipsius was professor of history. In this way, the publication serves a means of securing one's intellectual standing. In turn, it provides a context for reading these poems. For a prominent owner of Greek manuscripts, translation is a natural preoccupation. One departure from his interest in Greek is Susius's translation from the Italian of Petrarch of the penultimate sonnet in his collecting *Il Canzoniere* (365), originally known by the Latin title *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*:

I' vo piangendo i miei passati tempi
I quai posi in amar cosa mortale,
Senza levarmi a volo, abbiend'io l'ale,
Per dar forse di me non bassi exempi.
Tu che vedi i miei mali indegni et empi,
Re del cielo invisibile immortale,
Soccorri a l'alma disvïata et frale,
E 'l suo defecto di tua gratia adempi:
Sí che, s'io vissi in guerra et in tempesta,
Mora in pace et in porto; et se la stanza
Fu vana, almen sia la partita honesta.
A quel poco di viver che m'avanza
Et al morir, degni esser Tua man presta:
Tu sai ben che 'n altrui non ò speranza.

I go on weeping for my times past, / that I spent in loving a mortal thing, / without elevating myself in flight, / I having wings, with which perhaps / I might have made not a low example of myself. / You who see my shameful and ungodly sins, / invisible and immortal king of heaven: / help this straying and frail soul, / and fill its shortcomings with your grace, / so that, if I have lived in war and in storm, / I may die in peace and in port; and if my stay / was in vain, let my departure at least be honourable. / To what little of life that remains to me / and at my dying, deign your hand to be present: / you know well that I have no hope in any other. (186)

The translation by Susius is entitled *De Petrarchae epigrammate LXXXXVI*:

Transmissos ego plango dies: fleo inutile tempus,
In quo mortalis me res deuinxit amore,
Non me sublimem in caelum sustollere curans,
Ventorum et leuibus seu commisisse procellis,
Grandia sic de me fors Orbi exempla daturus.
Tu mala qui cernis multa, atque indigna relatu,
Rex Caeli invise, ac longo immortalis honore
Auxilio propere me nunc defendere cura,
Defectusque implere meos, ne forte fathiscam.
Et si nunc vixi in bello, saeuisque procellis,
In pace exspirem, portuque: et mansio si fors
Vana fuit, saltim discessio honesta sequatur,
Hoc paruo vitae spatio quod viuere spero,
Inque tua o mihi morte manus velit esse parata.
Etenim quod non alio spes ultima nixa est.

I lament the days past. I cry for wasted time, / in which a mortal thing bound me in love, / Not caring to raise myself to lofty heaven / or if I was to be entrusted to the flurries of the winds or to the storms, / so that the world's fortune would be given great examples from myself. / You who see many evils and things unworthy to relate, the king of heaven, invisible, immortal and with boundless honour, / deign to protect me quickly now with your remedy, / and deign to fill my shortcomings, lest by chance I tumble into pieces. / And if now I have lived in war and savage storms, / let me die in peace and port, and if perchance my stay / was in vain, at least allow an honourable withdrawal to follow. / In this mean interval of life that I hope to live in, / oh say that your hand desires to be procured at my death. / Indeed, acknowledge that the last hope is fixed on no other. (19)

Petrarch was a bilingual poet, who wrote in Latin and Italian. His written vernacular was not the strict language of speech, but a literary blending of Tuscan with Occitan, the usages of the Sicilian school poets, and Latin. Latinisms can be observed in this sonnet, such as *exempli*, *defecto* for *colma*, and *honesta* for *dignitosa*. Although Susius's translation is only barely expansive in accommodating the text to the prescriptions of Latin metre, and in many parts meticulously follows the original, the divergences from the original have transformative effects on the poem. On one hand, Susius maintains the structure of the original and is careful to replicate such

effects as the parallelisms of war and storms with peace and port. On the other, his departure from the original starts with his choice of metre. Susius rejects the traditional metres of Latin love poetry, including the elegiac couplets of the Roman poets Ovid, Propertius, and Tibullus and the hendecasyllabic verse used by Catullus in his erotic epigrams. Yepes notes that their understanding of the Roman love poets often influenced Dutch Neo-Latinists' readings of Petrarchanism (94). Neo-Catullan verse, along with Petrarchanism, enjoyed a considerable vogue in earlier part in the sixteenth century (Ford 55–96). However, Susius diverts Petrarch's sonnet from these modish genres as well as the tradition of Latin love poetry. Instead, Susius utilises dactylic hexameters, more commonly for epic or narrative poetry but also the most common metre of Latin poetry. A reworking of the poem occurs around the subtle rendering of "cosa mortale" into "res mortalis." In Italian, Dante had used *cosa mortale* as an epithet for Beatrice, the object of his devotion, in the fourth stanza of his *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore* (43), and then later in *Purgatorio,* Beatrice admonishes Dante for fixing his desire on a "mortal thing" after her own death (XXXI. 53). Petrarch's sonnet 90 uses the phrase in describing Laura's movements as angelic, and not those of a mortal being. The epithet occurs again in Petrarch's Latin work *Secretum*, a dialogic examination of faith aided by St. Augustine as an interlocutor, in which Franciscus (who stands for Petrarch) affirms: "neque enim, ut tu putas, mortali rei animum addixi; nec me tam corpus noveris amasse quam animam" ("For I have not, as you suppose, yielded my mind to a mortal thing, nor have I, as you know, loved a body as much as a soul"; 210). Although sonnet 365 depreciatingly laments Petrarch's time spent loving a mortal thing, in the *Secretum* he denies ever having wasted his time in such a manner. There is little reason to demand consistency between the two works under such scrutiny, yet this contradiction picks up on the varying ambiguity of the epithet, which Susius further stretches in his translation. In the Italian poetry of Dante and Petrarch, *mortale* suggests an object of affection that is transient and not divine. But Susius's extends that into something more perilous.

Petrarch refers to his time "posi in amar" ("spent in loving" 2), where Susius uses the verb *devincio* to describe the poet as "bound" or "fettered" in love. In the original, the *cosa mortale* is the object of verb expressing the poet's love, but in the translation, *res mortalis* is the subject of the verb binding the poet. The word order is arranged so the poet in the first person, "me," is placed between the surrounding "mortalis" and "res," emphasising the poet's confinement (2). Although throughout his sonnets, Petrarch often elevates his affections from Laura towards the divine, this tradition is absent in the love poetry of the pagan Roman poets. Perhaps the

movement of amatory poetry between languages suggested to Susius the need to strengthen the Christian tone of Petrarch's verse. Perhaps the laywer Susius grasped the use of *res mortalis* in a legal context to refer to a slave, a "human object," suggesting a more negative connotation and debasement and sanctioning a more stringent metaphor in describing the poet's captivity in love (Ulpian, *Dig*. 4.4.11.4–5 in Kreuger, Mommsen et al.; cf. Courtney 247). Susius's metrical choices signal a rejection of amatory poetics, which is then emphasised through poetic effect, setting the tone for the remainder of the poem in a more direct Christian context, stressing the need to place God in a preeminent position in one's devotion.

Aside from this restructuring, Susius draws on the traditions of Latin poetry in his translation. Line four, for example, offers a learned reminiscence that echoes Jean de Gorris's translation of Nicander of Colophon's *Alexipharmaca*, in "ventorum levibus voluit servire procellis" ("he wished to be a slave to the wind's fickle storms" 173), and the phrase 'indigna relatu' is a well-known tag from Virgil's *Aeneid* (IX. 595). These references, though not allusive, illustrate Susius's humanistic poetic training. He utilises translation to refocus Petrarch in the context of the Christian humanism of the Low Countries, bringing Petrarch into Latin and into circulation within the scholarly network of his friends, addressed through his collection. This repurposing of secular letters occurs again in another poem Susius wrote, "De vita Christianorum beata, Martialis μίμησις' ("Concerning the happy life of Christians, imitating Martial"):

Vitam quae faciunt quietiorem,
Optatissime Christiane, sunt haec:
Mens non adsita humo, sed apta Coelo,
Non ignara sui DEIque cultus,
Diues pauperibus reclusa bulga:
Culta, at non Domino invidenda, villa,
Ventrem quae satient dapes inemtae:
Nati candiduli, patris gemelli;
Non fastu tumida, actuosa vita,
Prudens simpliciter: gravisque amanter.
Ode quae faciat DEO propinquum,
Fortunamque animus ferens utramque,
Pro CHRISTO haud timidus subire lethum.

O most fortunate Christian, these are the things / that provide a more tranquil

life: / a mind fixed not on earth, but fastened onto Heaven, / a mind not unmindful of itself, but devoted to God, / a rich purse open to the poor, / a well-tilled farm / but not one which arouses envy from the Lord, / a belly filled with home-grown food, / bright children, their father's equals, / not bursting with pride, an active life, / being innocent but sensible, loving yet serious-minded, / savouring what makes one closest to God, / a spirit that endures both one's fortune whether for good and for ill, / and by no means being afraid to submit to death for Christ. (33)

This is a response to Martial's famous epigram on the happy life:

Vitam quae faciant beatiorem,
Iucundissime Martialis, haec sunt:
Res non parta labore, sed relicta;
Non ingratus ager, focus perennis;
Lis numquam, toga rara, mens quieta;
Vires ingenuae, salubre corpus;
Prudens simplicitas, pares amici;
Convictus facilis, sine arte mensa;
Nox non ebria, sed soluta curis;
Non tristis torus, et tamen pudicus;
Somnus, qui faciat breves tenebras:
Quod sis, esse velis nihilque malis;
Summum nec metuas diem nec optes.

O dearest Martial, these are the things / which make for a happier life: / possessions not laboured for but inherited; / a not unfruitful field, an ever-glowing hearth, / no litigation to attend to, rare duty and a tranquil mind; / a natural vigour, a healthy body, / wise simplicity, friends who are one's equals; / amiable companions, a simple table, / a night spent sober and carefree; / a bed that is not disagreeable and yet modest; / sleep which makes the night-hours seem brief; / that you be what you wish to be and prefer to naught else; / neither fearing your final day nor wishing for it. (X. 47)

Again, Susius illustrates the sixteenth-century humanist poets' strain between secular and Christian traditions of poetry, between scholarly preoccupation with the literary past and spiritual concerns about the future. The communication and

reinforcement of shared values of Christian piety are at play here, but this assertion of shared morality is in the context of a Catholic poet in a circle of scholars centred on the Protestant University of Leiden. In his satiric poems, Susius decries the Duke of Alba's destructive campaign during the Dutch Revolt, which he personally witnessed at Mechelen (Porter 162). The shared values of Christian humanism expressed in his poetry are against a backdrop of religious conflict and violence not far from the life of the poet. They are an affirmation of common values and irenic discourse as a challenge to those conflicts. They stand as an elevation of the Christian scholars and a common language of learned Latin against a political reality of sectarianism and embattled interests.

Another Latin translation of Petrarch's sonnet worth comparing was composed by the Dutch Calvinist Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687). Huygens, a multilingual poet, wrote fluently in Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch and English, as well as translating from those languages in addition to Greek and Italian (see Hermans). He rendered Petrarch's sonnet 365 into three languages, Dutch, French and Latin, over five days in February 1664 (Angelini 138). A fourth translation, possibly in English, is lost (Mönch 144). Huygens held a long-standing interest in Petrarch, even going to visit Laura's grave in 1665 (Mönch 144). His Latin translation into elegiac couplets of *I' vo piangendo i miei passati tempi* runs as follows:

Praeteritos, male praeteritos mihi conqueror annos
Mortalis misere captus amore rei,
Dum propriis ab humo pennis non evolo quo me
ngenii poterat vis rapuisse mei.
Magne deus, quem nemo videt, cui cuncta videntur,
Visaque sunt quorum me pudet esse reum,
Erranti succurre animae, succurre labanti,
Gratia defectus impleat ista meos.
Ut male jactato Bellique Marisque procellis
In portu liceat perpete pace frui,
Et, si vana fuit vitae statioque tenorque,
Ex illa quali cunque decenter eam.
Sis mihi perpetuus comes ac tutela, per istos
Quos super haut longos suspicor esse dies;
Denique sis praesto morienti, Maxime; nosti
Nempe meae solum te caput esse spei.

> I lament to myself the years past, passed wickedly, / wretchedly captivated by the love of a mortal thing, / while I do not fly up on my own wings from the ground from which / the strength of my mind could have carried me. / Great God, whom no one sees, to whom all things are seen / and whose witness renders me ashamed to be the culprit, / Aid my errant soul, aid me in my fall, / fill my shortcomings with your grace. / So that wickedly tossed in War and the storms of the Sea / I might be permitted to enjoy port and perpetual peace / And, if both the station and course of life was vain, / let me depart from it, such as it was, becomingly. / Be my constant companion and guardian, though / day which I hardly suspect there to be any length of time beyond. At the end be present at death, Highest one, you know/ truly that you are the only source of my hope. (VII. 32–33)

Huygens translates into the elegiac couplets of Latin love poetry. Where Susius has the poet fettered, Huygens adopts the Virgilian phrase "captus amore" (2, cf. *Ecl*. VI. 10), which suggests possession or capture by one's beloved. But Huygens's translation, though less strict in following the original than Susius's, bears closer to Petrarch's sense of the predicament of lamenting past love. Huygens, for example, is freer with the text in not trying to duplicate Petrarch's use of parallelisms as Susius does; yet, Huygens crafts his translation elegantly.[1] His effort confirms that Susius's interest in Petrarch's poem was not unique to that one, but that this sonnet held an extended interest for the Northern humanist poets (cf. Yepes 144, 266 *et passim*).

**The Art of Photography in Nineteenth-Century Latin Verse**

Departing from the humanist Latin of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, very different approaches to Latin poetry can be found in the nineteenth century, when Latin maintained a strong presence in education but was displaced from its formerly

1 For a detailed account of the Latin style of this translation, see Angelini 138–44. However, some caution is needed where Angelini finds the departures from classical precedents. For example, she faults Huygens for the apparently metrical *cui*: "au vers 4, Huygens nous propose « vī|dēt, cŭī | cūnctă vī|dēntūr », et ce obligatoirement, vu la scansion du dactyle cinquième et la quantité des voyelles du verbe « videt »; or la grammaire classique nous enseigne que l'*i* de « cui » est normalement long! (« cuī »)" (Angelini 140). This, however, is incorrect: *cui* was both often pronounced as a monosyllabic diphthong (which would scan here) and also frequently treated as pyrrhic by the silver Latin poets, no differently than how Angelini scans the line (Allen 42). Less common, in fact, is Huygens's use here of *nemo* as a trochee instead of a spondee, though that not without classical precedent (Cf. "Nemo se credet miserum; licet sit," Seneca, *Troades* 1017).

preeminent place in scholarly discourse and international communication. Francis Paget (1851–1911), later the Anglican bishop of Oxford, was as an undergraduate, the author of a 210-line poem on photography entitled *Sol Pictor* (*The Painter Sun*), for which he won the Chancellor's Latin Prize at the University of Oxford (Paget and Crum 24). The title is a pun on *Sol Victor,* an epithet for Zeus. The poem begins:

> Non equidem arva canam, nedum praeconia regum,
> Nec Bacchi laudes, nec moenera militiai,
> Pectora nec blanda cuppedinis icta sagitta;
> Res nova carmine pangendast poscitque poetam.
>
> For my part I shall not sing of fields, still less the praises of kings, / Nor the commendations of Bacchus, nor the military tributes, / nor flattering hearts stuck with the arrow of love: / A new thing is to be put in verse and requires a poet. (1–4)

This rejection of pastoral, encomia, and other genres of poem forms a traditional *recusatio*, but with a twist as the poet is turning not any higher form of poetry, such as the epic traditionally announced in such a statement, but something entirely new. The style already signals that Lucretius is the poet's model, through the use of archaic *cuppedinis* for *cupiditatis* (cf. Luc. V. 45), the Lucretian stylistic features such as a strong predilection to frequent elision, alliteration and anaphora, such as *non, nedum, nec, nec, nec*. The model of the didactic verse of Lucretius for a technical topic has classical precedent, but is a departure from the normal models of Virgilian hexameter poetry taught in the schools. It is a means for the poet to exhibit his skill in verse composition, and display his mastering of an unusual model. The exercise also provides the poet an opportunity to demonstrate the poetic vigour of the Latin language through explaining modern innovation in a deliberately archaic style. A former student recalled that Paget's method of composition was "immensely laborious" (Paget and Crum 46–47), requiring working constantly with a dictionary and verifying everything. This is evident in his careful attention to stylistic features and the diction of Lucretius. The employment of archaisms characteristic of Lucretius's style is meticulous: one finds the first declension genitive singular *–ai*, as in *vitai* (8, 28), *naturai* (50) and *flammai* (87, 119), the third declension genitive plural *–um* instead of *–ium* as in *sapientum* (47) and older forms such as as *potis est* (135, 180) for *potest* and *alid* for *aliud* (88, 157). Also characteristic of Lucretius, one finds aphaeresis after a closing *–m*, for example, *pangendast* (4), *perfusast*

(27) and *suppostast* (89) as well as the suppression of final *–s* as in *semotu'* (13), *omnibu'* (48), and *compostu'* (67). Paget also borrows both distinctive words such as *maximitatum* (57, cf. Luc. II.498) and phrases such as "lumine solis" (117, cf. "lumina solis" Luc. I. 5, II.114 et al.), "quippe etenim" (161 cf. Luc. III. 440, IV. 860, et al.) and "genus omne animantum" (201 cf. Luc. I. 4) from his model. Stylistic and metrical features of Lucretian verse, such as very frequent elision, alliteration and assonance, and other repetitions, such as duplicate words from the same root, for example, "imitari imitamen" (174) are incorporated into the poem. Curiously, however, Paget does not follow Lucretius's distinctive coining of compound words, such as *silvifragus* or *caecigenus,* avoiding even those used by Lucretius as well as the invention of new ones.

*Sol Pictor* often emphasises the newness or novelty of its subject, and the poet reflects on the challenge he has undertaken: "Quam sit difficile antiquis exsolvere dictis" ("How difficult it is to explain in ancient diction" 45). The struggle over using ancient words for new purposes and avoiding neologisms is evident, for example, in the poet's use of *gausapa* (100), originally referring to a type of woolen clothing or tablecloth, for the covering of the camera box. A trickier challenge is reforming a description of a chemical process in Latin:

> Diluit ille etenim argentum medicamine tali
> Ut nova materies concresceret in crystallum,
> Qualiter in glaciem concrescit liquor aquai.
> Deinde hac materie chartas ille imbuit albas
> Sub noctis prudens tenebris, ut luce carerent;
> Quae porro eductae dias in luminis oras
> Ante oculos admirantis nigrescore pergunt.
>
> Indeed he washes the silver with such compound / that the new material hardened into glass / just as liquid water hardens into ice. Then with this material this skilled man soaked the white papers / during the dark night, so that they were free from light / which hereafter he brought out into the bright shores of light / where they proceeded to blacken before his astonished eyes. (146–52)

As Paget explains in a footnote, this refers to the scientist Carl Wilhelm Scheele's discovery "that the chloride of silver spread on paper was speedily darkened in the blue rays" (Paget 11). Paget provides Robert Hunt's *Researches on Light*,

published in 1844, as a reference. The Latin passage is not exceedingly technical in its description of the experiment, but rather emphasises the refiguring of Lucretius's poetic style through continued use of alliteration, elision, poetic effects, as with the poetic plural "noctis [...] tenebris," and Lucretian archaisms such as the third declension accusative plural *–is* instead of *–es* ending in *admirantis* or the use of antique *materies* for *materia*. Some phrasing is plucked directly from Lucretius's poetry, such as "dias in luminis oras" (I. 22) and "liquor aquai" (I. 454). The repetitions *concresceret* / *concrescit* echoes Lucretius's own *crescunt* / *concrescunt* (VI. 527–28).

Appreciation requires an understanding of Lucretius's poetry on a stylistic and technical level, along with an interest in adaptation and Latin verse composition. It was a success, as illustrated by the author winning an award and the poem meriting publication, but its success points to a contemporary fascination with technological advancement and occupation with Latin education. Its appeal was that it brought together those two interests at a time where they were often in conflict in pedagogical debate. As Susius's dedications of friendship and pious poetry obfuscate the factional divisions in his social and religious reality, or at least present the world of irenic Christian scholars as an alternative, Paget's rendering of a modern scientific discussion into classical Latin hides the reality that research science was challenging the primacy of classical education. However cleverly scientific theory might be couched in classical verse, the challenge of the rapid development of the sciences and technology against an educational model that emphasised learning to write in ancient languages remained. The clash between science and Latin might not be a visceral one, but it is notable that as Latin retreats from academic discourse, didactic poetry on scientific themes, closely modeled on ancient authors, becomes more frequent in Latin writing.

One off-hand comment in James Joyce's "Grace" was: "'I remember reading,' said Mr. Cunningham, 'that one of Pope Leo's poems was on the invention of the photograph – in Latin, of course'" (Joyce 121, see Brown 27–28). The poem referred to was "Ars Photographia" written in 1867 by Vincenzo Gioaachino Pecci (1810–1903), who later became Pope Leo XIII:

Expressa solis spiculo
Nitens imago, quam bene
Frontis decus, vim luminum
Refers, et oris gratiam.

O mira virtus ingeni,
Novumque monstrum! Imaginem
Naturae Apelles aemulus
Non pulchriorem pingeret.

(Formed by the beam of the sun, / A brilliant likeness. How well / it renders the beauty of the brow, the energy of the eyes / and the grace of the mouth. / O amazing power of genius / new miracle! / Jealous Apelles never painted / a more beautiful image of nature. (44–45)

The meter of this epigram is iambic dimeter. The opening line recalls "percussa solis spiculo" ("Stuck by the sun's beam") from Prudentius's *Morning Hymn* (*Hymni* II. 6), with which Leo would have been familiar from his Roman Breviary. The epigram is short, but struck a chord, and was reprinted and translated numerous times in nineteenth-century and early twentieth- century periodicals.[1] Its appeal stems from a dual fascination with technology and invention and its implications for the future contrasting with language and allusions (such as to the painter Apelles) of the distant past.[2] Although in earlier centuries, a Latin poet could write about

1 For a few—far from exhaustive, and only from English-language publications—examples, see "Pigeonhole Paragraphs" 107, "Ars Photographia" 456, "A Royal Charity Album*"* 67, "The Pope as Poet" 105 (itself quoting a previous article in the *Times*) and "News and Notes" 250.

2 My analysis conflicts with a recent close reading. Miller claims the poem expresses the "acheiropoietic notion of photographs" (22), but this interpretation, however, is undermined by apparent difficulties in understanding the text. "O mira virtus ingeni, / Novumque monstrum" is translated "O new born, wonderful and virtuous entity [or monster/creature]" (25), where every word is misconstrued: the noun *virtus* is mistaken for an adjective modifying *monstrum*, *ingenium* and the enclitic *que* are omitted, and although *monstrum* ("prodigy" or "miracle") in other circumstances could refer to a "monster," it is incomprehensible what beast would be referred to in this poem; it follows that "new born" should be just "new." Often Miller relies on an English translation by T.H. Henry, but that is still usually problematic. For example, Miller complains that Henry "inserts the human mind into the middle of Leo's argument" (25) in rendering the above mentioned "O mira virtus ingeni" as "O miracle of human thought," but as *ingenium* often refers to human qualities such as wit, talent and character, the translation is not far off. In another passage, Miller expounds on "the magic of the sun" (22), seemingly unaware that this supernatural quality denoted by the word "magic" is only present in Henry's translation, and no magic is mentioned in the Latin. The result is that Henry's translation is faulted where is follows the Latin correctly and relied upon when it departs from the original. These troubles with the text are detrimental to the

science and invention in Latin as the natural language of learned discourse, for the nineteenth-century poet, it is an assertion of Latin's vivacity in performing a literary function that it was less frequently relied upon to perform. The epigram celebrating a new invention, and the technological and artistic revolution it represents, thereby asserts the ongoing power of Latin to contend with change and innovation while remaining true to its classical form. In a minor way, Leo's poem established a new genre. The poet Harry Schnur also wrote several epigrams on photography and similar inventions (Schur 44, see Sacré 80) and the poet Joseph Tusiani wrote an ekphrastic epigram on a seaside photograph, "Photographema maritimum" (see Kirby 77–79). The tradition continues also in the skillful Sapphic verse of Anna Elissa Radke's (1940– ) "Telephonum":

> Quae vias nectis, Trivia o Diana,
> machinam dignare meam tueri,
> machinam peritam et amantium con-
> nectere voces.
> Te, Venus, voco volucrum imperatrix,
> mitte machinae tacitae catervas
> passerum, ut stridore mihi indicetur

---

interpretation. Henry is faulted again for translating "oris gratiam" into "lip's fine chiseling":

> Henry unnecessarily imposes upon the poem the suggestion of mimesis, especially in the word "chiseling," whose Latin equivalent is "*scalprum*." As *scalprum* does not appear in the Latin original, "chiseling" thus serves more to obfuscate how the "frontis" (forehead), "vim" (strength) and "oris" (mouth) of the photographic subject are depicted by means of the sun itself' (25).

But s*calprum* refers to a chisel, not "chiselling," and it is not "strength" that is depicted in the photograph, but *vis luminum,* the power of the eyes. While the epithet "fine chiselling" might be allowed for the forehead's *gratia* ("grace"), as a concession to the needs of the rhyme scheme, the objection is illuminating: removing any mention of human artifice in the poem supports the assertion that "Leo's speaker opens with declaration about the unhandmade power of photography, implying that there is no *techne* (skill) to photography; no element of craft; no human tampering; no fiddling or signs of workmanship that could diminish the truth that this "fair" images expresses" (24). But this reading is irreconcilable with the Latin poem as well as the technical skill involved in nineteenth-century photography, which would require the human *ingenium* mentioned in the poem. The author was a cleric, and *acheiropoieta* are religious images; the connection is otherwise tenuous.

vox aditura.

O Diana of the Crossroads, who connects the lines / that are deemed worthy for my machine, / and maintains the skilfully constructed machine / that connect the voices of lovers.
Venus, mistress of birds, I call on you: / send a crowd of sparrows to a silent machine, / so that the incoming call is announced to me / by a ringing sound. (*Carmina latina recentiora* 25)

Through these poems, it is evident that Leo's poem inspired a minor poetic tradition and an ongoing fascination with the adaptation of Latin verse to new challenges. Paget and Leo demonstrate a keenness for innovation. An emerging quality of Latin composition of the past two centuries is an increasing inventiveness, whether following unusual models, or in experimenting with new forms as *vers libre* or haiku (syllabic meters lend well to Latin), or a fashion for translating children's books into Latin. In the decades shortly after its invention, there was a fascination with photography and the new form of mimesis it presents. Paget offered to explore that new invention and interest in the theories behind for a classically-educated audience. Leo matches technological innovation with inventive versification, providing Latin poets with a new model of poetry. Paget's poem has been forgotten, but still represents the potential of Latin verse, even following restrictive models, for adaption and communicating ideas in new settings.

**Harry C. Schur's Poem on Adolf Eichmann**

The final poem studied here is by Harry C. Schnur (1907–1973), who adopts the Latin name Caius Arrius Nurus. Born in Berlin to a Jewish family and trained as a lawyer, he escaped the Nazis, first to the Netherlands and then to Britain, where he and his family were placed in internment camps for six months and where he later served in the Home Guard. In 1947, he moved to the United States, where he began studying classical philology, earning a PhD in 1956. He later moved to St. Gallen in Switzerland in 1973 and died in Hong Kong during a world tour.[1] Schnur himself commented of a limited scope of composing Latin verse:

We cannot strive for poetic originality: if we can achieve a neatly turned phrase, some polished elegance, a few lines a Roman could have understood because they sound like Latin verse-then we have attained our aim, and upon

1 On the details of his life, see IJsewijn; on his Latin verse, see Sacré.

> our modest endeavors the Muse will have smiled. ("Do-It-Yourself" 357)

It could, however, be claimed that most ancient Latin poets, happy to follow Greek models, do not often boast of originality. Sacré relates this statement to Schnur's emphasis on technical perfection in Latin composition (72). Nevertheless, much interesting poetry has been and continues to be written in the Latin language. And there is no reason to suppose that no major works of Latin literature will appear any more than to claim any other lesser-used language cannot ever produce a world class author.

Schnur grouped his poem "Eichmann," which contains over 100 lines in elegaic couplets, with his satires, and although it owes something to the savage indignation of Juvenal, it is more emotionally charged than Roman satire. The subject of the poem, Adolf Eichmann, was one of the key organisers of the Holocaust. Schnur noted that the poem was written in June 1961 (Sacré 76, fn. 28) which places it after the start of Eichmann's trial in Israel but a year before his execution. It opens: "Hic stetit, infandae fabricator caedis – et iste / (Mirum!) non monstro Tartareo similis. ("Here stood, the maker of unspeakable slaughter – and that man (wonderously!) did not resemble a Tartarean monster" 1–2). Soon the poem turns to a domestic scene:

> Uxorem amplexus dat dulcibus oscula natis,
> qui patriis caligis substituunt soleas.
> "Durus erat tibi, Adolfe, dies?" — "Mediocriter," ille,
> "plus nam debuerant suppeditare gasi."
> "Religiosus, vir, nimium es nimiumque laboras." —
> "Pro duce, pro patria nil mihi difficile est."
>
> Embracing his wife gives kisses to his dear children, / who bring him his loafers to replace their father's army boots. / "Was it a rough day, Adolf?" — "Only a little," he answers, / "more gas had to be supplied." / "You are so devout, husband, you work so hard." — / '"For the Führer, for the fatherland, there is nothing difficult for me." (5–10)

The normalcy of the scene conjures to mind Hannah Arendt's comments on the "banality of evil" in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, published two years after the composition of this poem. The familial character of the domestic scene is made to contrast with the horrors being discussed. The poem transitions to rage, which

contemplates on the incitements against Eichmann:

> ISTVM IVDAEAM CONATVM EXCIDERE GENTE
> CRIMINIBVS QVAE GENS INSIMVLARE CVPIT? —
> Nemone? Ecce iterum: PARVOS DE PECTORE MATRVM
> QVI RAPVIT, FLAMMIS VT DARET ATQVE NECI [...]?
>
> That design to exterminate the Jewish people / what people desire to make indictments? No one? Look again: the little ones who were seized from their mother's breasts, to be surrendered to flames and death [...]? (83–86)

Schnur's capitals express his outrage at Eichmann for remaining, though on trial, still unpunished for his crimes against humanity. The text contains miscellaneous footnotes with references and quotations to texts such as the Bible, Maimonides and the poet Heinrich Heine, drawing largely on Jewish literary traditions. After the domestic scene in the early part of the poem, Schnur digresses on various injustices. He challenges the proponents of passive resignation to the crimes of Nazis (Sacré 77) and challenges the presence of divine justice: "At iustum esse Deum, quis dubitare potest?" ("But who can doubt that God is just?" 40) As a historical reflection on Anti-Semitism, Schur cites from Heinrich Heine's poem "An Edom!":

> Ein Jahrtausend schon und länger,
> Dulden wir uns brüderlich,
> Du, du duldest, dass ich lebe,
> Dass du rasest, dulde Ich.
>
> For a thousand years so far and longer / We have had a brotherly forbearance / You, you tolerate my breathing, / and I tolerate your raging (quoted in Schnur, *Pegasus Claudus* 208)

Schnur renders this in Latin as "Iam dudum inter nos dulcis tolerantia fratrum : / Vivere me toleras, te furere at tolero." ("Now long since there has been a kind mutual tolerance among us / You endure me to live, where I endure your rage"; 71–72). The brotherly endurance refers to Edom and Jacob, representing Christians and Jews.

Latin poems on photography marvel at human inventiveness. Schnur is brought to reflect on the machinations of the Holocaust, which utilised human ingenuity for

genocide. In a chapter on the voices of the Holocaust, Hart wrote: "The violence of modernity and its increasing machinery and systematic killing are part of the story in which the industrial, political, and technical revolutions have come into being since the late fourteenth century" (193). Violence has a history, and Schnur utilises that history; through this web of allusions, he invokes the violence of Edom against Jacob, the violence of anti-Semitic hostilities explored in Heine's poetry, and the Holocaust. Schnur expresses horror at Eichmann's apparent humanity and false justifications, while challenging those who would cast blame on the victim or passively wait for divine justice. Schnur might have striven for technical mastery in Latin verse, but writing about the genocide of one's own people is not a game of versification. Schnur's poem illustrates the potential for poets to charge Latin writing with emotive efficacy and address themes that are personal and of grave moral import. Schnur commented in the early 1960s: "That our century, although threatened by the mechanized bestiality that would engulf it, has produced so much original Latin poetry (and much of it on a gratifyingly high level) is a cause for much rejoicing" ("Neo-Latin Poetry" 134). This poem is very much as responsible to the worst excesses of 'mechanized bestiality.' His assertion might be surprising to someone who had never considered contemporary Latin as worthy of notice, but as Schnur exemplifies, like any language, Latin has as much vitality as a poet brings to it. Very few have spoken Latin as a native language, with the famous exception of Montaigne and some early modern scholars such as Isaac Casaubon, whom Cardinal Du Perron asserted spoke French like a peasant while speaking Latin as if it were his mother tongue (Pattison 88), but this no more prevents a prospective poet from success in Latin than it prevented Joseph Conrad from writing in Engish, or Ágota Kristóf in French, both of who mastered their literary languages later in life.

Latin poets operate in a longstanding and ancient literary tradition that has developed alongside those of western vernacular literatures. Rather than limiting poets, it provides them with a wealth of potential resources to draw upon and to respond to in the formation of their own poetry. Susius's translation of Petrarch's sonnet transfers the Italian poem into the context of Northern humanism and rewrites it for his friends and community of readers. It fixes on Christian hope without sectarian divisions at the heart of the conflict around him. Paget scrupulously transfers scientific discussions on light and photography into carefully wrought Lucretian diction, affirming the capacity of Latin in a restrictive and difficult form for meeting the demands of scientific discourse, at a time when science was supplanting the pedagogical system that relied on meticulously teaching Latin (and Greek) composition. Pope Leo more successfully responds to the marvels

of technology, and his imitators demonstrate the potential for new literary traditions to emerge in Latin. Schnur, on the one hand, matches the technical demands of a skilful versifier, while at the same time bringing a deeply personal rage and indignation to the forefront of his Latin poem. This does not hope to exhaust the limits of Latin poetic expression, but express how in the past Latin poetry has been rooted in specific cultures, times and places and reflected those roots both explicitly and implicitly in the poets' manner of composition and personal expression. The poems explored have only circulated in small communities of readers. There is potential in a globalised world, where technology can bring both texts and communities of readers and writers together. Perhaps somewhat uniquely, Latin offers potential for a small community as seeking alternative means of expression from one's own vernacular or for those who would resist English because it lacks Latin's neutrality or from concerns about cultural imperialism, or who are drawn to creative imitation or experimentation with a language with thousands of years of literary tradition.

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# How Can Literature Respond to a Global Age? From Globalization to Universality and the Poetics of Partial Connections with References to David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*

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**Abstract** The duality of the local and the universal and its application to literary works in our age of globalization are likely to be deemed irrelevant because a global or multinational world is, *per se*, often identified to the universal. Consequently, it should be wise to avoid binary approaches to the duality of the local and the global, and to conflate the latter with the universal that is to be contrasted with the singular. Moreover, the local has no direct logic or semantic opposite — *global* is not the strict antonym of *local*. By substituting partial connections between historical, cultural, symbolic and anthropological facts to the prevailing designations of both dualities (local/universal, singular global), contemporary novels respond to any universalism that these dualities invite to imagine. Rushdie, Mitchell, and Murakami exemplify this use of partial connections.

**Key words** Universal; universalities; partial connections; Rushdie; Murakami

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which relies upon the notion of enigmaticity, an extensive redefinition of mimesis, and comparative references to the anthropological frames that literary works disclose.

**Introduction**

Jonathan Hart invites us to consider the duality of the local and the universal and its application to literary works in our age of globalization; the latter is likely to make us consider this duality as irrelevant since a global or multinational world is, *per se*, often identified to the universal. Let us stress that this identification equates the universal with universalism and its many exemplifications, ideologies and imaginations. Globalization is an economic fact and should be qualified as obviously imagined, since no one has ever seen the globalized world, as Nestor Garcia Canclini wrote in *La Globalización imaginada*.[1] Consequently, it will be wise to avoid binary approaches to the duality of the local and the global. Let us remark that the universal, to which globalization is often assimilated, is first to be contrasted with the singular, and that the local has no direct logic or semantic opposite — *global*, the root of the modern "globalization," is not the strict antonym of *local*.

The issues attached to the three notions of local, universal, and global, and their effects on and use in literary works have been addressed from many perspectives: national, transnational, cultural, multicultural, social, economic, literary, and ideological. They have referred to wide critical frames such as postmodern, postcolonial, diasporic; or political and philosophical paradigms such as Empire[2] or general intellect[3] and finally anthropological perspectives. The mutual implications and exclusions of the notions of local, singular, and global, and of most realities they designate, eventually command a kind of general relativistic approach to the world itself[4] which should prompt us to revise our usual approaches to globalization. These issues and their critical frames are often partially denied because the notion and reality of globalization are neither new nor clearly definable[5] , and because the alliance of globalization and literary works is considered a tradition that started with modern globalization in the nineteenth century. This tradition includes many kinds of works with explicit and non-problematic representations of globalization. Jules

1 The title of the book is explicit. See Canclini.

2 See Negri and Hardt.

3 See Virno.

4 See Bruun.

5 See Assayag.

Verne's novels offer relevant nineteenth-century examples; in the twentieth century, Carlos Fuentes's *Terra Nostra* views world history since the sixteenth century as global and exemplifies the connections of global history, evocations of nations and places, and the totalizing potentials of the novel as genre. Literary forms that appeared in the nineteenth century, such as detective and science fiction novels, have become world literary forms. The enunciative autonomy of poetry, initiated by Romantic writers and defended by Symbolist poets, imposed the notion of world poetry, which, because of its enunciative status, fits the circulation of literary works in a global age while its initial enunciative conditions are not denied. These critical issues are also restricted by descriptions of various scales[1], according to which writers can represent our world, its parts, and its social, national, cultural and human divisions. Consequently, many critics think it relevant to defend a simple critical approach: the local, the universal, and globalization presuppose that literary works have qualities and potentials that enable them to be widely displaced and to fit many audiences across the world while not negating their origins and initial places.

This short enumeration of current comments about globalization, the universal, the local, literature and world literature and their realities does suggest that the model one chooses to apply is a definition of the specific relations between these notions and the representations one attaches to them. Here, we suggest restricting these issues to basic approaches to literary works on the one hand, and on the other, to the influence of the issues we have mentioned on the characterizations and poetics of literary works. These poetics are defined, not according to usual poetical categories, but to specific poetical frames whose condition is the play, which we call partial connection(s) [2], between writing, globalization, and the local and the universal, with no reference to any kind of binarism and any hierarchical view of the local and the global. These remarks lead to two final suggestions: the doxic duality of the local and the globalized, and the invitation of the partial connections of world novels to deconstruct that duality.

## The Local, the Universal, the World and Literature: Some Critical Debates from Sloterdijk to Borges

In order to give a clear view of the three notions and/or realities discussed here — local, universal, global/world at large — let us offer an initial remark. In most Western languages, the word "local" has no specific antonym, while universal has

1 See Tanoukh.

2 See Strathern.

one: "singular." The singular is often designated as the concrete.[1] The word "local" should be contrasted with the qualifiers "distant," "non-native," and any word which refers to the world at large. This contrast must be constructed because the local is, by definition, a place that shows its specific characters and is explicitly limited to itself. Consequently, we as readers or interpreters cannot *literally* identify either the universal or the world within the local, which literary works represent, although we understand that the local is involved in what — *a* world, *the* world — should seem to complete it and which literary works should in some way enable us to delineate. This mutual implication of the local and the world at large — the latter is the completion of the former — cannot be directly demonstrated because the world transcends the local and neither the world nor the local can be a measure for the other. Because it cannot be directly identified, this alliance of the local and the world produces the need to interpret literary works today. The more literary works make this need and its question obvious, the more they circulate, are widely read and identified as world works, they are recognized across the world and characterized as evocations of the world at large, although no shared image of the local and the global is available and no reference to the local is excluded. To restrict approaches to literatures' links with globalization to the recognition of domination fails to consider that literary expressions cannot avoid representing the issues we have defined here, either explicitly or implicitly.

In the past, shared or reciprocal images of the local and the global have included the Renaissance reflective relationship between the world/macrocosm and the local/microcosm, and the nineteenth-century notion of the "world spirit" that implied a reading of the local and the world according to a broad frame of historicism. Peter Sloterdik's remark about today's global world highlights the latter's paradox which makes impossible to directly designate its interconnection with the local: "the earth [to be read as a synonym of the world, in our opinion] rose as the only and true orb, the basis of all contexts of life […]; it is itself the drama of globalization" (*In the World Interior* 275), because our earth (our world) has "been discovered, interconnected and singularized" (*In the World Interior* 276). We should be aware of the contradiction between the earth, the world, qualified as the "true orb, the basis of all contexts of life" (*In the World Interior* 276), and its singularity: our "singularized" world can no longer be seen as the totality, to which the "world spirit" and the duality of microcosm and macrocosm refer; however, it delineates a context that is a singularity. Literary works, which represent the alliance of the

1 The notion of "concrete universal" refers to Hegel; Sartre used it widely in his literary criticism.

local and the world, must handle a double paradox: the world, the macrocosm, has become a singularity that is equal to any singular local, while the world's singularity is the context of all local singularities, with no shared measure of both levels of singularity. This lack of balance between both kinds of singularities questions the possibility and relevance of any allied or implied representations of the local and the world, and it also compels writers and readers to imagine means to explicitly answer this question.

Before we identify these means, which writers and readers construct, we must reject some critical views that equate the singularity of literary works and literature in general with hospitality: small-sized singularities can include evocations of the world at large, whatever extension of this evocation is shown. This theory, which runs from Jacques Derrida to Derek Atridge[1], renews the characterization of mimesis — literary works always represent the world at large and the real in some way — while the use of the word "hospitality" connotes or implies ethical views. An idealistic approach to literature, in the belief that any literary work can represent the human community and the world,[2] is restored in order to respond to the lack of balance between the world and literary works. The most effective argument against this kind of idealistic reading of the alliance of the world and the local in literary works is offered in Borges's *cuento*, "The Aleph."[3] The narrative and argument of this story demonstrate that only two kinds of representations of the world at large are available and that both fail. First, it designates and depicts countless places (locals) in the world; second, it designates and depicts the orb and unique totality that is the world. The first kind results in many enumerations: the world is only the endless series of its locals and singularities. The second kind can only be conceived as an impossible view: the world as a totality transcends any local or singular reality and can be referred to only by using a "fantastic" image of its totality. The enumerations and the final fantastic image of "The Aleph" demonstrate that allied representations of the world and its many "locals" are useless.

Since literature can neither represent the hospitality that Derrida defines nor restitute images of the world's totality, it must simultaneously represent singularities and offer images of the general context which should be assessed as the relevant definition of the world in our global age. Remarkably, the double singularity of

1 See Derrida and Atridge.

2 This theory recalls Lukacs's idealism, which can be read in the first chapters of his Theory of the Novel. Homer's epics refer to a world that is complete and cannot be disassociated from the human community, which is also viewed as complete.

3 See Borges.

any place and human action and of the world viewed as a general context, which we have identified in Sloterdijk's characterization of our present-day world, does not require specific references to globalization, and allows us to define the quasi-philosophical task of literature "as a quasi-science of totalizations and their metaphors, as a narrative theory of the genesis of the general, and finally as meditation on being-in-situations — also known as being in the world" (Sloterdijk, *In the World Interior* 288). We should read this quotation along with the conclusions of "The Aleph" in order to define the responses of literary works to the paradox of the double singularity. They respond by describing the *universality* of the world as equally inclusive of all singularities and the specific universals they imply, and in defining specific relations that characterize the condition of "being in the world" and which justify viewing the world as a context. Let us reiterate that these responses are associated with a specific kind of poetics, which we call poetics of "partial connections."

## From the Singular and the Local to the World's Universality in a Global Age: David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*

For a more specific reading of our remarks on Borges's "The Aleph" and Sloterdijk's conclusions about the world's singularity and its many singularities, we must stress that both kinds of singularity make this world, our world, a sort of non-world. This means that it seems contingent, with no stable identification, and does not constitute a background or context for the many singularities. In other words, even if we say, as Sloterdijk does, that our world is also a totality and a kind of general context, we cannot represent this general context. Critics are prone to emphasize that this difficulty cannot be deleted and that, in today's world novels, exemplified by David Mitchell's works in general and by *Cloud Atlas*[1] in particular, evocations of our world are only language games and have no "function but to reawaken all differences in an ephemeral instant" (Jameson 6460). Singularities are constant, and the world's context can be only equated with an arbitrary instantaneity, which Fredric Jameson's reading of *Cloud Atlas* identifies as the end of realism and the time of the futureless world of the global age. This kind of critique is implicitly contradictory for two reasons: Jameson interprets *Cloud Atlas*, the novel of the world's singularities, from the angle of his own universal approach to history, and the worldview it commands frames Jameson's argumentation; and, to read the instantaneity of past and present events in the novel presupposes the universal context that our world— a single world — constitutes.

1 See Mitchell.

Jameson's implicit contradiction shows that David Mitchell's novel's many places and disparities cannot prevent readers from referring to, and eventually identifying, the universal and our world as a whole in *Cloud Atlas*. In other words, in novels of our global age, the local and the universal, the local and the world at large can assemble, although we cannot discern any explicit rules for constructing or desginating this assembly. Because these rules are missing, the critical issue, which is attached to the world/local duality, should be formulated as follows: how can singularities — any place in the world, and the latter viewed as a singular place — suggest inferences about a whole world and its representations, which are not to be confused with the current and prevailing images or narratives of globalization?

The link between the local and the world cannot be represented because the latter cannot be viewed as an encompassing whole although all the locals share a common ground, this world, our earth, or as Sloterdijk says, our orb. Consequently, the image of the world as a general context and a whole must be generated by texts. This generation results from a process that begins with the duality of the universal and the singular. These notions cannot be disassociated and should be read in any characterization or qualification of any agent, place, or object. They are consequently involved in any literary text and allow readers to indirectly infer images of the world as a possible whole composed of the designations and descriptions of many locales.

The link between the universal and the singular, which is not a substitute for the missing link between the world and the local, is first logical and semantic. On the one hand, when the universal is free of any kind of actualization, the singular or the concrete remains an abstraction. On the other hand, the singular amounts to a "pure" designation if it misses the background of an encompassing perspective, whatever the latter is — semantic, rhetoric, symbolic, or plural; these various perspectives can be combined. The universal commands its exemplification, and the singular, namely, any nomination of any agent, object, or data, the inference of the universal. Literary works often use fables and arguments that claim universal relevance, and do not separate them from actions, circumstances, depictions, enunciations, which are obviously singular and question any assertion of the universal, and show the latter always open to dispute. For example, in *Hamlet*, even the most universal characteristics of life and death are to be debated. Any singularity is the obvious questioning of its own limits. Imagism and objective poetry, which describe specific agents, objects and scenes, rely upon this paradox. This questioning alliance of the universal and the singular enable literary works to present a plural world and to unite the local and the universal, before they delineate the images of the world as a

whole.

The specific questions of the singular and universal imply a shared location. The world, which is the location of all the examples of these questionings and of all particular persons, agents, and objects to which they apply, is plural. Because these persons', agents', and objects' qualifications play upon the singular and the universal, all of them are involved in an entity of a different order. This entity, which cannot be an abstraction, is the world. It supplements these persons, agents, and objects with its own properties, and contributes to a metaphysics of presence in which persons, agents, and objects are manifest presences. Shared location and supplementary order make the questions that apply to local singularities, our singular world and the universals they imply, a unique set and leave them open. These questions are as many as the singulars that can be identified and the universals that can be conceived of. The world, which is the shared location of many, plays upon the singular and the universal, and a supplementary order is to be viewed as a *universality*. In other words, the world is the singularity that makes the iteration of the same kinds of persons, agents, objects, and disputes about them possible, whatever the variations of their specific locations and qualifications are. *Cloud Atlas* explicitly designates the world as the space of these iterations and variations.

This shift from the local to the *universality* of the world, or the alliance of both, presupposes a necessity and an incompleteness of a particular kind. The necessity is that the agents and readers of the literary work must represent the local to themselves as the opening of a possible whole, a counterpart and an alternative to the local and its disputes over the qualifications of persons, agents, and things. The incompleteness is the condition of the necessity, and is shown in the duality of singular and universal. The cognitive and ethical multiplicity of the universal triggers a demand for an interpretation that should hold the many examples of the universal/singular duality relative to one another. The shift from the local to the *universality* of the world is a response to the multiple universals that are available, as well as a hermeneutic and rhetorical move. Because universals and singulars are many, literary works present continuous cultural reexaminations and contradictory standpoints, and show that no place from without can give meaning to a holistic view of them. Borges's conclusion in "The Aleph" is correct: a place from without makes the viewer perceive an impossible image. To suppose and suggest the world's *universality* presupposes this impossibility and makes the world the *locus communis* of all questions that are attached to singulars and universals. David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* exemplifies this universality. In contrast to Fredric Jameson's conclusion, the novel offers an appropriate image of the world as long as we limit our reading to the

recognition of the presentation of universality: in the world, there are many stories that are connected in many ways and make this presentation possible.

Readers read these connections. They can neither totalize their implications nor identify the conclusion of each story as imposing any final meaning, nor can they apply continuous critical paradigms. They simply read histories, which have specific locations and designate the universality of our world because they are singular and connected. Because readers recognize the world's *universality* within literary presentations of the local, we should substitute characteristics such as affectability and responsivity, which remain irreducible for local or universal communities of readers, for the deciphering of and responses to a specific texts. By *local communities,* we refer here to particular and, more or less, broad cultural reading codes; by *universal communities,* we mean anthropological or cognitive definitions of reading practices.

**Literatures, Works, the World's Context and Partial Connections: The Lessons of *Cloud Atlas***

Our identification of the shift from the local to the universal and the world's universality, with references to a world novel, *Cloud Atlas*, allows us to contrast world novels, which exemplify this shift, with global novels, and to specify the distinctive representation of the local present in world novels. Grand narratives, or collections of small narratives, of globalization do not necessarily exclude designating the local and the world, then viewed as a universal reference. We might even say that they often highlight this designation and this reference. Olivier Rolin's novel *L'invention du monde* [1]describes global news networks and transcribes news circulated in and around the world: these transcriptions are always identified as local and characterized as inseparable from local dailies and the events the latter report. *L'invention du monde* can be read as a postmodern version of many literary and film narratives inspired by the various stages and the long progress of globalization, and do not exclude references to the local and the world at large. For example, Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* [2]exemplifies nineteenth-century globalization as it presents images of many places that represent the world. With their depictions of global plots and enemies of world order, two contemporary films, Zhang Ymou's *The Great Wall* and Justin Kurzel's *Assassin's Creed*,[3] are fables that do represent localities and can be read as linked to contemporary globalization. The

1 See Rolin.

2 See Verne.

3 See Zhang and Kurzel.

connected short narratives of *Cloud Atlas* are similar to the series of news reports in *L'invention du monde*, and the novel itself is similar to Verne's novels and Zhang's and Kurzel's films in that all these works feature identical plays upon space and history. Consequently, the characterization of the world's universality in *Cloud Atlas* must be complemented in order to differentiate the world novel *Cloud Atlas* from the aforementioned global novels.

One single theme and its logic drive each of the narratives of *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *L'invention du monde*, *The Great Wall,* and *Assassin's Creed*. For Verne, this theme is transport and world travel; for Rolin, networks and continuous flows of news; and for Zhang and Kurzel, the defence of world order. All references to places and locals are subsets of the set these main themes define: remarkably, in *L'invention du monde*, the many local dailies and news that are referred to do not stop the flow of information. Paradoxically, these many references do not appear as excursus although they are digressive. Globalization is a paradigmatic theme: many references to many "locals" are equated with the universal because any data in these works explicitly or implicitly refer to this paradigm. In these works, no one is in search of the world: agents scarcely describe themselves and point to their implications in one another and in the world *per se*. Without this double implication, the world and its agents, objects and places, which are universalized by the theme of globalization, can neither view this world as a universality or a concrete context, nor their places and agents as potential generalizations.

Compared to these works, *Cloud Atlas* might seem a kind of deconstruction of the grand narrative of globalization and, consequently, as another kind of globalization narrative. It would teach us that we can have no historical and coherent narrative of globalization because the latter contradicts any sense of the future and prevents us from viewing the world as a wide and unique context. That is a way to rephrase and support Fredric Jameson's reading of the novel and to define globalization novels as a kind of tautology: globalization is globalization. However, this is only one side of the reading that *Cloud Atlas* should produce. All of the stories of *Cloud Atlas* belong to specific places and times, and to our single world, our earth, which is consequently divided into many times and places. The world that is imagined as global can be neither described nor explicitly referred to, and forbids any image that would make it possible to play upon some of its parts or figures.

This invalidation of grand narratives of globalization relies upon an explicit narrative organization. All the "stories" of this novel are interconnected and are read twice, with the second reading reversing the order of the first. Each story appears consistently sized, but seems to expand because of its connections with

the other stories, with the two readings and their reversed order. *Cloud Atlas*'s narrative organization demonstrates that the designation of the world's universality is associated with relations between various agents, objects and places. Since the novel's stories are simultaneously autonomous and connected, pairs of them share some elements, and the double reading compels us to identify the whole novel as a play upon its first and second halves, the reader has to conclude that any part of any story can be a part of another story. Relations can be delineated through partitions of and extractions from continuous stories, data, actions, persons, and places. To designate the world as a general context requires a non-linear progression of the overall narrative of the novel, and a division of the world into places that match the paradoxical play upon parts and continuities, discontinuities and relations. Agents, objects, and times are linked in heterogeneous connections, and are included within the universality of this world, which is altered by these singularities.

The paradoxical partial connections of universality respond to the *doxa* of globalization. The image of the world as a whole, which this *doxa* suggests, does not deny the diversity of cultures, but implies that globalization is likely to impose kinds of world symbols and practices that might prevent recognition of specific places, agents, actions. Partial connections, which *Cloud Atlas* exemplifies, invite us to conclude that any worldview must take into account its local discontinuities and, more remarkably, show that the singular is the condition of the universal.

Because of this unavoidable alliance of the universal and the singular, more specific readings of the supposed unique world of globalization and the universality of the world are possible. It would thus be helpful to reconsider Jameson's double assertion about *Cloud Atlas*. According to Jameson, the novel offers no view of history, or at the very least a contradictory one: on the one hand, it designates the future by a return to the past, and on the other, it points to the universalism, variety, and continuity of the means of communication. In other words, the modern world cannot be read according to the continuity of history, but according to the universalism of the means of communication. This universalism should not be equated with the universal, but is only one of the many universalisms that have been identified in the present day. Our gloss of Jameson applies to contemporary paradigmatic views of globalization: the assertion of its universalism does not specifically address issues of the duality of the singular and the universal. *Cloud Atlas*'s interconnected and partially overlapping stories present one more positive consequence: because the elements that are repeated from one story to another apply to different times, they are means to figure transcultural, transnational and cross-temporal connections that offer a kind of overview of the world, while still referring

to local times and places. This paradox responds to the limits of the paradigmatic (and *doxic*) themes that are attached to the representation of globalization *per se* and its universalism.

## From World Novel to Literature's Rejection of Universalism, Recognition of Relativism and the Universality of Partial Connections

Our observations of the use of partial connections in *Cloud Atlas* and responses to the paradoxes of the singular/universal duality and representations of the world apply to contemporary literature in a broader sense: they invite us to return to their predecessors that have made prevailing references to globalization. The world novel, as exemplified by *Cloud Atlas*, defines symbolic, formal and poetical means for contrasting two opposing worldviews. One is the representation of contemporary societies and cultures and their images of human beings and universalism; the other is the recognition of relativist approaches to cultures and to humanity, and the restoration of world images and designations of the universal that contradict universalism.

The use of the world's universality and partial connections among world novels interrogates the limits of cultures and of humanity as a whole, and the consequences of the latter which prevailed in Western modernity. These limits are the foundation of the paradox of cultural comparisons and hybridity. Comparisons do rely upon distinct and separate identities, as does hybridity, with the latter defining the union of distinct identities. The idea of an "essential" human being presupposes the same kind of argumentative logic. Peter Slotedijk has stressed that extended recognitions and comparisons of differences express, in our post-unilateral world**,** the return of cultures to their identities and places; his remark obviously applies to Europeans (*Ecumes* 203).[1] In other words, globalization should be interpreted not according to its doxic duality of the local and the global, but according to its paradox. Globalization implies the recognition of differences under the aegis of a universalism that, though asserted in a post-colonial age, repeats the abstract universalism of the unilateral age — the age of Western Empires — and implies recognition of differences and, consequently, of locals. This recognition does not require the specific identification of differences and local relations, because these differences have been drawn inwards our globalized world and "de-

1 Cf. Sloterdijk's In the World Interior of Capital (emplacement 383): "Globalization has been saturated in the moral sense since the victims began reporting the consequences of perpetrators' deeds back to them from all over the world – this is the essence of the post-unilateral, post-imperial, post-colonial situation."

spatialized the real globe" (418). The poetics of partial relations in *Cloud Atlas*, which our reading has defined, offers an implicit critique of this recognition of differences which does not address the specific issue of the duality of the local and the global. As *L'invention du monde* demonstrates, to represent differences under the aegis of some universalism does not question the representations of the local or the global. Conversely, partial relations allow a writer to destructure the order of representations, either local or global, and to resinscribe them in various times and spaces with no alteration of their basic identifications, which are repeated without implying any systematic comparison. The particular visions attached to a place or to a type of universalism are relativized: they are compared but also, and more importantly, seen and described through other places or types of universalism. In *Cloud Atlas*, the literary means of these re-inscriptions and descriptions are the overlapping and repeating narratives and the permutations that result or which readers might infer, with no suppression of the mutual alterity of narrative segments that are united: diversity is constantly activated. Because the duality of the local and the global imposes this relativization, the local and global frame the differences between any place and any other places. Neither the global nor the local can be a sum or fragment of any place, as no one can be a sum or a fragment of his/her own identity and his/her own place and culture. Transcultural novels and their relativistic approaches to cultures, novels of the posthuman and novels with double anthropological perspectives offer relevant exemplifications of this relativization and the global/local paradox.

Many contemporary novels offer relativistic views of cultures and question the universal that these cultures profess. Most universal assertions are ideologically loaded or meant to be interpreted as kinds of universalism. This argument is constant in Salman Rushdie's novels, but does not, however, exclude the designation of the universal. In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, [1]singularities such as characters, locations, and actions should be read as the ruined images of the universal, history as a series of disparate events; many characters simultaneously display a hyper-selfhood and an empty one. Critics have often defined the novel as a chaos, a representation of the hell of the world and of language, and a negative example of postmodernism and its void, while they recognize that the novel denounces political or religious authority, identified as an illusory universalism.[2] It should be more productive to read *The Moor's Last Sigh* as a baroque novel with many folds. Innumerable designations of singularities do not imply that these singularities are contingent, nor

1 See Rushdie.

2 For a good summary of these assessments, see Gonzales.

do they exclude any mutual compatibility: they belong to various social, national and historical orders. However, these singularities are not wholly equivalent to the societies, cultures and times from which they originate: they do not completely fit the part/totality relationship, and do not suggest an encompassing context. They are parts of a unique world — our world, and a unique novel — the novel we read, and are consequently compatible, seen and described through one another and other places or types of universalism. *The Moor's Last Sigh* makes these singularities, their determinations, their distance and their compatibility obvious, by indirectly uniting two worlds and two times, present-day India and Boabdill's fifteenth century, and by multiplying intertextual references, the narrator's identifications, voices and locations. On the one hand, the worlds and times present in the novel allow the narrator to establish many perspectives, which do not suggest any necessary links between these two places and times, and to define writing as an exercise of simultaneity, overlapping, and transition. On the other hand, because connections between the two poles do not refer to any specific authority or causality that could be considered to define them, the shifts from one pole to the other and from one perspective to another are easy, and no singularity can be viewed as entirely defined by one of these poles or perspectives. The whole novel relies upon these multiple poles, perspectives, times and places, and their partial connections. These connections are partial because none of these multiplicities and attached singularities are identical, and none can be disassociated. The novel further relies upon characters who are defined only by partial identities: their selves are at once deflated, inflated and variable, that is, isolated, multi-relational and metamorphic, explicitly singular and compatible with many selves. *The Moor's Last Sigh* consequently excludes the recognition of any kind of universalism: any universalist assertion supposes a stable enunciator. The universal is designated by this world and its history, which make many variables identifications of places, times, characters and actions, and their partial connections possible. No person, no place and no time offers a perspective for itself. Each singularity extends the other, only from the other position. What these extensions yield are different capacities to elicit more relations. The universal is meant to be read in the continuous and reciprocal translations of the singularities that the novel's narrative and partial connections designate. No universalism is to be recognized, whatever it is. Radical relativism is the best means to evoke the universal, the world's universality, the many singularities and their many locals.

Novels of the limits of the Anthropos and the posthuman, allow us to read the singular and the universal and their manifest paradoxes, although they focus

on the possible absence of the human being who is in search of the universal. Cyborg novels, such as *Cyborg* by Martin Caidin[1] or *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons[2], exemplify this focus. Cyborgs are mixed subjects; at the same time both human beings and technological devices, they seem to resist any reference to the universal. However, they are meant to be viewed as simultaneously universal and partial. They are like human beings, and partial, because they are complemented by specific and partial technological objects, and because those objects are produced by repetitive techniques and can be reproduced, they demonstrate a kind of universality. Because of the alliance of technology and the human, and of the universal and the partial, cyborg novels make the demand for completeness and interpretation obvious, and respond to this demand in a specific manner. The cyborg, a fantastic being, allows us to identify cyborg novels as anti-mimetic: such novels exclude literal repetitions of the singular and the universal, which both humanity and technology exemplify. Partial similarities between cyborgs and humans and technological devices are substitutes for these literal repetitions, and inspire reflections on the otherness that the cyborg represents. This otherness demonstrates a double paradox: it is manifest even though the human being is obviously supported by technology. In other words, the latter confirms the humanity of the former; the human being does not seem discontinuous with what it is not or should not be. On the one hand, the double paradox makes extended comparisons possible: the human part of the cyborg is to be compared with other human beings, and its technological parts with other technological devices. On the other hand, the same paradox makes technology and humanity reciprocal extensions even though they are obviously discontinuous. Other plural relations indicate a multiple world and enable readers to infer concepts and universals that account for these paradoxical relations. This inference from the complexity of the cyborg presupposes that the universal should be indicated by the composition of elements that can be comprehended from the perspective of various orders that allow moves from one to another. In the world of the universal, no order, either human or technological, prevails.

To apply the play upon double anthropology to characters — that is, to human subjects — in novels is an easy means of picturing various worlds as equally accessible, of characterizing subjects who are fully committed to their worlds, and of showing that these characters' identities are incomplete. This play reconstructs the duality of difference and compatibility, endows it with a maximal scope, and suggests an extension of each subject's position in another. Novels characterize

1 See Caidin.

2 See Simmons.

these subjects as able to perceive national, cultural and social relationships as simultaneously part and not part of themselves.

The main dual typologies of the subjectivity described in contemporary anthropology is useful to describe these specific partial connections and the implicit universal they designate, even though they do deny the extent and diversity of the world. This typology is exemplified in the theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Philippe Descola[1]. Lévi-Strauss distinguishes the centrifugal subject from the centripetal subject: the former refers to non-western, particularly Asian, subjectivities, and the latter refers to anything and anyone in relation to him/herself. This is the basic definition of the romantic subject, which, *mutatis mutandis*, still applies to people in Western cultures. Lévi-Strauss cites the contrast between European and Asian, specifically Japanese, behaviours as the archetypal example of the distinction between these two types of subjectivity. Descola, meanwhile, differentiates the naturalist subject from the analogical subject. The former refers to the modern, post-seventeenth-century subject, who is conceived and viewed according to the duality of mind/spirit and nature. All human beings belong to nature; each human being possesses a singular mind or spirit. The analogical subject is the individual of *cultures premières* in anthropology. All natural beings have different bodies, according to their species and to each being; each has an analogical mind that perceives similarity between humans and animals, humans and plants, or animals and plants. Descola uses the concept of the analogical subject mainly to discuss the concept of animism.

Many contemporary works can be read according to Lévi-Strauss's and Descola's typologies. The magical realism of many South American novels suits the duality of animism and individualism, as do many African postcolonial works, such as Ahmadou Kourouma's *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*.[2] Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*[3] links the psychological and existential portrait of its main character — a high school student who exemplifies the distraught Western individual and his/her centripetal subjectivity — to Shintoism and animism. Each of these anthropological dualities allows us to interpret the entire work, but excludes any saturating interpretation, so that we can discern only partial connections between the worlds, anthropological perspectives, and characters within the work.

Partial connections, double anthropology, and types of subjects demand that we view these characters neither as individuals nor as persons defined by a holistic

1 Claude Lévi-Strauss and Philippe Descola.

2 See Kourouma.

3 See Murakami.

view of their community. Therefore, no individual or collective identity is self-sufficient, and each one is defined by what it is not more than by what it is. The move from "what it is" to "what it is not" justifies the shift from the local to the world at large, and shows that "what it is not" is to be recognized as the means to designate the limit and the possible extension of "what it is." We must therefore ask: are a place and its agents an identity as such? Let us say that, because of the use of double anthropology, an identity is shown as wholly deployed in the world; it is not secret and always appears to extend the other, but only from the other's position.

Reading postcolonial novels, novels of the posthuman and novels of mixed anthropological perspectives along with one example of the world novel, *Cloud Atlas*, and its designations of the duality of globalization and the local, shows that this duality and its paradoxes highlight the constant question of how to identify and describe places, viewed according to various scales such as the local, the global, and persons, viewed as dependent upon these scales' variations yet capable of recognizing that they are subsumed neither by the local nor by the global, and identifying themselves neither as a sum nor a fragment of their own designations. The local and global issue in today's literature(s) may be interpreted as one more questioning of power and dominant relations. This interpretation reduces the issue to the confrontation of two universalisms: the one that is identified with globalization, and the other with the rights of the local. The world's universality, which our reading of *Cloud Atlas* has defined, allows us to refer the local and the global to the many reciprocal perspectives that are implied by any situation and position of persons and do not apply to human beings only. Remarkably, this approach to the duality of the local and the global invites us to reinterpret postmodern and postcolonial works, and see them not only as earlier construals of competing universalisms in modernity, but also as designing ways to represent relational singularities that respond to the paradoxes of two kinds of wholes: the world and the local. Partial connections and double anthropology enable us to reread the various approaches we have initially enumerated as presuppositions of the duality of local and global.

## Imagined Globalization, Its Universalism and Our Manifold Commonsense World

Let us rephrase these final remarks and our whole argument: globalization, a word that applies to economic flows, book trade, international relations, travel and travelers, and many other persons, can be conceived of only according to many bifurcations. Because no one has ever seen the totality it implies, it is one of the present-day versions of universalism. Literary works exemplify these bifurcations

and interpret them from the angle of bifurcations imagined and to be read in the world and in the local. The duality of the local and the world prevents us from suggesting any kind of universalism. Poetics of partial connections and the singular and universal duality that is attached to the local and to the world make it obvious that many kinds of authenticity are recognized by writers as they identify the duality of the local and the world. Novels offer no final synthesis; the multiplicity and variability of the views which this duality makes possible are a challenge to literary form. This is the only conclusion to be drawn from Borges's fable, "The Aleph." Avoiding deliberate framing or encompassing of the local and the world does not equate with departing from our commonsense world — that is, from our most immediate views of the local and what is beyond it — but with restoring it through displacement and partial connections. That is the response to globalization, its imaginations and universalism. However, it leaves an ambiguity: in *Cloud Atlas* and the postcolonial, posthuman and multi-anthropological novels discussed here, persons who appear to give coherence to networks — the connected stories of *Cloud Atlas* and all kinds of connection in the other novels — are also particles of the organization of their location, their local. This ambiguity defines the imagination of the local and the world in the novels discussed in this paper and their responses to the imagined universalism of globalization: our experience of our structurally manifold commonsense world and its partial connections counterpoise any universalism.

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# Joan Crate, Indigenous Identity, and the Reach of Global Colonialism in *Foreign Homes*

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**Abstract** Canadian Metis author Joan Crate explores the fraught existence of those with Indigenous ancestry within the Canadian nation in her volume of poems, *Foreign Homes*. The definition and understanding of multiply constituted identities, the tenuous position — socially and politically — of Indigenous Canadians, and the uncertain narrative of indigeneity in contemporary Canada are examined in her volume as is consideration for how Indigenous identities are formed globally, shaped through colonial contact and the imperialistic ambitions of European powers. The volume's title reflects this tension of identity and place in its invocation of a home that is signalled by its otherness as foreign space. This tension is particularly liminal, suggesting that an individual's status as an Indigenous person within the Canadian nation is bounded by global — and thus foreign — forces that disrupt a sense of rootedness in place, a disruption that spans centuries.

**Key words** colonialism; liminality; Indigenous identity; poetry; postcolonialism

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**Introduction**

In her 2001 volume of poetry, *Foreign Homes*, Canadian Metis writer Joan Crate suggests a liminal status that relates to the reach of colonialism, from first contact to the contemporary. Crate signals in *Foreign Homes* that the identity of those with Indigenous ancestry within the Canadian nation are rightly situated in relationship to a global sensibility that is firmly defined by the ideological forces of colonialism reaching back over five centuries. Indigenous identities are typically situated in the Canadian cultural and political spheres in highly localized tribal and First Nation terms (e.g. Anishinaabe, Saltaux, Nakota, Mik'maq), yet Crate indicates that this local sense of identity is situated within a broader set of global concerns.[1] Her poems in *Foreign Homes* underscore the fraught existence of those with Indigenous ancestry within the Canadian nation, implicate the very definition and understanding of multiply constituted identities, the tenuous position — socially and politically — of Indigenous Canadians, and the uncertain narrative of indigeneity in contemporary Canada. Interlaced with these concerns is consideration for how Indigenous identities are formed globally, shaped through colonial contact and the imperialistic ambitions of European powers. The volume's title reflects this tension of identity and place in its invocation of a home that is signalled by its otherness as foreign space. This tension is particularly liminal, suggesting that an individual's status as an Indigenous person within the Canadian nation is bounded by global — and thus foreign — forces that disrupt a sense of rootedness in place, a disruption that spans centuries. For Crate, the play of local and global is expressed as a form of liminality, which Jill J. Morawski defines "as the threshold, the betwixt and between of established social states" (54) and Victor Turner states that "the most characteristic midliminal symbolism is that of paradox, or being *both* this and *that*" (37). If Crate's articulation of Canadian Indigenous identity in the current age is marked by being in-between states, neither local nor global, then it is also inevitably infused by both, shaped by the ongoing flux of colonialism's effects.

Robert JC Young insightfully points out the legacy that colonialism has in the contemporary moment, which is usefully recast in the context of Crate's exploration of Indigenous identity in *Foreign Homes*. "In a sense," he writes, "postcolonialism has always been about the ongoing life of residues, living remains, lingering legacies" (10). For Crate, the effects of colonialism are ever present, shaping the

1 Saskatchewan and Manitoba author and film maker Warren Cariou explores the continuing global influences on the local and Indigenous in his films, *Overburden* and *Land of Oil and Water*, set in Alberta's northern oil fields.

life of her speaker and penetrating her fundamental sense of self. Young defines this sort of permeation of the past as a function of "postcolonial remains" which "invoke historical trajectories that have hitherto been scarcely visible, but which offer potential resources for critiques" (22). For Young, the postcolonial is similar to Derrida's assertion that "there will always be something 'left over' […] the postcolonial will always be left over. Something remains, and the postcolonial is in many ways about such unfinished business, the continuing projection of past conflicts into the experience of the present, the insistent persistence of the afterimages of historical memory that drive the desire to transform the present" (R. Young 11). The notion of the palpable reach of the colonial into the contemporary leaving its traceable inheritance is central to Crate's figuring of Indigenous existence in the current age, with its exposure to ongoing prejudicial political, social and cultural power structures. Young remarks that "Analysis of such phenomena requires shifting conceptualizations, but it does not necessarily require the regular production of new theoretical paradigms: the issue is rather to locate the hidden rhizomes of colonialism's historical reach, of what remains invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken" (10). As Crate demonstrates in *Foreign Homes*, that which is "left over" is the legacy of the global within the localized context, and her articulation of Indigenous identity in the contemporary moment reflects and acknowledges this assertion of the global as it intersects the immediate. Identity thus becomes mired in the liminal, of being betwixt and between, neither here nor there, simultaneously global and local, and existing in an uncertain status. Her poems in *Foreign Homes* underscore the fraught existence of those with Indigenous ancestry within the Canadian nation, implicate the very definition and understanding of multiply constituted identities, the tenuous position — socially and politically — of Indigenous Canadians, and the uncertain narrative of indigeneity in contemporary Canada, and point to the hidden rhizomes of colonialiaty found at the intersection of the global and local.

*Foreign Homes* covers significant geographical and temporal terrain in its three sections as Crate explores Indigenous identity in contemporary Canada. Largely autobiographical in nature, the first and third (and final) sections — "Dowries" and "Thieves"— explore the speaker's difficult first marriage and early life and the tragic fall of her former husband into alcoholism and drug addiction, her reflections on her new relationship and marriage, and the forming of a new family and home life, as well as investigations of family and ancestry. The middle section, titled "Loose Feathers on Stone: for Shawnandithit," gives voice and space to Shawnandithit, reputed to be the last Beothuk, who died in 1829. "Loose Feathers on Stone"

provides a political force to the other sections, establishing the relationship between the arc of an individual life to the larger colonial forces that have shaped and formed that life. For Crate, the forces of European colonization that marginalized, diseased and ultimately eradicated a completely distinct First Nation two hundred years ago are the same forces that have an impact on her sense of self and identity, in addition to her material well-being in the present moment. The relevance of these historical forces in the present underscores the liminality of contemporary indigeneity in Canada. Crate establishes these connections thematically, but also formally through a double-voicing technique that itself thematizes the way in which Crate conceives of how identity is multiply and historically formed. As Crate tells the story of another, issues of appropriation of culture and voice come into play; aligning her own subject position with that of Shawnandithit, Crate legitimizes her ability to speak in the voice of the Other, which is given context by the first and last sections of the volume, "Dowries" and "Thieves." By establishing her legitimacy to speak for Shanawndithit, and by extension the Beothuk, Crate inserts herself into theoretical discourses of how othering typically operates within a colonially-oriented binary. Crate steps outside this binary, challenging what Robert JC Young identifies as a failure of postcolonialism to implicitly accept the identity categories of self and other and thus reinforcing discriminatory categories of identification:

> Othering is what the postcolonial should be trying to deconstruct, but the tendency to use the concept remains: the often-posed question of how "we" (implicitly the majority or dominant group) can know "the other," who remains implicitly unknowable and unapproachable, or how "the other" can be encouraged to represent itself in its otherness rather than merely be represented as other, is simply the product of having made the discriminatory conceptual distinction in the first place. It accepts the discriminatory gesture of social and political othering that it appears to contest. The question is not how to come to know "the other," but for majority groups to stop othering minorities altogether, at which point minorities will be able to represent themselves as they are, in their specific forms of difference, rather than as they are othered. (R. Young 29-30)

Crate's challenge to the binary is itself a symptom of the liminal status of colonial and postcoloniality in Canada's present moment, for even the fundamental — and racialized — categories by which we identify who belongs to the dominant (and

colonial) group and who serves as Other are contested and uncertain.[1] As Robert JC Young remarks, "The idea that there is a category of people, implicitly third-world, visibly different to the casual eye, essentially different, and 'other,' is itself a product of racial theory, its presuppositions drawn from the discriminatory foundations of modernity. The legacy of this, of course, is the existence of minorities, who struggle for full participation within a society that continues to other them as 'the other'" (29). Thus, *Foreign Homes*'s three-part structure serves to illustrate the fraught and complex existence of those with Indigenous ancestry.

The middle section, "Loose Feathers on Stones," most effectively illustrates Crate's exploration of identity as it relates to the globalized forces of colonialism as they pertain to the contemporary experience of those of Indigenous ancestry. Central to the sequence of poems is the figure of Shawnandithit, the last known member of the Beothuk, a First Nation of Newfoundland eradicated through genocide. Crate explores the situation of Shawnandithit, who has become a servant of colonials and provides the only existing records of the Beothuk through her mappings of the Beothuk territory. Taking my cue from work in cultural and social cartography, I read Shawnandithit's maps as expressions of her indigenous knowledge: they challenge Eurocentric notions of how her ancestral landscape signifies and how it relates to her identity. Crate figures Shawnandithit and her maps as a way of undermining binarized understandings of Indigenous writing that view culture and identity as fixed categories, and thus she authorizes Indigenous knowledge systems; this knowledge in turn situates her own identity as Metis, indigene, and Canadian. Shawnandithit's maps portray a landscape that is neither "new," as the colonizers term it, nor do they conform to the usage patterns that the Europeans imposed. For Crate, the maps function metonymically for how she conceives her own sense — as expressed in her poems — of identity and ancestry separate from colonially-derived modes of understanding; they become sources of Indigenous knowledge that transcend place and time to inform her sense of herself. I read Crate's poetic project in *Foreign Homes* as deriving out of a complex set of concerns that ultimately serve to underscore the notion of a plurality of Indigenous identity, which is legitimized through a valuing of Indigenous knowledge systems and which illustrates the shared experience of global influence on local Indigenous social, cultural, and political experience. Crate employs this paradigm to authorize and give weight to her own use of Shawnandithit's story.

1 Indeed, the controversy that erupted in December 2016 surrounding the identification and self-identification of best-selling author Joseph Boyden's status as Indigenous author speaks to the very terms that are invoked in Young's construction.

Cultural cartography serves well as an entry to Crate's consideration of these concerns in her poems. Brian Harley notes in "Re-reading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter" that "[Colonial boundaries drawn on maps] provide perhaps the most spectacular illustrations of how an anticipatory geography served to frame colonial territories in the minds of statesmen and territorial speculators back in Europe. Maps were the first step in the appropriation of territory. Such visualizations from a distance became critical in choreographing the colonial expansion of early Modern Europe" (532). As Harley argues in another essay, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," "maps have been the weapons of imperialism. […] Surveyors marched alongside soldiers, initially mapping for reconnaissance, then for general information, and eventually as a tool for pacification, civilization, and exploitation in the defined colonies" (282).

In his essay on mapping and Shawnandithit, Matthew Sparke argues that "there can be no doubt that those negotiating with imperial rule sometimes used maps to present to the colonialists a pre-European understanding of the land. In so doing, they demonstrated indigenous cartographic skills, and also reaffirmed — in a way that remains vital for contemporary struggles to decolonize — the land's deep inscription through millennial pre-contact historical geographies" (1). Shawnandithit's maps, then, figure not just resistance to colonization but also legitimize long-term understandings of how geography means. As Sparke notes, "A singularized script has emerged for the Beothuk, their experience has become homogenized, and their place in the process of colonization has been diminished to that of either a cute, or a criminal, bit-part in the drama of their own destruction" (6). The maps drawn by Shawnandithit can serve, he argues, to signify a broader sense of the plight of the Beothuk that does not rely exclusively on Eurocentric notions of colonization and defeat. In effect, valuing indigenous knowledge in the maps shifts away from the colonizer's gaze.

For Shawnandithit, "The situation [under which she drew the maps] was alive with colonial power relations. Urging her on was Cormack, eager to salvage information; reporting how through his 'persevering attention' and constant tending of 'paper and pencils of various colours,' Shawnandithit 'was enabled to communicate what would otherwise have been lost'" (Sparke 8). Sparke argues that Shawnandithit was in fact not enabled but rather was disabled by the context of her drawing. Her language was treated as "gibberish" and thus her "record of pain and misery" was not understood nor was her "Beothuk representation of space" (8).

The maps have been read historically as contributing to accounts of Captain David Buchan's attempts to return the dead body of the captured Beothuk woman

Demasduit. Never is the position of the Beothuk as both observers and as possessors of knowledge — which is transmitted through the map — considered. As Sparke notes, "Clearly marked on the map are the travels and camping sites of the Beothuk. […] Shawnandithit's drawing shows where they camped, the places from where they observed Buchan's party, and the tracks along which they followed him. […] Shawnandithit's cartography documents the fact that the Beothuk were also observers and agents of geographic interpretation" (10). Shawnandithit reflects the Beothuk understanding of space, which is not a sea bound discourse, and relates the new knowledge of how space can be understood as variable or plural.

This notion of the variable and plural is central to Joan Crate's valuing of Indigenous knowledge, which she affirms in the biographical statement that precedes her contributions to *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*, edited by Jeanette Armstrong:

> The experiences of moving from place to place, being of mixed nations (Cree and five million other things), and having been part of different socio-economic groups at different periods in my life, have made me think of the concepts of "home" and "belonging" as somewhat transitory, really existing in terms of the spirit within the universe, rather than the physical body at some address or part of some identifiable group. My work with Pauline Johnson and Shawandithit has allowed me to feel (and hopefully express) the existence of those of the past in our present lives as part of the landscape which they inhabit(ed), both physical and spiritual. I thank my father for his insistence on making us familiar with whichever native culture we were living near or amongst at the time, and his love of First Nations art at a time it was devalued. (227)

Crate expresses here a view of ancestry, culture, and identity that is detached from place and time. Discussions of appropriation of voice binarize the relationship of self to Other, primarily along the axis of colonizer and colonized, but Crate's biography reinforces how writing in the voice of the Other can in fact be seen as an alignment of voices and history. To be "Cree and five million other things," as she notes, is to erase cultural and racial oppositions (Crater 227). The Cree culture and history is different from that of the Beothuk, clearly, but the underlying colonial patterns are similar enough to allow Shawnandithit's story and voice to serve the purpose of Shawnandithit's articulation as well as that of Crate. Her sense of self is rooted in a broad set of associations that are appropriately set within notions of

Indigenous knowledge. Ladislaus M. Semali and Joe L. Kincheloe remark in "What is Indigenous Knowledge?" that "The term indigenous, and thus the concept of indigenous knowledge has often been associated in the Western context with the primitive, the wild, the natural. […] [I]ndigenous knowledge reflects the dynamic way in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relationship to their natural environment" (3). For Semali and Kincheloe, "A central tenet […] [is] belief in the transformative power of indigenous knowledge, the ways that such knowledge can be used to foster empowerment and justic in a variety of cultural contexts" (15). Semali and Kincheloe emphasize the value of developing an understanding of Indigenous epistemology, which they argue "provides Western peoples with another view of knowledge production in diverse cultural sites. Such a perspective holds transformative possibilities, as they come to understand the overtly cultural processes by which information is legitimated and delimited. An awareness of the ways epistemological 'truth production' operates in the lived world may shake the Western scientific fath in Cartesian-Newtonian epistemological foundationalism, as well as the certainty and ethnocentrism that often accompany it" (17).

For Crate, as for the work in cultural cartography undertaken by Sparke and others the drawings are a rejection of European notions and means of signification, and are significatory in their own right. To recast Shawnandithit's maps points to a different way of seeing and thus considering identity. The maps are misread and misunderstood by imperialist agents, but can be seen as counter-colonial or anti-colonial statements as they recognize alternative, pre-European modes of understanding space and place, and they figure resistance to the destruction that Shawnandithit and her family and community experienced at the hands of settler colonists.

The poems in "Loose Feathers on Stone," then, present a multi-vocal perspective on colonialism's effects on Indigenous life in North America. She speaks betimes in her own voice, in the voice of Shawnandithit, and at times through a double voice. By using multiple voices, Crate acknowledges the difficulties of speaking for others but also asserts her legitimacy or authority to at least try to speak for Shawnandithit. The poems that comprise "Loose Feathers on Stone" establish a historical imperative for Crate and indicate an ethical perspective on her need and desire to articulate identity through her poetry. The opening and closing sections of *Foreign Homes* frame "Loose Feathers on Stone" by including poems about family, her youth, ancestry, failed marriage, her new marriage, and her relationships with various family members in the present. Read as a complete

structure, the volume suggests a complex representation of the inter-relation of colonialism, post-colonialism, and contemporary life in Canada, what can be seen as the ongoing liminal intertwining of the global and the local.

The primary poem that references Shawnandithit's mapping is "Sentences: at the Culls'" — which I will return to in a moment — but the pattern of resistance to the signifactory practices of her captors is repeated in a number of other poems as well. In the poem "Burial" Crate expresses her personal interest in Shawnandithit's story, wondering about the lack of knowledge about her in her own time, a sentiment that also extends to our time:

> No one thinks of her
> now, didn't
> spend much time thinking of her
> when she was alive. (53)

This lack of knowledge is similar to Shawnandithit's inability to be articulate, as Crate notes: "Did she ever speak?" (53). In answer to this question, Crate asserts her own interest in the story of Shawnandithit and the Beothuk: "She is the silence / … / I try so hard to hear" (53). In this paradox of silence and hearing is the imperative to articulate. Whatever the legitimacy of speaking for an Other might be, Crate asserts that what is silent can never be heard and that to speak in the voice of Shawnandithit is an ethical move intended to fill an absence. In the final poem in the sequence, "The Pleiades," Crate notes the danger of lost history and story and the importance of remembering and telling stories that have been nearly forgotten. Imagining Shawnandithit as the lost star, she fears that all that is left is a shadow of a story:

> alling star-
> woman,
> like you Shawandithit,
> reduced to dust. (56)

Crate connects herself to Shawnandithit's story by noting how she is touched by the loss of Shawnandithit's story:

> Now when I look up
>
> there are just six stars in the sky

and some forgotten story sliding
down the long gullet of night. (56)

Crate uses familial terms to figure Shawnandithit, thinking of her as one of the lost sisters (the "near-sighted sister," for example), reinforcing her role in remembering the Beothuk woman. This act of remembrance is figured as the writing of the poems themselves but also, importantly, as an integral connection of writer to victimized Aboriginal and through her status as woman. Shawandithit is presented as a "sister" and as "woman," as is emphasized by the isolation of the word in the first passage quoted above. Crate's speaker is "like" Shawandithit, the phrasing suggests, and thus is also "reduced to dust" and a "falling star." The mythical reflections are made clear by the speaker here, but the cosmic associations should not be overlooked, for they assert that the effects of colonialism encompass the breadth of the sky under which we exist.

Several poems from the middle section of "Loose Feathers on Stones" reinforce the difference in knowledge systems at work when Shawnandithit is exposed to colonial rule. Her story is told — in her voice and through Crate's speaker. In "Heirlooms," Crate notes the dichotomies of colonizer and colonized through the imagery and symbolism of drinking glasses, which contain in their form and function imperial designs:

How the glasses came to them — imported from England
in great oak and canvas chests — how it held
the English sun, soft as a worn cotton rag
rubbed in the eye. She dusted each piece,
placed them in the kitchen cupboard. (46)

The cupboard contains all that seems free and natural to Shawandithit, as the speaker notes: "The spring water changed / in those jugs and goblets" and the water becomes symbolic of "Centuries of decay" that are conveyed to her mouth. The water from the "cut glass" reinforces her misery, as the water is "shoved down her throat" (47). In another poem, "Working for the Peytons," Crate speaks in the voice of Shawnandithit, who speaks her oppression, figuring it as captivity. The work is defined by boundaries and restrictions, and all are alien and constricting to her. She feels out of the normal cycle of life, "lost," as she notes, "shed by all seasons" (48). Her work in the vegetable garden is colonial, reflecting her mastery by foreign forces:

I garden, coerce
the soil to surrender its caressing grasses
and sucking grubs, impose boundaries,
plant an invasion—watercress and English cucumber—
row upon row of betrayal.

Ultimately, for Shawnandithit, her experience of work in the Peytons' house is one inherently opposite to the existence she knew beforehand: "the European / vegetables refuse our laws of gravity / and fly from my hands." Crate's use of the concept of a law of gravity is interesting here, for it signals her figuring of the colonial oppression as unnatural and alien to the world that exists in this place. The result of Shawandithit's experience is that her culture is lost as her memory erodes:

I fumble with memories, already
a memory, chew legends I heard
lifetimes ago, my entrance into the cavity of tomorrow.

For Crate, the writing of Shawnandithit's story is integral to a recuperation of her as well as the Beothuk's story, lest she become forever a "suspended sentence," as Shawnandithit puts it in "Sentences: at the Culls." Crate links this notion of recuperation to her sense of connection to Shawandithit's story of mastery and oppression. As Crate's speaker notes in another poem in this section, "She is crying in a corner / of my mind, next to the dirty laundry" (51). To forget her is also to close herself off to her past and its traumatic history:

I can hardly hear her
screams sinking like a scalpel through a sense
and absence, but she is with me,
with us all. (51)

In "Sentences: at the Culls," Crate directly addresses the issue of the maps that Shawnandithit draws in response to the question of her captors: "What shall we do with her?" Shawnandithit is set to "sketch my lives for them," as she puts it. For Shawnandithit, the pages are "blank pages" and "vast white sheets," both ironically comment on notions expounded by European cartographers and on epistemological differences between indigene and European colonizer: the sheet of paper is neither

blank nor the appropriate implement to map a way of life. Shawnandithit conveys her resistance to the drawing she is asked to undertake by her refusal to use most of the writing implements she receives: "I choose graphite, refuse colours— / yellow, blue, the flowing red" (50). The result is a series of drawings (there were four, in fact) that reflect "frustrated inks" and that reinforce the irony of the Beothuk situation: "New-found-land the title, / a joke, a riddle" (50). There are naturally potential challenges reading Crate's figuring of Shawnandithit's drawings as emanating from the voice of Shawnandithit herself. One might consider how we understand Crate's apparent position that the Beothuk Indigenous knowledge is also itself a part of her own Indigeneity, and how we read the recuperation of the past and someone else's story as a legitimate aspect of the articulation of her own identity and as political act of decolonization, which raises questions about her signifying practice.

To begin to answer these questions I want to consider poems from other sections of *Foreign Homes*, poems that frame and contextualize the poems in "Loose Feathers on Stone." The Beothuk story of colonial oppression, Crate indicates, is paradigmatic of contemporary Indigenous concerns, concerns that continue to be shaped by the global colonial forces that have persisted for hundreds of years in North America. In the first section of *Foreign Homes*, titled "Dowries," Crate outlines several of the effects of colonialism that have framed her existence, reinforcing her compulsion to write the story of Shawandithit as she does. By contemplating broken and dislocated lives, as well as ancestral issues, in this section of the volume, Crate implicitly links her sense of being a "fallen star" like "Shawandithit." In "You who have disappeared," the speaker contemplates the lost people in her life. They "pock my dreams with disease," she writes; "Are you stumbling streets wine-and piss-soaked, / filthy, ragged, railing?" (26). Her abusive, alcoholic, ex-husband is one of the lost figures that mark her memory, as is evident in "Dirty Dream," where his presence in the marriage is as a "drunk, raging, burning" (29). The poem focuses on an encounter with him years later, when she and his son find him in the street, dispossessed and lost to ordinary life:

> And when was it?
> At least two years ago,
> your son and I found you on the street,
> your mouth grimacing recognition,
> eyes swimming.
> That's worse

than any anger — your silent weeping over us,
grime and tear-striped cheeks,
nicotine-stained fingers pawing
sad air (29)

The speaker asserts her ongoing love for him and recognizes the "open wound you are" (29). The open wound that he is, however, is one that remains with her, shadowing and haunting her life:

Yet you return
night after night
young and fresh as maggots,
and rage–that rust knife
guts me (30)

The "rust knife" can be read as a metonym for the global forces of colonialism that continuously and repeatedly create wounds in the localized existence of its subjects. Other poems in this section deal with her teenaged pregnancy and rebellion, as well as with her attempts to make her life anew in a fresh relationship.

In her essay "The Properties of Culture and the Possession of Identity: Postcolonial Struggle and the Legal Imagination," Rosemary J. Coombs remarks that "Native peoples discuss the issue of cultural appropriation in a manner that links the issues of cultural representation with a history of political powerlessness, a history of having Indian identity continually defined and determined by forces committed to its eradication" (88). Many of Crate's poems in the first and last sections of *Foreign Homes* establish a framework that reinforces Coombs's statement, for as she figures Shawandithit's life and experience, Crate also make implicit links to the colonial roots that define and shape the life of her speaker. Thus, Crate's discursive practice becomes simultaneously personal and political. James O. Young notes that "The concept of cultural appropriation has no application unless insiders and outsiders, members and nonmembers of a culture, can be distinguished" (136). Crate positions herself as insider and outsider seeing identity as transitory, that to define herself is to do so in the historical and cultural and not necessarily purely in a chronological and locational manner—asserting indeed that the liminality of colonialism establishes uncertainty of identity, blurs divisions. Thus, Young's notion that cultures are intertwined and overlap is applicable to Crate's sensibility here. Young borrows from Wittgenstein's idea that culture is "a family

resemblance concept […] A culture is to be defined in terms of having enough of a certain range of characteristics. Perhaps at least some basic core values and beliefs is essential to a culture" (J. Young 137).

Crate chooses to speak for Shawnandithit out of this context of the persistent influence of liminal global colonialism, the last of the Beothuk, who in her own life had no opportunity to be articulate and who was clearly subsumed by colonial forces that were beyond her control. Typical criticism of speaking for another rests upon a polarized conception of colonizer and colonized, but Crate operates outside this dichotomy as she identifies her speaker in *Foreign Homes* as subject of colonial practice, and so when she speaks for and in the voice of Shawandithit, she also speaks for and in her own voice. Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao point out in their introduction to *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation* that in recent debates about cultural appropriation in Canada, "The main concern has been whether white novelists were wrong in appropriating Native voices by writing about Native culture or by speaking through the intermediaries of Native characters" (17). The fraught nature of this discussion is well defined by Jonathan Hart when he writes, "Cultural appropriation becomes a question of cultural rights and difference and enriches or makes problematic, depending on the view, the possibility of community" (138). We need to consider here the notion of how Crate uses the Beothuk story for her own means, but then legitimizes it and I suggest authorizes it to create a sense of shared community. This move is marked by aesthetic and imaginitive concerns. The notion of the role of the poet's imagination is central to Crate's conception of an appropriate articulating ethos, for the careful crafting of the poems underscores the contemporary voice of the poet even as she speaks in and for Shawandithit. This notion is made clear, for example, in the choice of the sonnet form for the opening poem in the "Loose Feathers on Stone" sequence. Crate chooses a highly conventional and rigid form, firmly rooted in European culture, to frame and contextualize her articulation of the lost voice. Her strategy here signifies the centrality of European forms to Crate's creative and imaginitive practice, and also announces the impossibility for speaking for Shawnandithit without being implicated in the cultural and political structures of colonialism, even when one is also subject to those same forces as Crate is.

The opening poem of the sequence, "Unmarked Grave," reinforces the role that Crate takes as rememberer, and as writer who is implicated in the story she tells about Shawandithit. The poem's second person voice is both general and double-voiced, to use Mihkail Bakhtin's terminology. The story of the unmarked grave is both specific to Shawandithit, to Crate, and to Indigenous victimization

and suffering. Crate asserts here that the losses of the past are centrally implicated in the losses of the present that she suffers as both are related to colonial practices. Further, her need to articulate her own losses is related to the need to state those of Shawandithit. When Crate writes in the opening lines of "Unmarked Graves," she speaks for the Other and for herself and her losses: "There is no stone, no word, or prayer to mark / Our fleet lives, our staggering deaths" (45). The assertion of negation—that there is no stone—is however ironically and paradoxically undone by her writing of the poem: the text becomes that which marks both their lives in its articulation. The metaphors she chooses reinforce the racially motivated effects of colonial practice on herself and on the Beothuk:

> Everything
> We were is buried in silence under dark
> White plot. (45)

The split of "dark" and "white" across these two lines underscores the racial polarities that marks colonial practice and that continues in colonial discursive practice.

That she writes about the past and also about her present is evident close to the end of the poem when she employs contemporary imagery:

> We languish in sorrow and dirt, betrayed.
> Stake me with fences, bullshit, provisions
> Of guilt, Weed 'n Feed. I am silence crowing,
> Broken wing soaring, language beyond their knowing. (45)

Silence is paradoxically also language, growing out of betrayal. Staked by fences the self and Other are enacted upon by the encounter with colonial enterprise. By speaking in the second person — "we" — Crate connects the fertilizer and chemicals of her present with the story of Shawandithit's oppression and death. Ultimately, in this poem Crate establishes a context or frame for how one should consider the poems that follow in the "Loose Feathers on Stone" section of the volume. Shawandithit's concerns become both her own and reflect the speaker's own concerns of identity and politics.

In moving to conclusions, it is worth returning to my earlier considerations of Indigenous knowledge systems, which Semali and Kincheloe argue provide transformative potential, erasing the either-or oppositional epistemological

foundationalism that informs ethnocentric (and typically Eurocentric) visions of knowledge and hierarchical power structures. By side-stepping oppositional epistemological systems, Crate asserts her valuing of cultural relation as epistemologically valid. She effectively shifts herself from what Abdul JanMohamed has defined as the manichean allegory, which is the "central trope" (*Manichean Aesthetics* 80) of an entire colonialist "economy" (80) of representation that is based on a transformation of racial difference into moral and even metaphysical difference. Though the phenomenological origins of this metonymic transformation may lie in the 'neutral' perception of physical difference (skin colour, physical features, and such), its allegorical extensions come to dominate every facet of imperialist mentality. (80)

My argument is that Crate's alignment with Shawnandithit is itself an assertion of the self-other dynamic that is core to colonialist mentality but that also — most importantly — informs perspectives on what constitutes cultural appropriation. JanMomhamed has challenged post-colonial critics to recognize in their own thinking (most famously, perhaps, Homi Babha, in JanMohamed's essay "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature") the oppositional qualities of the manichean allegory. As he elaborates:

> The dominant model of power — and interest — relations in all colonial societies is the manichean opposition between the putative superiority of the European and the supposed inferiority of the native. This axis in turn provides the central feature of the colonialist cognitive framework and colonialist literary representation: the manichean allegory — a field of diverse yet interchangeable oppositions between white and black, good and evil, superiority and inferiority, civilisation and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality, self and Other, subject and object. (82)

Crate, however, is able to see beyond the manichean allegory to figure the experience of colonial subjugation as rooted in exploitative disenfranchising practices in which she is implicated as subject, as self and other simultaneously.

These considerations can be extended by looking to Australian articulations of the interrelationship of colonialism and the trauma of that subjugation experienced by Indigenous peoples. The pattern of trauma in contemporary life experienced by Crate's characters and her speaker, as well as the trauma of the historical figure of Shawnandithi that she figures, is uncannily reflected in the characterization of the contemporary experience of Aboriginal peoples in Australia that Irene Watson

discusses:

> The face of contemporary suicide is not so much death by shooting or poisoning, as occurred in the nineteenth century; it is death arising out of severe trauma and a pain so big that many of our people let go of life. Indigenous peoples of the modern world have "discovered" ways to kill the pain: suicide, drugs, alcohol. If we were to measure the contemporary impact of genocide and its experience, some of the worst indicators would be found in the mental and health statistics of the Nungas. Our profiles are Third World standard, in a country that enjoys being a leader among global capitalistic economies. (134)

Maria Giannacopoulos argues that Watson presents "a powerful argument […] built around the changing face of colonialism, first killing in an overt manner and then leaving people to self-destruct" (183). Watson's colonialism is rooted in global forces that impact local communities and identities, forces that cannot be exorcised from long histories of colonial activity in consideration of the contemporary. As Joan Crate demonstrates in her volume of poetry, *Foreign Homes*, the trauma of current Indigenous experience in Canada follows similar and complex patterns of engagement with global forces. The experience of Beothuk genocide she articulates reflects the less overt forces of destruction that flow through contemporary Indigenous experience, not dissimilarly to Watson's articulation of Australian experience. For Crate, the local — "home" — is foreign precisely because it is dramatically and violently infused with ongoing global forces of colonialism resulting in a seemingly endless liminal status.

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# World(s) in Balance in *Antony and Cleopatra*: Wole Soyinka's "Shakespeare and the Living Dramatist" Revisited

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**Abstract** Shakespeare's plays stand as powerful examples of the simultaneous appeal to the local and the global: though he most immediately wrote for his local audiences in sixteenth-century London, his choice of subject matter often takes on an international and even global scope, and his representations of what to his immediate audience/readership would be considered exotic and unfamiliar have inspired numerous responses from a global and/or postcolonial perspective, by authors such as Wole Soyinka and many others. This paper takes Wole Soyinka's 1983 essay "Shakespeare and the Living Dramatist," a reading of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and a discussion of responses to that play from the Arab world, as inspiration for an examination of *Antony and Cleopatra* as a literary work/world comprising many examples of opposing forces in balance with one another, and Soyinka's essay as an effort to bring a similar balance to postcolonial literary criticism. As Soyinka demonstrates in his essay, Shakespeare's portrayals in *Antony and Cleopatra* of the delicate balances between East and West, women and men, passion and reason, history and legend, and life, death, and immortality continue to make the play attractive to readers throughout the world.

**Key words** Shakespeare; Wole Soyinka; *Antony and Cleopatra;* postcolonial criticism; interculturation

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**Introduction**

Shakespeare's plays stand as powerful examples of the simultaneous appeal to the local and the global: though he most immediately wrote for his local audiences in sixteenth-century London, his choice of subject matter often takes on an international and even global scope, and his representations of what to his immediate audience/readership would be considered exotic and unfamiliar have inspired numerous responses from a global and/or postcolonial perspective, by authors such as Wole Soyinka and many others. These responses serve as reminders that a writer who chooses to depict a culture not his/her own in a literary work engages in a precarious balance between the two extremes of idealization of that culture on the one hand and demonization on the other, in part stemming from the impossibility of completely escaping one's worldviews and biases. This in turn can affect responses to the work by readers from the culture the work endeavours to represent, especially if that work is accepted as a "classic" or canonical text. Readers in this situation may then be faced with the choice of rejecting the work and/or its portrayal of their culture, or accepting it on its own terms and providing some justification for why they still choose to read it. This is the position in which many African, specifically Arabic-speaking, even more specifically Egyptian, readers have found themselves on encountering texts such as Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. The play is an archetypal example of "Western" literature, having been written by probably the best-known English writer and based on English translations of Roman historical texts, and its central figure has long been regarded, by Roman historians and English writers alike, simultaneously as a racial, cultural, and gendered "other" who has been called "an example of dissoluteness in Western literature" (Darragi 358), and as a great queen who inspires the devotion of the most powerful men in the ancient world and ultimately makes "a supreme sacrifice for love and freedom" (Darragi 369). Yet, as this paradoxical view of Cleopatra as both other and heroine demonstrates, *Antony and Cleopatra* is a play that depicts a

world, or worlds, existing in a delicate balance, and its portrayal of the interactions between East and West, women and men, passion and reason, history and legend, and life, death, and immortality continue to make it attractive to readers throughout the world.

**Wole Soyinka and African/Egyptian/Arab Responses to Shakespeare**

The question of how African readers in general and Egyptian readers in particular respond to *Antony and Cleopatra* was especially intriguing to the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka, who addressed it in the essay "Shakespeare and the Living Dramatist," originally "a lecture to the International Shakespeare Conference at Stratford-upon-Avon on 17 August 1982, and […] first published […] the following year" (Graham 29). In his essay, Soyinka notes that, quite apart from the numerous translations and adaptations of the play into Arabic, many Arabic readers have embraced and adopted Shakespeare by attempting to connect his fascination with and use of imperial Roman/Egyptian history to "the unrecorded things he actually did in real life" (1). He further alludes to an ingenious, if somewhat facetious, attempt to justify the appeal of Shakespeare to Arabic readers: in 1964 — the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth — M.M. Badawi suggested in his essay "Shakespeare and the Arabs" that, given what little we know of his life, Shakespeare might possibly have been Arabic himself. According to this theory, his 'real' name would have been "Shayk al-Subair […] as dune-bred an Arabic name as any English poet can hope for" (Soyinka 2). Badawi, in fact, was not the originator of this hypothesis: according to Ferial J. Ghazoul, it "started in the late nineteenth century with the Lebanese writer Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804–1888), who claimed that Shakespeare was an Arab whose real name was Shaykh Zubayr" (9). It has resurfaced throughout the Arab world over the years in varying degrees of seriousness, even, as Cork Milner points out, having been referred to "in 1989 when Radio Tehran announced that […] [Muammar al-Qadhafi] had declared that an Arab sheik named Zubayr bin William, who had been born in the sixteenth century, was Shakespeare" (qtd. in Litvin). Soyinka's attitude toward the Shakespeare-as-Arab idea is a combination of amusement and admiration: though he has fun with it by suggesting that perhaps it was Shakespeare's wife and not the playwright himself who was of Arabic descent (10), he does recognize that "even the most esoteric of their claims lead one […] to the productive source itself, and to the gratification of celebrating dramatic poetry anew" (10). Indeed, Soyinka's essay is itself an example of this process, as he uses the Shakespeare-as-Arab hypothesis as a way into his "celebrating dramatic poetry anew" with his reading of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The "Shayk al-Subair" claim is a particularly striking example of intercultural appropriation in which the literature of the dominant power is adopted and adapted by the subordinate culture, not merely by rewriting that work to suit the needs of the subordinate culture in the mode of "the empire writing back" (Graham 41), but by claiming the dominant culture's writer as one of its own. Although Shakespeare wrote in English and is considered the quintessentially "English" author, his literary skill and multifaceted presentations of Egyptian, Jewish, and African characters in *Antony and Cleopatra, The Merchant of Venice,* and *Othello* and *Titus Andronicus,* respectively (cf. Soyinka 4), suggest to adherents of this hypothesis that he could not have been entirely English to describe non-English characters in such believable and sympathetic ways, even where those characters are placed in stereotypical, oppositional, and/or antagonistic roles. On the other hand, Shakespeare's "allegedly unflattering views of Jews, Turks, and the British" (Litvin) in those plays and others have also been cited to support this claim in the belief that, as Margaret Litvin notes, "Who but an Arab could harbor unfavourable views of precisely these three groups?" Indeed, in positing characters such as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice,* Aaron in *Titus Andronicus,* or even Othello as "proof" of possible Arabic origins for Shakespeare or his plays, "Soyinka's irony is at its heaviest" (Graham 31). No matter which plays and characters are put forth as evidence of such a reading, however, and whether for serious or humorous/ironic reasons, this sort of appropriation of a "canonical" author from one culture by readers and writers from another further serves as a countermeasure to the "political turn that saw postcolonial cultural influence in terms of the stark alternatives of oppression and resistance" (Graham 29) to which Soyinka's essay was itself a reply.

Soyinka observes that not all African cultures that have produced translations and/or adaptations of Shakespeare have embraced the author and his works in the same way that Badawi and other proponents of the "Shayk al-Subair" hypothesis have done. For example, there have been no known attempts to claim Shakespeare as Nigerian, even as his plays are translated into local languages and adapted into distinctly African settings (Soyinka 2–3). One reason Soyinka cites for this seeming discrepancy is that, in general, European colonies in Africa such as what is now Nigeria have historically taken an approach to education in which "the [colonizer's] literature is always centrally placed" (2), with the result that the colonizer's literature is seen as imposed from above rather than emerging from the colonized community itself. Another reason is the interconnection of Arabic literature and Islamic culture, "from which European culture became not merely a liberating, but, in certain aspects, even a revolutionary force" (Soyinka 2–3) because European

literatures provided representational possibilities that were different from those to be found in Arabic/Islamic cultures and literatures. His use of the words "liberating" and "revolutionary" further demonstrate his efforts "to challenge the belief that the historical influence of colonizing cultures is always harmful" (Graham 31), though, as Kenneth J.E. Graham admits, "such a history is not Soyinka's focus" (31) in the essay as a whole. Soyinka further notes that Arabic readers have also recognized the parallel, though not entirely identical, uses of Elizabethan/Jacobean English and classical Arabic as the languages of both literary and religious texts, where "Arabic is the conscious vehicle of Islamic piety" (Soyinka 3) while the King James translation of the Bible, widely praised for its poetic language, was also a product of the era in which Shakespeare lived and wrote.

### *Antony and Cleopatra* as an Intercultural Text

*Antony and Cleopatra* is a key text for Soyinka and, in his reading, for African and Arabic readers of Shakespeare in general, because of its vivid descriptions and portrayals of the intercultural contacts and balances between Rome and Egypt in virtually all their forms. These interactions transcend simple binary oppositions and "systematic antitheses" (Kermode 1392), and also demonstrate that the processes of colonization and interculturation were by no means new phenomena. As Soyinka asserts, "It is not entirely by accident that the physical terrain […] was the meeting point of the Orient and the Occident" (4), both in the geographical and the mental/cultural senses. The play's Egyptian scenes take place in Alexandria, which was historically the home of Greek colonists in Egypt — and it is worth noting here that as a member of the Ptolemy family, descended from the half-brother of Alexander the Great, Cleopatra was partly of Greek origin herself (Archer 8; Darragi 365; Loomba 112–114) — as well as "a center of learning to rival Rome [that] never really adopted Roman customs" (Crane 12) even after the Roman conquest of Egypt depicted in the play. In that respect, Alexandria is an analogue in the ancient world to Shakespeare's London, as Cleopatra herself, like many of Shakespeare's strong female characters, can be read as a counterpart of sorts to Elizabeth I, "a political and social model whose passion stands as a bold challenge to the Puritan values of the time" (Darragi 362). Conversely, the Egypt of *Antony and Cleopatra* is also a society in transition. Just as the play depicts the shift in the balance of power between Egypt and Rome, Shakespeare's immediate audience would also be reminded that "London was increasing in economic power and metropolitan centrality while Cairo was becoming less and less important, hampered since the fifteenth century by European competition" (Archer 6). Indeed, as an emerging

colonial power and a beneficiary of international trade, Shakespeare's England was, in many ways, just as much an analogue of the Roman Empire as depicted in *Antony and Cleopatra* as it was of Cleopatra's Egypt, though Shakespeare's interest in the Roman Empire was "not [so much] because England was already an empire, but because empire was one of the subjects of his play" (Loomba 119). As Rafik Darragi further points out, *Antony and Cleopatra* was written amidst a period of ideological as well as sociopolitical transition, as it first appeared "in 1606, at a moment of spiritual, Puritan upheaval in England" (362) to which a play whose heroine is a woman who rules, and is ruled, by passion — and whose strength of character evoked still-fresh memories of the Elizabethan era that had so recently ended — was a powerful act of resistance. The analogies between Shakespeare's England and both Cleopatra's Egypt and Antony's Rome have influenced Arabic treatments of the same theme, such as the Egyptian poet laureate Ahmad Shaqui's 1927 play *Masra' Cleopatra,* known in English as *The Fall of Cleopatra* (Soyinka 4) or *The Death of Cleopatra* (Darragi 360), upon which Soyinka touches briefly in his essay as an archetypal example of a postcolonial response to a canonical Western text. Shaqui's play was inspired "by the Egyptian struggle for independence from the British [and] recreates Cleopatra as a woman torn between her love of her country and her love for a man" (Soyinka 4).

Cleopatra's love for Egypt as much as for Antony is evident throughout Shakespeare's play, even though Soyinka regards her as "unpatriotic, […] ready to sacrifice her country on the altar of love" (4). It is especially demonstrated in contrast to the Romans' attitude toward "the wide arch / Of the rang'd empire" (*A&C* I.i. 33–34) of which Egypt is, to them, just another part. Antony and the other Triumvirs refer to Rome, both in itself and as the centre of the empire, as "the world" (e.g. *A&C* I.i. 12), a "'world' [that] is composed largely of hard, opaque, human-fashioned materials, and its surface is divided into almost obsessively named — and conquered — cities and nations" (Crane 2). Cleopatra, meanwhile, constantly refers specifically to Egypt, as her historical counterpart was known to have done. Several times throughout the play, she is referred to as "Egypt" (e.g. *A&C* I.iii. 41; V.ii. 115), not just as metonymic shorthand for "the Queen of Egypt" (*A&C* V.ii. 112), but also as a symbol of how strongly she is identified with her country. Even though "[f]or the Romans, an identification between Cleopatra and Egypt was strategically necessary in order to highlight an absolute division between Rome and Egypt" (Loomba 114), within the world of the play this identification does not necessarily "other" her as it did for the Roman historians. Rather, it serves as a means of self-definition informed by a favourite theme of Shakespeare: the

paradigm of the ruler's two bodies — a single individual who at the same time represents his/her entire nation. Cleopatra's self-assertion and "steely patriotism" (Soyinka 5) ultimately influence her choice of death over dishonour (see esp. *A&C* V.ii. 111–233) and her refusal to allow the Romans to define her life or her death in their terms. Her decision to commit suicide by allowing a snake to bite her, and dressing in her royal robes as she prepares herself for this final step (*A&C* V.ii. 207–313), further illustrates her self-definition as both a queen and an Egyptian, as the "serpent of old Nile" (*A&C* I.v. 25) — Antony's affectionate and foreshadowing nickname for Cleopatra — was a symbol of Egyptian royalty in general, and more specifically "of her control of Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt, as well as the additional territories which Antony gifted her" (Loomba 114).

It is Shakespeare's emphasis on Cleopatra's self-definition and identification with Egypt that provides much of the balance in *Antony and Cleopatra*, which otherwise might have remained a series of simple binary oppositions between Egypt and Rome as embodiments of East and West, rule by women and rule by men, or emotion and reason. Cleopatra is constantly dismissed by the Romans — including Antony — in such terms as "gipsy" (*A&C* I.i. 10), "strumpet" (*A&C* I.i. 13), and "wrangling queen" (*A&C* I.i. 48) in the opening scene alone, and these racially- and sexually-charged descriptors and others throughout the play mark her, from the Romans' point of view, "as a typical wanton, extravagant sexually […] whose devilish charms ensnared and destroyed the noble Antony" (Darragi 359). Soyinka too remarks that, despite Shakespeare's depictions of Cleopatra's positive qualities as well as her flaws, "every act, […] every caprice, every clownish or imperious gesture confirms that she deserves every one of these accolades and more" (5). The Romans' report of a victory feast in Egypt (*A&C* II.ii. 175–183), followed by Enobarbus's famous description of Cleopatra's first meeting with Antony (*A&C* II.ii. 190–242), solidify the Roman perception of Egypt as a place ruled by appetites, sexual and otherwise, as Shakespeare "contract[s] the pomp and panoply of love and royalty into a gastronomic experience, yet unfailingly elevate[s] both into a veritable apotheosis without a sense of the ridiculous or the inflated" (Soyinka 9). Cleopatra is herself aware of the Roman opinions of her and her kingdom, and in a metatheatrical passage marked by ironic references to the world of author and audience, expresses her fear that if she surrenders to them,

> Saucy lictors
> Will catch at us like strumpets, and scald rhymers
> Ballad's out a' tune. The quick comedians

> Extemporally will stage us, and present
> Our Alexandrian revels: Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
> I'th' posture of a whore. (*A&C* V.ii. 214–221)

She thus becomes all the more determined not to give the Romans the opportunity to do so, and in the process displays the character traits of both a noble Roman and a passionate Egyptian, in her choice of taking the honourable way out rather than submitting to almost certain humiliation by Caesar.

By contrast, Octavia, "whose beauty claims / No worse a husband than the best of men; / Whose virtue and whose general graces speak / That which none else can utter" (*A&C* II.ii. 127–130), is presented as an example of the Roman ideal, a foil to the self-indulgent and passionate Cleopatra — and thereby, to many readers, far less interesting a character than her Egyptian counterpart. However, Enobarbus's characterization of Cleopatra as one who "makes hungry / Where most she satisfies; for vildest things / Become themselves in her, that the holy priests / Bless her when she is riggish" (*A&C* II.ii. 238), while meant to define Egypt in general and Cleopatra in particular as the 'other' to which Rome stands in opposition, also establishes her as the embodiment of all the Romans have tried to deny in themselves, so that Octavia's "beauty, wisdom, modesty" (*A&C* II.ii. 240), values that the Romans admired, become statements of repression. Thus, within the world of the play, the Egyptians in general and Cleopatra in particular play a similar role for Antony and the Romans to that which Soyinka identified for English literature within the Arab world: "not merely a liberating, but, in certain aspects, even a revolutionary force" (Soyinka 2–3), albeit one tinged with irony in the conquest of Egypt by Rome at the end of the play.

It is Antony who serves to bridge the gap and maintain a balance between the virtuous/repressed Romans and the passionate/liberating Egyptians; though he clearly defines himself as his peers do, as a Roman warrior/co-ruler and "The triple pillar of the world" (*A&C* I.i. 12), he alone of the Romans makes an effort to understand the culture of the Egyptians. This is most clearly illustrated in Act II, scene vii, in which he explains to Caesar the Egyptian custom of marking the cycle of the year by the flooding of the Nile:

> Thus do they, sir; they take the flow o' th' Nile
> By certain scales i' th' pyramid; they know,

> By th' height, the lowness, or the mean, if dearth
> Or foison follow. The higher Nilus swells,
> The more it promises; as it ebbs, the seedsman
> Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
> And shortly comes to harvest. (*A&C* II.vii. 17–23)

This passage serves to remind the Romans, and the readers, that the Egyptians are "a people to whom […] fertile land is both worship and life" (Soyinka 9), and that as the ruling powers, the Romans must respect that if they are to gain the respect of the Egyptians. The association of Egypt and the Egyptians with the land provides a further contrast to the Roman perspective that equates themselves and their country to "the world" (*A&C* I.i. 12). As Mary Thomas Crane observes, where the Romans speak of the "world," the "Egyptians […] inhabit the 'earth,' in which they imagine themselves to be immersed and which they perceive and understand through all of the senses" (2). Furthermore, the Egyptian perception of the "earth" is influenced more by "the Aristotelian system of elements and humours" (Crane 2) than by the separation between "humanity" and "the world" that marks both the Roman and Elizabethan/Jacobean mindsets. Ironically, however, the battle that seals the fate of Antony, Cleopatra, and Egypt itself is fought "By sea, by sea" (*A&C* III.vii. 40), due not so much to any perceived advantage but primarily to Cleopatra's "refusal to occupy and defend hard ground […] upon which the Roman world is based" (Crane 10). Yet, even despite the triumph of the "world" of Rome at the play's close, in the end "the earth of Egypt dominate[s] Rome" (Soyinka 8), both within the world of the play as Caesar acknowledges "No grave upon the earth shall clip in it / A pair so famous" (*A&C* V.ii. 359–360), and in the world of readers and audience as "Egypt, as depicted in the play, represents something other than (or in addition to) an orientalizing stereotype" (Crane 12) and becomes a vivid example of what Soyinka characterizes as "local colour" (4).

**Shakespeare's Balance Between History and Legend**

Shakespeare's affinity toward Egyptian culture and "local colour" in *Antony and Cleopatra* goes beyond acknowledging the people's co-existence with the land; it also encompasses what Soyinka calls "the esoteric cults of Egypt and allied religions, including Islam" (6) in a much more balanced, even sympathetic, manner than typical depictions of non-Western religions by Elizabethan/Jacobean writers. As with Egyptian culture in general, Cleopatra also embodies Egyptian religion through her association with the goddess Isis, whose symbol is the moon (e.g.

*A&C* I.ii. 67–69; cf. Soyinka 6–7), and this is another feature the Shakespearean Cleopatra shares with her historical counterpart, who, "[l]ike Ptolemaic queens before her, […] encouraged identification of herself with Egyptian goddesses" (Loomba 114). The association is appropriate because of Cleopatra's constantly changing moods (e.g. *A&C* I.ii. 2–5), reminiscent of "th'inconstant moon / That monthly changes in her circled orb" (*R&J* II.ii. 109–110). It also contrasts her further to Octavia and Roman women in general, because the Greco-Roman moon goddess, Diana, was traditionally regarded as a personification of "the cold fruitless moon" (*MND* I.i. 73), associated with virginity and purity rather than with emotion and mutability. Even Cleopatra's farewell speeches to Antony (*A&C* IV.xv. 21–30, 73–91) and her suicide illustrate the Egyptian views of the afterlife, "of death as a place of physical habitation" (Soyinka 7), as well as the principal myth of Isis and Osiris that was used to explain the Egyptian funeral ritual (cf. Kermode 1393). As well, Antony's description of the flooding of the Nile not only shows his respect for Egyptian culture, but his position in the play's mythological/religious subtext as "Osiris to [Cleopatra's] Isis. The union of these divinities assures the fertility of Egypt" (Kermode 1393); and, within the context of the play and its historical base, the union of Antony and Cleopatra assures the endurance of Egyptian identity even as Egypt becomes part of the Roman — and, centuries later, the British — Empire.

In tracing a line of descent between Egyptian religion and Islam (Soyinka 6–7) through the imagery in Cleopatra's elegy for Antony (*A&C* IV.xv. 73–91), Soyinka remarks that "the pagan Greeks, who borrowed from [the Egyptians] much of their cults and religions […], would have no difficulty in identifying the Osiris-prowed Hadithic boat of death with Charon's canoe, scything through the River Styx" (6). His observation of the similarities between Greco-Roman and Egyptian mythologies serves as a reminder that just as Antony and Cleopatra are associated with Osiris and Isis, they are also counterparts to Greco-Roman mythical figures, in both the historical world and the world of the play. Antony in particular is described as a "Herculean Roman" (*A&C* I.iii. 84) both literally and figuratively, claiming descent from Hercules as well as sharing character traits with him. On the one hand, this connection plays upon Antony's reputation as a fierce and determined warrior who could endure the most inhumane conditions (e.g. *A&C* I.iv. 55–71) until the battle was won, recalling the legends of Hercules's twelve nigh-impossible tasks by which he earned divinity. On the other, however, Cleopatra's dressing Antony in her "tires and mantles" while she takes "his sword Philippian" (*A&C* II.v. 22–23) recalls Hercules's similar humiliation at the hands of Queen Omphale, as told by Herodotus and Didorus Siculus — both of whom claimed possible Egyptian origins for "the

seemingly most Greek, and later Roman, of heroes" (Archer 13; see Archer 12–18). Antony is ultimately forsaken by his legendary ancestor and guardian (*A&C* IV.iii. 12–16), prefiguring his supplication to "teach me / Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage" (*A&C* IV.xii. 43–44) as he accuses Cleopatra of betraying him "To the young Roman boy" (*A&C* IV.xii. 48) in a parallel to Hercules's ultimate defeat brought about in part by a woman he had loved (*A&C* IV.xii. 43–49).

Meanwhile, Cleopatra, as the exotic idealized woman who inspires the love of Antony, and before him Julius Caesar and others, can be read as a counterpart to Venus, the Greco-Roman goddess of love (see e.g. Kermode 1393). Indeed, the historical Cleopatra fostered an association of herself with Venus just as much as she did with Isis (Darragi 365), playing upon her mixed Egyptian/Greek ancestry as well as her alliance with Antony, and in this way creating an intercultural synthesis of their respective mythologies in a similar manner to the Shakespearean Antony's description of Egyptian timekeeping customs in Act II, scene vii of the play. Antony's account of the seasonal cycle of the Nile occurs in the midst of the "Egyptian bacchanals" (*A&C* II.vii. 104) aboard Pompey's galley, which further points to the syncretism between Egyptian and Greco-Roman religions by alluding to the historical association of Antony with Bacchus (Darragi 365), himself often regarded as a Greco-Roman counterpart of Osiris (Archer 15–18), alongside Cleopatra's identification with both Venus and Isis. As a figure of fertility and pleasure, Bacchus represents the casting off of inhibitions, the fear of which Caesar expresses in his reluctance to "wash my brain / And it grow fouler" (*A&C* II.vii. 99–100) by participating in the festivity. Within the play-world's establishment of Rome and Egypt as the domains, respectively, of virtue/repression and passion/liberation existing in a delicate balance with each other, Caesar's apprehension over the revelries further represents his insistence on defining himself as a Roman and on not giving in to "the foreign god's power over his subjects" (Archer 18) — or, for that matter, the foreign queen's power over hers.

Shakespeare's mixture of history with both Egyptian and Greco-Roman mythologies in creating the world of *Antony and Cleopatra* represents yet another example of balances between seemingly opposing forces, and one that, like the juxtaposition of Rome and Egypt in the world of the play, or of Arabic and English literary traditions as characterized by Soyinka, opens up possibilities that enrich both the world of the play and the world of the readers. In depicting "[t]he transitions from the physical to the metaphysical" (Soyinka 9), Shakespeare reminds his readers/audience that the characters of whom he writes were actual historical figures, of a time and place far removed from his own. At the same time,

and in part thanks to the play and its sources in Roman historiography, they have transcended their historical origins and taken on a legendary dimension that may well rival that of the Greco-Roman and Egyptian gods and heroes to whom they are frequently compared, as Caesar's elegy for Antony and Cleopatra at the end of the play acknowledges. Indeed, in this respect, *Antony and Cleopatra*, much like Shakespeare's other Roman tragedies and history plays, may be regarded as an example of the figurative 'colonization' of historiography by poetry, alongside the literal colonization of Egypt by Rome. And just as historical colonization eventually gave rise to postcolonialism in all its facets, as Soyinka's essay exemplifies, so has the encroachment of poetry upon history led to revisionary and/or revisionist readings of and responses to those plays and their sources, quite often taking "an oppositional stance to Shakespeare in order to speak for themselves" (Graham 41; cf. Darragi 361–362). Even so, in much the same way that Soyinka's essay serves in part to remind his fellow postcolonial critics that interculturation is not always a zero-sum game that benefits only the dominant social group at the expense of the subordinate, works of historical poetry and/or poetic historiography such as *Antony and Cleopatra* and Shakespeare's other plays with historical themes remind readers of the balance that these works establish between "the actual world of the past" (Dolezel 84) and the legendary/mythic domain to which the characters and the story now belong.

Probably the most powerful imagery in *Antony and Cleopatra* of the protagonists' transcendence of the historical world into that of legend is not so much the play's numerous references to Egyptian and Greco-Roman divinities as counterparts to the title characters, however, as its frequent juxtaposition and balancing of life and death, as "ritual transformation steps towards the mystic moment of transition" (Soyinka 7). Antony's reference to the fate of his mythical ancestor Hercules in Act IV, scene xii, for example, leaves unspoken the hero's ascent to Olympus to join the gods, though those of Shakespeare's audience who were familiar with the story would thus be prompted to remember it; similarly, the association of both the historical and literary Antony and Cleopatra with Osiris and Isis serves to remind readers of the Egyptian views of "the secret house of death" (*A&C* IV.xv. 81) and what comes afterward (cf. Soyinka 6–8). But it is not merely death and immortality that Shakespeare juxtaposes in the play's final scenes. With Cleopatra's comparison of the snake that bites her, already established as a symbol of her status as the queen of Egypt and as an embodiment of both Egyptian and Greco-Roman goddesses, to "my baby on my breast / That sucks the nurse asleep" (*A&C* V.ii. 309–310), he joins "approaching bodily corruption with the essence-

draining paradox of birth and infancy [and] closes the fatal cycle of the union of opposites" (Soyinka 7) that has been the driving force behind the play and its world — and, in Soyinka's reading, the responses of modern readers in the Western and Arab worlds alike *to* the play and its world. Cleopatra's death and her burial beside Antony bring together all the opposing elements within the world(s) of the play — East and West, Egypt and Rome, reason and emotion, male and female, queen and soldier, human and divine, birth and death — into the unifying force of immortality, both in the literal sense of entering the afterlife and in the figurative sense of the remembrance of how, in Caesar's words that end the play:

> High events as these
> Strike those that make them; and their story is
> No less in pity than his glory which
> Brought them to be lamented. (*A&C* V.ii. 360–363)

**Conclusion**

Soyinka closes his essay with several playful responses to the "Shayk al-Subair" theory he had addressed at its beginning, acknowledging its similarity to other alternative authorship claims for the works of Elizabethan writers such as Shakespeare and Marlowe, as well as to the various hypotheses surrounding the largely unknown biographical details of the playwright and his wife, which he claims "will, I hope, provide endless preoccupation for at least a dozen doctoral theses" (10). Facetiousness aside, the desire of Arab readers such as Shidyaq, Badawi, and others who have taken up their claims, to envision Shakespeare as a transplanted Arab, or descendant of one, writing in English does stem to a great extent from the essential paradox of an English writer contributing to the definition of a non-English culture, especially with the British occupation of Egypt long after Shakespeare's time in mind. So, in its way, does Soyinka's response to this Arab appropriation of Shakespeare and to the world of *Antony and Cleopatra* as a whole. It is part of his larger reminder to readers, audiences, and critics that, just as the play depicts a world existing in many simultaneous balances each having some influence on all the others, so can, and perhaps should, postcolonial literary criticism keep in mind the "rich and multivocal mixture of local cultures, and Shakespeare as part of a continuing conversation within and between these cultures" (Graham 41) that act upon, and are acted upon by, one another, rather than merely choosing "to see society as a structure of oppression and exploitation, and to read Shakespeare accordingly" (Leggatt viii). The Arab world's relationship to Shakespeare in general

and *Antony and Cleopatra* in particular is a definite example of "a passionate compliment to those qualities in Shakespeare" (Soyinka 10) that readers admire, "but above all the paradox of timelessness and history" (Soyinka 10), which transcends temporal, ethnic, and geographical boundaries even as the plays remain documents of their own time and place. It is that "paradox of timelessness and history" that can be said to be the fundamental balance present in the world(s) of *Antony and Cleopatra*, if not of Shakespeare's work in its entirety and the responses that work continues to elicit throughout the world.

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# History, Myth, and Nationhood in A. S. Byatt's *Possession*

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**Abstract** There is a gap in the current research on historiographic metafictional novels; previous efforts have mainly focused on the postmodern treatment of language and narration in these novels: the use of parody, language plays, slippage of meaning, etc. The focus has been mostly upon the formal features of these writings. This article however offers a fresh line of research, because the writer believes that historiographic metafictional novels necessarily reveal a connection to the discourse of nationhood since they evoke shared memories of the past. The present article examines the relationship between history and national identity in A. S. Byatt's neo-Victorian novel *Possession* (1990). In this novel, the past is retrieved through a collage of pseudo-historical documents and intertexts. *Possession* is written at a time Britain was involved in negotiating and redefining its post-imperial identity. Here Englishness is mainly reflected in the interaction between history and myth.

**Key words** Englishness; the nation; history; historiographic metafiction; *Possession*

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> The only duty we owe to history is to rewrite it.
> — Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist"

> My sense of my own identity is bound up with the past, with what I read and with the way my ancestors, genetic and literary, read, in the worlds in which they lived.
> — A. S. Byatt's *On Histories and Stories*

These two seemingly contradictory epigraphs are nowhere more masterfully united than in *Possession: A Romance* (1990), a Booker Prize winning novel of excellence in historiographic metafiction by Antonia Susan Byatt (1936- ). Written at a time Britain was involved in negotiating and redefining its postimperial identity, *Possession*, like many other novels in that period, falls back on the memory of ancestors. The memory of the past is used to open new spaces for literary creation, for re-invention of an imagined community.

*Possession* is set in 1980s England and describes the imaginative possession of two academic researchers, Drs. Maud Bailey and Roland Michell, "trained in the post-structuralist deconstruction of the subject," who, resorting to an archive of letters, poems, and diaries, seek to unveil the clandestine love affair between two Victorian poets, Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, whom they finally emulate by falling in love (Byatt, *Possession* 13). Here Byatt links two distinct historical periods. But are they really "distinct"? The writer shows that the past is not merely a finished story; it continues to exert its influence upon the present in many a different way, not the least as part of cultural memory.

Byatt's epigraph that opens the novel is a quotation from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Preface" to *The House of Seven Gables* (1851), which mainly asserts that the label of "Romance" allows the author to "attempt to connect with a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us" (Hawthorne, *The House of Seven Gables* xi). Therefore, we are not dealing with a diachronic narrative, but a "synchronic" one, a *meta*narrative of history, which is a telling example of the postmodern historical novel, not unlike Graham Swift's *Waterland*, Peter Ackroyd's *Chatterton*, or Julian Barnes' *Flaubert's Parrot*. Moreover, *Possession*, in the words of the writer herself:

> plays serious games with the variety of possible forms of narrating the past — the detective story, the biography, the mediaeval verse Romance, the modern romantic novel, and Hawthorne's fantastic historical Romance in between, the campus novel, the Victorian third-person narration, the epistolary novel, the forged manuscript novel, and the primitive fairy tale of the three women,

> filtered through Freud's account of the theme in his paper on the Three Caskets. (*Histories* 48)

The novel is a postmodern pastiche of literary styles and genres (romance, satire, campus novel, mystery, etc.); it has many intertexts, literary or nonliterary, making the text "a palimpsest on palimpsest" (Byatt, *Possession* 181). This point will be dealt with later but for now it is advisable to refer to some major critical readings and reviews written on/about *Possession*.

Most of the critical pieces written on the novel are possessed either by the formal, postmodern features of the novel or by its treatment of gender and feminism. To name but a few, Andrew Higson in "Fiction and the Film Industry" examines the novel, as an extended case study, in his discussion of the interaction of the cinema and contemporary English literature; his reading is mainly focused on the formal features of the novel and its cinematic adaptation. Michael Greaney in *Contemporary Fiction and the Uses of Theory* examines *Possession* in terms of the relationship between feminism and post-structuralism. The novel, Greaney says, is "conspicuously fluent in the language of post-structuralist theory, but notably ambivalent about its contribution to feminism" (Greaney 101). Louise Yelin describes the novel a "rewriting of the history of post-war criticism that restores to prominence scholarly labors regarded as feminine and accordingly undervalued or, conversely, deemed of little value and accordingly assigned to women" (Yelin 39). Nancy Chinn also views the novel from a feminist perspective and focuses her attention on the characterization of Christable LaMotte, and explores her resemblance to the main character of her finest achievement *The Fairy Melusina*. Jessica Tiffin however discusses self-reflexivity of Byatt's novel and says, "she [Byatt] continuously explores and deconstructs the nature and workings of her own narratives as well as the problematic relationship between narrative and reality" (Tiffin 47). Byatt's fiction, Tiffin adds, betrays an interest in fairy tales and folklore; the structure of the fairy tale "signals an explicitly non-mimetic function, a transition to a different reality from our own … a nonrealist form of representation" (Tiffin 48).

There have been also critics who have touched on the importance of history in the novel though their readings have not been comprehensive. For example, Del Ivan Janik in "No End of History: Evidence from the Contemporary English Novel" refers to and analyzes *Possession* in order to contest the ideas of "such diverse critics and philosophers as Jean Baudrillard, Francis Fukuyama, and Fredric Jameson [who believed] we are at or beyond the 'end of history', [and] there stands

before or about us only a perpetual present" (Janik 160). Janik argues that "history and the concept of history are alive and well, particularly as subject and theme in recent English" (Janik 160). Janik believes *Possession* and similar contemporary novels have rejuvenated the historical novel as an art form. Nonetheless, his reading is not very profound since he has only referred to the novel as a case to corroborate his point.

Furthermore, what critics and reviewers have recognized less is a reading that foregrounds and links the concepts of myth and nation. Thus, I shall firstly explain why history plays such an important role in the text and then discuss the role of myth in the discourse of nationhood.

History is a vital to any discussion of *Possession* mainly for two reasons. Firstly, following the revisionist literary and historiographical theory of the 1960s and 1970s, English literature "[has] seen an explosion in the sales and popularity of novels set in the past" (de Groot 1), written mainly to problematize representations of history and reinterpret/rewrite the archival history. For example, *Possession* interrogates the certitude of our traditional assumptions about the past and challenges our historical knowledge. The idea that history is just a narrative, one among many, is repeated in the words of Christabel LaMotte in her final letter to Randolph Ash. By creating a false narrative to tell Ash, Christabel managed to hide a piece of history for almost twenty-eight years. She lied to Ash about the miscarriage of their child. In fact, she shaped history to her liking. She says: "*All History is hard facts — and something else — passion and color lent by men. I will tell you — at least — the facts*" (Byatt, *Possession* 542). This is not however the only narrative regarding this event. Christabel thinks she has kept this secret only for herself; Roland and Maud also think they have discovered the whole truth; however, the reader knows the insufficiency of their knowledge. The novel ends with a "postscript" which tells a different story about the main historical event of the novel. Christabel, Roland and Maud were certain that Randolph Ash did not know the whole truth about his child, however, the reader is made aware that their certainty is groundless. All this time, Ash knew he had a daughter. The postscript not only disrupts linearity, chronology, and closure, but also demonstrates that the desire to know the past through and through never ends in fulfillment. As the writer self-consciously and metafictionally comments, "Coherence and closure are deep human desires that are presently unfashionable," because the novel as "a form of narrative envisages no outcome, no closure" (Byatt, *Possession* 456, 145). Indeed, "[m]etafiction *displays* and *rejoices in* the impossibility of such a resolution" (Waugh 6).

Historical narratives are always open to alternative readings and rewriting. The "Postscript" section — which is an invitation for the reader to participate in the meaning-making process — begins as follows:

> There are things that happen and leave no discernible trace, are not spoken or written of, though it would be very wrong to say that subsequent events go on indifferently, all the same, as though such things had never been. Two people met, on a hot May day, and never later mentioned their meeting. This is how it was. (Byatt, *Possession* 552)

Ash asks Maya to deliver a message to her Aunt Christabel that she "met a poet, who was looking for the Belle Dame Sans Merci, and who met you instead, and who sends her his compliments, and will not disturb her, and is on his way to fresh woods and pastures new" (Byatt, *Possession* 555). Maya forgets to deliver the message; therefore, neither Christabel nor the present-day scholars ever know that Maya once met her real father. The postscript withholds closure, exposing the unfulfilled nature of desire to possess the past completely. In the groundless certainty of Roland and Maud as detectives, one can see clearly the idea that even historical documents are not complete and unquestionable. Roland and Maud can only interpret the history from their own perspectives; they have only access to the textual traces of history.

Secondly, the last decades of the twentieth century and the first two of the third millennium have witnessed an ever-growing tendency among British women writers to engage in writing alternate histories, to experiment with literary historiography; Angela Carter, Penelope Fitzgerald, Jeanette Winterson, Zadie Smith, Sarah Waters, A. S. Byatt, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and many other female writers of fiction have chosen "history" as their subject only to reclaim the "ex-centric" voice of women. A voice that has, for a long time, been silenced or at least driven to the margins by patriarchal practices of History. Since history was connected with identity, it assumed the status of a master narrative and barred the door on the possibility of existence of different accounts. Therefore, "the sudden flowering of the historical novel in Britain, the variety of its forms and subjects, the literary energy and real inventiveness that has gone into it" owes a great debt to revisionist works of contemporary female writers of historical fiction (Byatt, *Histories* 9). These revisionist historical novels are mainly written in historiographic metafiction, a form that welcomes dissident readings and alternative realities. Byatt in *Possession* rewrites history from a female point of view.

Moreover, historiography has been in general a fecund ground for British writers of fiction in which to retrieve, or rather to recuperate, "a sense of the nation in the context of millennial anxieties" (Boccardi 61). *Possession* in particular "proposes a form of envisaging national history that is dependent on existing ideological and economic conditions: the fact that they are put at the service of a 'just' cause cannot fully conceal their connivance with the politics of the time" (Boccardi 87). Here *Possession* as a historical novel, as a text that makes an entry into the past and comes out with interpretation(s), serves two roles: imagining the nation and showing the continuity in nationhood through different periods of time.

The historical past is part of the national present. In retracing the past, Maud and Roland come in possession of important information about two Victorian poets that only adds to the already-high prestige of English literature and culture. The nation is, after all, represented by its culture and cultural products.

**Myth and Nationhood**

Hayden White in his famous book, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973), asserts that the postmodern self-reflexive narrative forms manifest "a return to a mythic apprehension of the world and its processes" (10). One of myth's functions is to reflect cultural memory, the collective memory of a nation. It functions as the nation's link to its distant past. Many different critics have written on the regenerative quality of myth and mythological stories — the most famous is perhaps the ethno-symbolist Anthony D. Smith (1939-2016). According to Smith in *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (1999):

> what gives nationalism its power are the myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritages and the ways in which a popular *living past* has been, and can be, rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalist intelligentsias. It is from these elements of myth, memory, symbol, and tradition that modern national identities are reconstituted in each generation. (9)

The myths, symbols, traditions, and memories of the past guard the nation and our collective national-cultural identities against forces of oblivion. It is thus vital to trace and understand the formation, the origins, of a nation over time. Byatt's novel moves within such parameters, as if its writer were familiar with Smith's definition of nation "as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories" (*Myths* 11). Also Smith names "continuity" and "reappropriation" as two important national elements that link the past and the

present: "If continuity signifies the forward reach of the ethnic past to the national present, the rubric of reappropriation represents the converse movement, a reaching back into the ethnic past to obtain the authentic materials and ethos for a distinct modern nation" (*Myths* 12).

Byatt regularly employs myths and fairytales as intertexts in her fictional work. In *Possession*, particularly, she reaches for old English mythology. By evoking the memories of a glorious past, Byatt attempts to substantiate a sense of *continuity* and to emphasize national origins. As she puts it eloquently, "[individual/national] identity is bound up with the past, with what I read and with the way my ancestors, genetic and literary, read, in the worlds in which they lived" (*Histories* 93). She is not the only one to think in this way. Brian Finney in *English Fiction since 1984: Narrating a Nation* (2006) argues in the same vein that "the English past is still part of the present state of the nation," and "representations of a national past and present interact with one another in surprising ways" (70).

Historical and mythological themes reappear in Byatt's oeuvre commonly. Her *Possession* makes references to two mythological stories in the main: the pagan Anglo-Saxon myth of Yggdrasil (or an ash tree at the center of the universe) and the myth of Melusina (Ilkhani, "Old" 122-8).

The obvious question is why does Byatt use Anglo-Saxon mythology? As part of the answer, I should refer to the condition of English identity after the Second World War. With the gradual loss of Empire after the Second World War, England lost her high status in the world and also her self-confidence. This catastrophic loss also affected English national identity. Moreover, the influx of large number of immigrants from the former colonies and the subsequent hybridization of society added to this problem and disturbed the sense of Englishness for many English people. It is in this atmosphere that writers like Byatt tried to regenerate a fresh discourse of national identity. Byatt here uses myth for creating the idea of nationhood.

Byatt's novel creates an imaginary Victorian poet named Randolph Henry Ash who always carries a wooden stick made of ash-tree. In Anglo-Saxon mythology, ash tree or Askr Yggdrasil was the Tree of the World, a tree that held the whole universe. William Fairfield Warren in "The World-Tree of the Teutons" (1907) asserts the Askr Yggdrasil is one organic unity that unites celestial, terrestrial, and infernal worlds. The tree has three roots, and some believe it stands as "a symbol of life, universal and human, and that the three roots symbolize the physical, the intellectual and the moral principles respectively. Another attempted explanation has taken the three to mean matter, organization, and spirit" (Warren 126). It was believed

that the first humans were made from a piece of this tree. Textual references to the ash tree are therefore important because they evoke myths of origin, building up a sense of belonging, validating the notion of Anglo-Saxondom.

Another important issue throughout the novel is "cultural imperialism" versus nationalism. A good example is provided by disputes over the late discovery of the Ash-LaMotte letters and whether the correspondence should remain in Britain or be sold to the Americans. There is rivalry between the Americans (represented by Mortimer Cropper) and the English (represented by James Blackadder) over the possession of the said correspondence:

> The Americans have offered my client huge sums for the manuscripts. But the English have got onto it, and are trying to have the whole lot declared of national importance, and stop the export. They seem to hate each other. (Byatt, *Possession* 448)

Cropper "represent[s] capitalist and cultural imperialism" (Byatt, *Possession* 431). As Kate Mitchell accurately points out, "[t]he novel ties Cropper's acquisitiveness to his American nationality. A current of anxiety circulates throughout the novel about the loss, during a period of economic decline for England, of English cultural artefacts to rich Americans like Cropper" (98). As the name-symbolism for the American collector (Cropper) indicates, the writer is both criticizing American materialism (under Reagan's capitalist regime) and warning her own beloved country of the threats of such capitalist acquisitiveness. Counter to "Cropper's large offers of money," the moneyless patriot Blackadder has to ask for charity to keep the Ash-LaMotte correspondence — which forms part of the national heritage and consequently of national pride — where it really belongs:

> "Blackadder had written to every public body he could think of who might be concerned with the Ash-LaMotte correspondence. He had lobbied the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art, and had requested an interview with the Minister for the Arts …" (Byatt, *Possession* 430)

Yet Blackadder's attempts to see the Minister "resulted in a dialogue with an aggressive and not wholly gentlemanly civil servant, who had said that the Minister was fully apprised of the importance of the discovery, but did not believe that it warranted interfering with Market Forces" (Byatt, *Possession* 431). The Market Forces! With capitals. The writer reveals her anger at the government's politics.

Therefore, "if the novel parodies acquisitive America, then it also excoriates the compliance of Thatcher's England" (Mitchell 98).

Nevertheless, since "the retention of these old letters in this country is truly in the national interest," the writer "ensure[s] that the papers are kept in this country," but still "without any artificial aid from the state" (Byatt, *Possession* 431). Roland's mentor Professor Blackadder and Maud's friend Professor Leonora Stern discuss this issue in a television interview after the discovery becomes publicized:

> Shushila [the interviewer] sat between her guests and smiled. Blackadder watched the cameras and felt like a dusty barman. [Blackadder:] Now we know who it is — we have discovered Ash's Dark Lady. It is the kind of discovery scholars dream of. The letters have got to stay in our country — *they are part of our national story*.
>
> And Shushila: "You won't agree with *that,* Professor Stern? Being an American?"
>
> And Leonora: "I think the letters should be in the British Library. We can all have microfilms and photocopies, the problems are only sentimental. And I'd like Christabel to have honor in her own country." (Byatt, *Possession* 436, emphasis added)

For Blackadder this dispute relates to Britain's pride and honor in its culture and nationality. This feeling is also visible in Sir George Bailey's conduct towards the American Cropper who trespasses in Seal Court, ignoring the signboard that read: "Private Property. Keep Out" (Byatt, *Possession* 346). Concerning the Ash-LaMotte letters, Sir George tells Cropper clearly, "I don't like English things being bought up by foreigners" (Byatt, *Possession* 347), and later adds, "English things should stay in England" (Byatt, *Possession* 348).

Blackadder also declares that "Randolph Henry Ash was one of the great love poets in our language" (Byatt, *Possession* 348). He thus tells us that language is linked to a sense of nationhood. Notice that Blackadder names only Ash as a great poet "in our language," and leaves out LaMotte, the other Victorian poet. It is because Christabel LaMotte was a hybrid — "half-French, half-English" (Byatt, *Possession* 377). She spoke with her cousin Sabine de Kercoz in Breton — a Celtic language spoken in Brittany, in the north-west of France.

Equally important as language is religion, a matter of moment upon which English national identity is predicated since the Reformation. "*She* [LaMotte] says she is a member of the Church of England in England, but that here the faith of her

fathers is the Catholic faith, in its Breton form" (Byatt, *Possession* 398). Perhaps it is because of this "mystical Breton brand of Christianity" that she is enabled to "dr[a]w on her native Breton mythology, which she had known from childhood," and write poems with strong feminine heroes" (Byatt, *Possession* 41, 148). One such poem is *The Fairy Melusina*, the mythological story of a water nymph who is cursed to take the form of a serpent from the waist down each Saturday. The curse can only be lifted if she marries a mortal who has to swear never to visit her on Saturdays. Melusina marries the knight Raimondin for whom she abundantly exerts her supernatural powers of fertility and creativity. Driven by curiosity, he eventually does not keep his word and spies on her in her bathroom, thus witnessing her transformation. Melusina's curse is fulfilled. Turning into a dragon, she has to abandon her husband and her children. It is very interesting that LaMotte comes to realize that she has been Melusina all these years. The Melusina myth is female-empowering: "feminists see Melusina in her bath as a symbol of self-sufficient female sexuality" (Byatt, *Possession* 39). Here Byatt supports the idea of female creativity and how much it is suppressed in the male-centered patriarchal society, especially in the Victorian era. This "make[s] it unexpectedly important in thinking about the popular expression of gender in English culture" (Featherstone 159). It is interesting that the first women's emancipatory movements started during that period. Also interesting in the myth of Melusina is that she "built castles": "The image of the hearth runs all through *Melusina.* She built castles and homes; the hearth is the home" (Byatt, *Possession* 258). Castle, as memory space, is amongst icons of Englishness; it embodies peace and security:

> [C]astle with its gardens, though now measurable with pins and fine stitches and thumbnails and thimbles, were lordly and handsome enough for any man to wish to spend his days there. (Byatt, *Possession* 74)

Writing in 1913, James Bone states: "No characteristic of the Englishman is more clearly expressed in his art than his love of a harmonious life within the walls of that much-vaunted castle of his, which is inviolate" (161). Castles are where kings and queens dwelled, where key moments in the history of a nation determined. Having Defeated the Vikings, King Alfred the Great ordered "burhs" (castles) to be built in order to protect his kingdom.

Therefore, in Anglo-Saxon societies, especially England, castles and historical houses are valued because not only are symbols of a proud and prosperous past, but also show the continuity of an ancient culture. Such a valued continuity could also

be seen in heritage sites: castles, monuments, historical houses, etc. For example, Chartwell evokes a sense of pride in Englishness since it was once the residence of Winston Churchill, the legendary Prime Minister of England during the Second World War who outwitted the Nazi Hitler more than once and changed the course of war. These heritage sites nurture a feeling of Englishness, a sense of belonging to a common culture and territory.

The textual example of such a *lieu de memoire*, as Pierre Nora calls it, is "Seal Court," a castle inhabited and guarded by Sir George Bailey. It is interesting that the name "Bailey" signifies the outer wall of a castle. Also, the name "George" makes one think of the name of the patron saint of England, Saint George. The name "LaMotte" refers to a mound in a castle. The word "castle" alone is repeated 31 times.

**Seal Court and the Myth of the Garden**

English castles are strong markers of power and prestige; they symbolize cultural kinship, a shared national identity that has stood the test of time. Visiting such heritage sites kindles a common feeling of belonging to an imagined community of fellow Englishmen, because they are reminded of their common national identity. However, the way these sources of collective memory are kept over the years is also very significant. It may show the present condition of a nation.

Mariadele Boccardi in her book *The Contemporary British Historical Novel: Representation, Nation, Empire* (2009) suggests Sir George Bailey's castle, Seal Court, is "symbolic of the nation with all its tradition and present decline" (*The Contemporary British Historical Novel: Representation, Nation, Empire* 79). That the castle is now deserted, Boccardi believes, calls to mind the image of the Gothic castles. Perhaps she is trying to refer to the position of England as a former empire after the Second World War. Whatever her intentions might be, she aptly refers to "the re-enactment of the myth of the Garden … for an imaginative recuperation of the national past" (*The Contemporary British Historical Novel: Representation, Nation, Empire* 81). Myth has the power to unite people and remind them of their togetherness.

Furthermore, I believe Seal Court, the olden castle and its garden, is a kind of chronotopic space which has stood the test of time. The castle as a chronotope, showing the continuity of the Baileys, symbolizes a national space, a space that unfolds a nation's heritage, that connects its past to its present and future. The use of the chronotopic castle becomes then a kind of national allegory.

Influenced by Kant, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) introduced the theory of

chronotope, signifying in brief the inseparability of spatial and temporal dimensions in a literary work (mainly a novel). However, "[t]he main use Bakhtin made of this theory in his own published works was in the study of literary history, where it served principally to demonstrate the 'process of assimilating real historical time and space in literature [. . . and] the articulation of actual historical persons in such a time and space'" (Best 291). According to Bakhtin:

> the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel. All the novel's abstract elements — philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect — gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work. Such is the representational significance of the chronotope. (Best 292)

Abigail Wheatley in *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* (2004) examines the "extent to which castles were involved in the ideological and mythographic life of the nation" (16), and argues that castles as chronotopes play an important role in "the articulation of [the continuity of] English political power and royal and national identity" (*The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* 144). Seal Court as chronotope both maintains the nation's continuity and moves ahead the symbolic pattern of the novel.

**Conclusion**

For the postmodernist historical novelist, the past has not ended nor is it sealed for good; instead, the past is an integral part of the present. Historiographic metafiction invites us to change our perception of history and makes us conscious of the limits and shortcomings of represented history. Also, the traditional idea of keeping separated the literary and the historical is challenged in postmodern theory, mostly through attention to the idea of intertextuality. Thus, history and literature function as *intertexts* of each other.

Since postmodern historical novels revisit the past and in a way reconnect the past to the present, we may say they are not simply about history but they *historically* reflect upon the past of a culture or a nation or the lives of the people of a region or a particular community. In this sense, postmodern historical novels are often, in one way or another, related to the general discourse of nationhood. A character's understanding of their national past is shaped through the historical

events in the novel. In A. S. Byatt's neo-Victorian novel *Possession* Englishness is reflected in the interaction between history and myth. The memory of the past is used to open new spaces for literary creation, for re-invention of an "imagined community."

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# Homi Bhabha and Iranian-American Literature of Diaspora: Is Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* Postcolonially Funny?

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**Abstract** From late 20th century, a large number of Iranians have migrated to Western countries. Some of Iranian immigrants especially women in diaspora began writing memoirs which represent the questions of ethnics, identity, language and other problems they have grappled. Living in Western countries with different cultures positions emigrants in a state of ambivalence. This ambivalence creates a metaphorical lesion in their identities. In such conditions, Iranian diaspora searches for new identities through different ways. This searching is represented in Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* (2003), narrating the life of Firoozeh and her life-style in America. With its humorous tone, her memoir deals with social aspects of living in Western culture and dilutes political features of most memoirs written by Iranian women in diaspora. This article aims to analyze Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* through Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theories of hybridity, mimicry and stereotype in order to represent how the characters of *Funny in Farsi* in specific and the Iranian immigrants in general can obtain new identities in the Western communities. It is concluded that the sense of superiority in Firoozeh is gained through celebrating her new, hybrid identity in the third space while her parents' reluctance is depicted as inferior and humorous.

**Key words** Diaspora; *Funny in Farsi*; Hybridity; Mimicry; Stereotype; Third space

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**Introduction**

Some Iranian women in diaspora have begun writing memoirs in recent years to express their inner feelings. Writing memoirs allow them greater latitude in expressing their opinions about living in Iran and residing in diaspora. They could propagate their attitudes through the popularity of their works all around the world. By reading the memoirs of these Iranian women, it can be understood how Iranian immigrants in Western countries confront many problems in terms of ethnics, identity, language and economic complications in diaspora. Living in Western communities challenges the position and identity of Iranian immigrants; indeed, they are in a state of ambivalence in Western culture. In such conditions, Iranians in diaspora lose their original identities and through different ways, they begin searching for new identities to be able to live with Western people.

The difficulties of living in diaspora and searching for new identities are reflected in Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* (2003). It is a collection of unified short stories that narrates the life of Firoozeh, a little girl who moved from Iran to America. When she was seven, she and her family all moved to Whittier, California in search of a better life. Her father, Kazem, studied in America at a graduate school in Texas. Kazem believed that America is the land of dreams and his insufficient knowledge of English is enough for a prosperous life in America. Unfortunately, his claims were false and Firoozeh tried to adjust herself to American culture, leading to many humorous and awkward encounters. The book follows Firoozeh and her family, as she deals with issues such as trying to earn money, marrying François, and the anti-Iranian feelings many Americans share during and after the Iranian Hostage Crisis.

This research singles out Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* for analyzing the conditions of Iranian immigrants because Dumas's memoir is different from any other memoir of Iranian women in diaspora. Its difference is egregious due to foregrounding sociocultural issues of emigration and blurring the political aspects, unlike other memoirs (Grassian 126). Those memoirs range from historically charming to shocking, sad or tragic. Some address political subjects, like Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003), others grapple with the difficulties of adapting to a life in exile. Some wrote about nostalgia, like Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad* (2005),

while others such as Marina Nemat's *Prisoner of Tehran* (2006) show Iran as a giant prison (Ramazani 294). Nevertheless, Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* is about social aspects of living in America expressed with humorous tone. On the one hand, most of Iranian women in diaspora have had Iranian elite families such as Azar Nafisi and Lily Monadjemi whose sociocultural backgrounds affect their works which are mostly about political matters. On the other hand, Dumas belongs to non-aristocratic family and this issue may be the reason of her apolitical memoir.

Title and cover of many memoirs, which deal with political matters, tell about their content such as *Prisoner of Tehran* (2006) and *Journey from the Land of No* (2005). They portray the colonial expectations of Muslim women in veil. The apolitical title and cover of Dumas's memoir are special subjects that few articles paid attention. Thus, it is the main reason that this paper selects *Funny in Farsi* among other memoirs. Many articles which have been written so far, draw their attention towards political memoirs, for instance, Marandi and Pirnajmuddin (2009) focus on Azar Nafisi and Azadeh Moaveni. Some articles which have been written about memoirs of Iranian women in diaspora briefly mentioned Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* without analyzing it in detail. However, this article attempts to fully scrutinize *Funny in Farsi* through Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theories.

After some explanations about sociocultural background of some Iranian women in diaspora as well as discussions about title and cover of the memoirs, this article will explain Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theories of hybridity, mimicry and stereotype and the applications of these concepts to the context of immigration. Through Dumas's stereotypical perspectives toward her parents which show generational conflicts, the paper will express the differences between the first and the second immigrant generations. The purpose of this article is to analyze how the characters of *Funny in Farsi* are searching for new identities to be able to live in the community of America.

**Sociocultural Background of Iranian Diaspora Literature**

Most of women in diaspora who have written memoirs have had Iranian elite families, such as Azar Nafisi, who is the daughter of one of Iran capital's mayors and her mother was one of the first female members of parliament in Iran before the Islamic Revolution (1979). Sattareh Farman-Farmian, the narrator of *Daughter of Persia* (1996), is a princess of Qajar Dynasty who ruled Iran until late 19$^{th}$ century. Lily Monadjemi, the writer of *Blood and Carnation* (1993) and *A Mother of Survival* (2010) is a descendent of Nassar-Al-Din Shah, one of the kings of Qajar Dynasty (1848-1896). Marjan Satrapi who wrote *Persepolis* (2003) is

another descendent of Qajar monarch. Davar Ardalan, the author of *My Name is Iran* (2008) is the daughter of Laleh Bakhtiar, one of the most prominent Iranian-American women scholar, and the only woman who has translated the Koran with feminist flavor. It seems that most of what is being written about Iran is presented by a particular class of Iranian society. Few writers like Marina Nemat, Gina Nahai, Susan Pari and Firoozeh Dumas belong to non-aristocratic family (Fotouhi 33-34).

The opinions of these Iranian women in diaspora about Iran can be understood due to their sociocultural background and their viewpoints toward Iran. These views have reflected in titles and covers of their memoirs that range from political to nonpolitical. The titles and book covers of the memoirs of Iranian women inform us much about their contents highlighting the urgency of life, death, revolution and the question of mandatory veiling and unveiling (Fotouhi 31). We can name, *Unveiled: Life and Death among the Ayatollahs* (1995), *Out of Iran: One Women's Escape from the Ayatollahs* (1988)*, In the House of My Bibi: Growing Up in Revolutionary Iran* (2008)*, Honeymoon in Tehran: Two Years of Love and Danger in Iran* (2009), *Rage against the Veil: the Courageous Life and Death of an Islamic Dissident* (1999). The title of *Funny in Farsi*: *A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America* (2003), reflects none of these political issues. The word of *Funny* is the evidence of universal motif, humor, and *Farsi* is a sign of ethnic implication. According to the title of this memoir, it can be understood that Dumas did not use a political tone in her social analysis of Iran and Iranians. This light and humorous tone of Dumas's memoir attracted the attention of not only the American readers but also the conventional Iranian readers who did not see any questionable matter in this memoir (Grassian 129).

The book covers of the memoirs can also be considered as important notions. Some of them, such as Nafisi's *Things I've Been Silent About: Memoirs* (2008) and Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (2004), illustrate the notion of silence, veiling, oppression and imprisonment and accentuating the differences between women in Iran and women in the West. More than half of Iranian women's memoirs have similar cover image of a woman whose face hides under a veil. Half-veiled face, with piercing eyes staring at the audience is the typical image that one can witness on the covers of *Unveiled* (1995), *Prisoner of Tehran* (2008, Fig. 1), *Journey from the Land of No* (2004), *Rage against the Veil* (1999), *In the House of My Bibi* (2008, Fig. 2) and *Watch Me* (2010).

The cover of *Funny in Farsi* (Fig. 3) illustrates none of these images. It demonstrates balloons and a cartoonlike woman in the shape of Mickey Mouse. All of these evidences depict that *Funny in Farsi* does not deal with politics, which

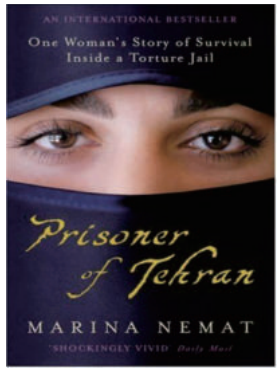


Figure 1


Figure 2

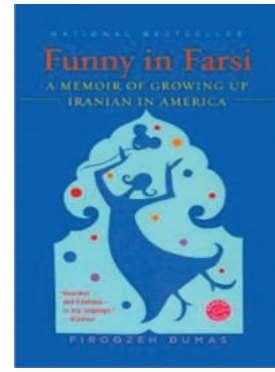


Figure 3

is why Dumas's memoir differs from more popular Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003), Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad* (2005) and other memoirs of Iranian women in diaspora which are loaded with political issues.

**Review of Literature**

Ramin and Jalalizadeh (2014) explore the already-hybridized self and psyche of Firoozeh Dumas as an Iranian-American. They claim that Dumas writes about Iran as well as America to reflect how she could establish a peaceful relation between different parts of her identity. This paper considers how she has depicted her homeland and the country she currently lives in. Samadi Rendy (2015) focuses on postcolonial and postmodern theories of bilingualism and gendered identities. She examines the relationship between bilingualism and female characters' identity formation in recent memoirs of Iranian women in diaspora, especially Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* (55). Tahani-Bidmeshki (2007) has devoted some parts of her article to *Funny in Farsi* entitled "Reading Funny Lipstick through Jihad." She explores the cross-sections of nationalism and feminism in Dumas's memoir. She addresses Dumas's political experience within the discourses of nationalism and feminism. She explains Dumas's self-orientalization through her discussions of the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Fotouhi's "Self-Orientalism and Reorientation" deals with gender dichotomy in the Middle East and the interest of the West in understanding this dichotomy. She employs Edward Said's theories and contends that the memoirs of the Middle Eastern women are involved in self-orientalisation. She examines most memoirs of Iranian women and she does not focus on one specific work. Zand (2015) pays attention to Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* and its Persian translation. Her study aims at comparing the signs of hybridity in immigration literature and its Persian translation

to discover if the translator saved the elements of hybridity in translation and his ideology had any effects on dehybridizing the text (208).

"Translating the Self" (2006) deals with a number of Iranian-American women's memoirs and the question of language as a key element of cultural identity. It examines the Iranian-American women writers in terms of their relationship to Persian language as a key component of the self. It shows that those Iranian-American memoirists, who narrate their journeys between Iran and the United States, represent their translation of self across the boundaries of language (Elahi 461). "Constructing an Axis of Evil" (2009) has studied the memoirs of Iranian women in diaspora including Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Marjaneh Satrapi's *Persepolis* and Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad*. It concerns with why many Iranian intellectuals are considered as people who are negatively influenced by the Western culture (Marandi and Pirnajmuddin 23).

A large number of articles were penned about political memoirs and a few papers were inscribed about Firoozeh Dumas's apolitical *Funny in Farsi*. Among different approaches which have been applied to Iranian-American women's memoirs, Homi Bhabha's theories of hybridity, mimicry and stereotype are selected, since they are concordant with Dumas's *Funny in Farsi*, the memoir of an Iranian immigrant (Firoozeh herself and her family) in America.

**Theoretical Framework: Homi Bhabha's Postcolonialism**

Homi Bhabha argues about the hybridity and impurity of cultures. Hybridity refers to the fact that cultures are always in contact with one another which eventually leads to cultural mixedness. This impurity of cultures refer to an original mixed-ness within every form of identity (Huddart 4) perceived in the immigrants living in Western countries. According to Bhabha, people who are in a hybrid position feel that they do not belong to a particular culture (Leitch and Cain 2377). The colonized, the immigrants and other minorities experience the situation of being in the hybrid space. They appertain neither to their own culture nor to the dominant culture, in other words, they are on the borderline of cultures. Being in this borderline means shaping in-between status or an identity which is central to the creation of new cultural meaning. To give privilege to in-between-ness is to undermine solid, authentic culture in favor of unexpected, hybrid and fortuitous cultures. According to Bhabha, the proper location of culture is on the boundary (Huddart 4-5). He believes that one who is in the place of boundary begins his or her presencing and this presence is accompanied by ambivalence (Rivkin and Ryan 936).

Based on postcolonialism, the colonized acquires ambivalent feelings toward the colonizer after a long relationship with the colonizer. It includes binary and contradictory feelings of desire, infatuation, and repulsion. Bhabha contends that this ambivalence turns the identity of the colonized to a hybrid position. The situation of being in ambivalence and duality is clearly perceived in the identity of Iranian-American women such as Firoozed Dumas. The postcolonial theories of Bhabha can also be exerted to the context of immigration as well. Through his perspectives, this article attempts to represent the hybrid conditions of Iranian-American women who live in diaspora, in general, and the hybrid situation of Firoozeh Dumas and her family in America, in particular.

Bhabha argues that hybridity does not refer only to space, but also to time. Being in the 'beyond' is to inhabit an intervening space; to dwell 'in the beyond' entails a revisionary of time. Hybridity means a return to the present, to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future in its hither side (Rivkin and Ryan 938). In the place of beyond or intervening space, the past, present and future of a hybrid person mingle together. For an instance, an immigrant brings past to present and the combination of past and present makes a new sense of identity. This encounter with 'newness' is not a part of continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. This process renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space. It innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The process of past-present is the necessity of living in different culture (Rivkin and Ryan 938). In the memoirs of Iranian-American women such as Firoozeh Dumas's, the characters bring their past in Iran to their present in America and this past-present process introduces new identities to Iranian-Americans. Being in the place of hybridity constructs the feeling of displacement and disjunction in the colonized or other minorities and these feelings lead to unhomeliness (Rivkin and Ryan 937). The immigrants such as Iranian-Americans experience displacement and disjunction in the Western culture and due to these feelings, they are in the uncanny or unhomely situation which does not totalize experience of being a Westerner.

In the postcolonial context, mimicry becomes a way for inferior to imitate and be like the superior. According to Bhabha, the imitator will not be one hundred percent the same as the original one. Mimicry is the process of reshaping, but not totally perfect "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 86). In the process of mimicry, the imitated should be encountered by the imitator. In this encountering, the imitator tries to copy what the imitated has, and the two must encounter in one space, which is both mental and physical. Bhabha refers to this space as the third

space. It "overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity" (Bhabha 86). Third space occurs in an encounter between the colonizer and the colonized in undetermined space beyond the colonizer and the colonized. In this space, hybridity is constituted and mimicry is processed in its negotiation. For Bhabha, mimicry is the play between equivalence and excess, which makes the colonized both similar and also terrifying: "mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha 86).

In this understanding, hybridity and mimicry cannot be separated at all because hybridity shows a borderless encounter between the colonizer and the colonized. Mimicry means the effect resulted from this encounter which makes the colonized imitate the colonizer while the imitation is never the same. The dissimilar imitation becomes the mockery. Mimicry is "a flawed colonial memeosis" (Bhabha 87). The flaw in imitation which leads to mockery represents the resistance of the colonized to colonialism in general. Mimicry can be interpreted as a strategy of resistance (Huddart 39). Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, third space, and mimicry are brought to the context of immigration in terms of behavior and language of the characters in *Funny in Farsi*. The memoirs of Iranian-American women show how the immigrants try to imitate the behavior of the Americans and through these imitations they depict their resistance toward American culture.

By stereotype, Bhabha means that colonial discourse depends heavily on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. It shows that the Other is already fixed as unchangeable, known and predictable, but at the same time, the Other is also contradictorily residing in a state of disorder. This justifies the colonizers' domination. Such contradiction in the colonial discourse itself reveals the resistance within colony (Huddart 28). The colonizers form their own identity in relation to the Other, but such an identity is characterized by ambivalence, which involves a process of fear, desire, ambivalence and paranoiac identification (Bhabha 61). Stereotype is employed for the characters of *Funny in Farsi,* to reveal the attitudes of Firoozeh and her parents, especially her father, since they try to find new identities in the context of diaspora as the new hybrid space.

### *Funny in Farsi* through the Lens of Bhabha

Firoozeh Dumas, an Iranian-American female novelist, who has been living in America since her childhood, strands in two different cultures: Iranian in which she was born and the American in which she grew up. She lives in a third space, neither to Iranian nor to American culture but somewhere hybrid. This sense of hybridity has been represented in "The Wedding," one of the most important short

stories in *Funny in Farsi*, where she narrates her dating with the future husband, the dissatisfaction François' mother and her marriage. In this story, Firoozeh is going to celebrate her wedding both in the church according to American tradition and *Aqd Aroosi* ceremony (marriage contract) according to Iranian tradition: "François and I had agreed that we would be married both in the Catholic Church and in a traditional Persian ceremony" (Dumas 145).

Her decision depicts her ambivalent and hybrid situation. She wants to embrace both sides of being an Iranian Muslim as well as a Christian American. Her in-between situation turns her to a different person with new identity. Being on the boundary reveals her presencing. For Bhabha, the proper location of culture is on the boundary and one who resides in the third space begins presencing. Yet, this presence is accompanied with ambivalence. Firoozeh's decision to hold her wedding in the style of both cultures represents her position in the third space and the impurity of her culture and identity.

Firoozeh dwells in the beyond, in an intervening space. Her past and present gather in one space and she cannot separate her past in Iran from her present in America. We can refer to the story of "You Can Call Me Al," where her past always innovates and interrupts the performance of her present:

> "What made Las Vegas even more awful were my memories of real vacations we had taken in the past. In Iran, vacation meant going to the Caspian Sea. Every summer, my father's employer, the National Iranian Oil Company, allowed its employees the use of its villas in Mahmood Abad for one week. Mahmood Abad, a town on the Caspian shore, was a two-day drive from Abadan." (Dumas 53)

She always compares her past in Iran with her present in America. Firoozeh recalls the past but through her recollection, she reinscribes it and via this process, she encounters new identity. This newness acknowledges a hybrid space. Her memories are neither similar to her past nor akin to her present. It creates a sense of the newness, hybridity, as a result of cultural translation. There is a partial presence in her recollection of the past as a result of living several years in America. When she wrote her memoir in 2003, she was a mature woman and the culture of America had permeated into her mind. Therefore, there is a partial presence of American culture in her memories which renews the past and refigures it. According to Bhabha, the 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity of living in different culture.

The act of mimicry is palpable in the behavior and speech of Firoozeh's

mother. Her mother, who lived in Iran more than half of her life, cannot speak English, as reflected in the story of "Hot Dogs and Wild Geese." With her arrival at America and encounter with the Americans, the way she imitates the language of the Americans is bordering on mockery:

> "I always encouraged my mother to learn English, but her talents lay elsewhere. Since she had never learned English in school, she had no idea of its grammar. She would speak entire paragraphs without using any verbs. She referred to everyone and everything as 'it'." (Dumas 11)

Thought mimicry of Firoozeh's mother is the result of her encounter with the Americans, her imitation is never the same. Her mimicry leads to mockery as a result of the flaw in her speaking English. She is not eager to learn English and her reluctance represents her resistance to the American culture and language. Living in America forces Firoozeh's mother to encounter with the Americans in the third space. Since mimicry happens in the conditions of being in a place of hybridity, hybridity and mimicry cannot be separated.

This act of mimicry can clearly be seen in the behavior of Firoozeh's father, Kazem. He desires to be more American than the Americans when he imitates their behavior and language. In "The Gutter," he underestimates the participants of a bowling match on a television show and believes that he can do bowling better than the American contestants: "My father's comments ranged from 'You should've gotten that!' to 'I would've gotten that!' From our sofa, bowling looked easy, and we couldn't understand why so many contestants failed to win the jackpot" (Dumas 15). He takes part in a bowling match and fails. His failure in imitating the Americans is also represented in the story of "You Can Call Me Al." Whenever he finds an opportunity, he goes to Las Vegas to gamble with the Americans, but he is always the loser:

> "My father headed straight for the blackjack tables. Everyone except gamblers knows that gambling never pays. My father always believed that he was this close to the big one, but because of some unforeseen event, like someone else winning, he'd lost." (Dumas 51-52)

Kazem tries to be like the Americans but this act of reshaping is not totally perfect, almost the same, but not quite. His repeated defeats in his affairs reveals this colonial tension that he cannot experience being an American. He tries to imitate the

behaviors and acts of the Americans when he encounters them but the flaws in his mimicry always lead to mockery.

As the story of "Hot Dogs and Wild Geese" shows, Kazem knows himself as an American citizen because he was educated in America for two years, but his way of speaking English destroys his pretentiousness:

> "My father spoke a version of English not yet shared with the rest of America. . . . [His] inability to understand spoken English was matched only by his efforts to deny the problem. His constant attempts at communicating with Americans seemed at first noble and adventurous, then annoying." (Dumas 8-9)

Kazem's behavior throughout *Funny in Farsi*, ironically, represents the narcissistic desires of the colonized. He aims to be more American than the Americans and in that mimicry he finds himself superior to the Americans to the extent that he considers himself as Self and the Americans as Others. Kazem forms his own identity in relation to the Americans but his identity is characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand, he desires to appear as an American through imitating the behaviors of Americans and on the other hand, he fears to lose his position as a superior person.

Firoozeh herself tends to be more American rather than Iranian. In "The 'F Word'," she depicts this inclination by changing her name from Firoozeh to Julie. Her name as a signifier for Iranian identity is shifted to Julie, with the excuse of "simplicity," Firoozeh was derogatively pronounced as Ferocious by her schoolmates (Dumas 64). It seems that her intention for changing her name is to obtain an American identity:

> "To strengthen my decision to add an American name, I had just finished fifth grade in Whittier, where all the kids incessantly called me 'Ferocious'. That summer, my family moved to Newport Beach, where I looked forward to starting a new life. I wanted to be a kid with a name that didn't draw so much attention, a name that didn't come with a built-in inquisition as to when and why I had moved to America. . . .I finally chose the name 'Julie'." (Dumas 63-64)

Her encounter with the American students impels her to imitate the Americans and change her Iranian name, but her act of reshaping is not totally perfect and she cannot be one hundred percent the same as the original Self of the colonizer.

This fact can be proved by her return to Iranian heritage: "When I went to college, I eventually went back to using my real name" (Dumas 65). After her "flawed colonial memeosis" (Bhabha 87), this return shows her ambivalence, her presencing in the boundary. Firoozeh cannot fix her position and identity on one specific culture. She belongs neither to America nor to Iran, but the hybrid third space. Her position in the Third space motivates her to translate American culture and this cultural translation is not a unified, homogenized experience. It happens in the place of hybridity. By changing her name from Firoozeh to Julie, it can be understood that she is on the boundary and this position forces her to mimic Americans. Her ambivalence is palpable in her constant movement to and fro (changing and returning to her name). In this instance, hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence intermingle in time and space both mentally and physically. It is impossible to separate hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence due to their interrelation.

The Hostage Crisis in Iran (1979-1981) during the Islamic Revolution (1979) was the main reason for Firoozeh's inclination to American culture. The Iran Hostage Crisis was a political action between Iran and the United States in which fifty-two American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 444 days by Iranian university students who took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran. After the Hostage Crisis, Americans were representing their hatred toward Iranians in Dumas's narrative. In "I-ranians Need Not Apply," through utilizing pun and humor in "I-ran" and "Iran," she narrates the hardships of being Iranian. For Dumas, having an Iranian identity meant to be ostracized from American community: "With each passing day, palpable hatred grew among many Americans, hatred not just of the hostage takers but of all Iranians" (Dumas 117). Therefore, Firoozeh tries to obtain new identity rather than being faithful to her Iranian background. She fills this gap by marrying a westerner, François. She believes that her marriage to a western man leads to a new, hybrid identity, compensates for her inferiority, and helps the process of Americanization. In "Bernice," her view toward her husband is a stereotypical one. She sees him as superior and tries to obtain his superiority by marring him. Only beside her husband, she feels like a western celebrity:

> "People see my husband and think of Gene Kelly dancing with Leslie Caron. People see me and think of hostages. This is why, in my next life, I am applying to come back as a Swede. I assume that as a Swede, I will be a leggy blonde. Should God get things confused and send me back as a Swede trapped in the body of a Middle Eastern woman, I'll just pretend I'm French." (Dumas 41)

Dumas wrote her memoir from point of view of an American woman. In narration, Dumas shows herself more American than Iranian and it can be proved by her stereotypical representations of Iranians through describing her parents. She considers herself superior to them. In "Leffingwell Elementary School," she depicts her mother as an uneducated and backward woman: "After a few awkward attempts by my mother to find Iran on the map, Mrs. Sandberg finally understood that it wasn't my mother's lack of English that was causing a problem, but rather her lack of world geography" (Dumas 6).

Firoozeh's superiority is represented in her fluent English at the age of seven acting as her mother's translator. She also illustrates her mother as a stereotypical Iranian woman who does not have any right to decide for herself. Her mother shows no resistance against her husband's decision when he dictates the choice: "My mother rarely questions my father's choices, and when she does, he answers her with one of his typical opinions: 'Anybody with a brain can tell that's a no vote'" (Dumas 119).

Dumas's description of her mother's lifestyle, indicating the patriarchal society of Iran, is the stereotypical representation of a submissive, indecisive Iranian woman. She employs humor in her memoir and this humor arouses a question: does Dumas use humor in *Funny in Farsi* to laugh at Iranians or to mock Americans? The butt of satire and the humorous aspects of *Funny in Farsi* are mostly directed to Iranians and their portrayals as stereotype. Dumas uses humor in recounting the stories of her parents and her uncle. She employs this humor intentionally to show the inferiority of the colonized and her superiority as the paragon of a hybrid American.

Some critics believe that for Dumas, this light tone or humor allows readers to identify with her family and to understand and appreciate the universality of humanity (Grassian 123-126). Though in her interviews, she believes in equality for all human being, her claim is only partly reflected in her practice (Grassian 126). Her desire to be more American than an Iranian reveals her residence in the third space. Her inner contradiction represents her ambivalence. This ambivalence in her speech and act is depicted by her stereotypical view toward her parents.

## *Funny in Farsi* Portrays the First and the Second Generations of Iranian-Americans

Dumas's viewpoint towards her parents represents the conflict between two different generations. Characters in the memoirs of Iranian women in diaspora can be divided into two generations. The first generation advocates the mother tongue

and national values. At the same time, they try to transmit these principles to the next generation. The first generation is expected to be faithful to the value system of Iranian community in diaspora; therefore, they are not interested in learning new language. On the contrary, the second generation of immigrants adjust themselves easily to the new society and eagerly learn English. Because of participating and being educated at schools or universities of the host country, the second generation integrate into the new society and this society invites them to learn the language in order to feel the sense of belonging. Yet, this belonging is never complete, as we witnessed in the case of Firoozeh. *Funny in Farsi* represents the insufficiency of basic education in the host country or social interactions for first generation. That is why these characters struggle with learning English.

The second generation have more social contacts in the new society and they learn the second language willingly (Rendy 58-64). In *Funny in Farsi,* Firoozeh's mother belongs to the first generation. In terms of language, she sticks to her mother tongue and never learns English well enough (Dumas 11). Since she has limited education, she cannot acquire English to communicate with other people. That is why the daughter plays the role of an intermediary, an interpreter: "My mother soon decided that the easiest way for her to communicate with Americans was to use me as an interpreter" (Dumas 10).

Later in "The Wedding," when Firoozeh introduces her fiancé, François, to her parents, her mother cannot understand her daughter's friendship with a man before their marriage. Iranian values related to courtships are represented as stereotypes of arranged marriages: "Dating, like the rodeo circuit or trout farming, is a completely foreign concept to my parents. They, like all their sisters and brothers, never dated, their marriages having been arranged by family members" (Dumas 142). Firoozeh's mother cannot assimilate American culture. Since Firoozeh belongs to the second generation, she eagerly learns English and adapts herself to the culture of America. In order to belong to the new country, she tries to embrace the hybridity of social life, the third space.

**Conclusion**

Scrutinizing Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* through the lens of Bhabha's hybridity, mimicry and stereotype in the context of diaspora, this paper reveals that Iranian people who immigrate to the Western countries confront a different culture that challenges their Iranian beliefs and values. Dumas has portrayed the conditions of Iranians in diaspora. In their encounter with the Americans, Firoozeh and her family face identity crisis. They try to mimic the behavior and language of the

Americans but this mimicry leads to mockery when it comes to Firoozeh's parents. Their failure to be Americans creates humorous events in the story. In other words, their imprecise manner of speaking English and the narcissistic and preposterous demeanor of Firoozeh's father alludes to their deficiency of being native citizens and consequently lead to hilarious events. They are in the third space, a place of hybridity where ambivalence is born. In this space, they feel that they belong neither to Iranian culture nor to American culture but somewhere in-between. It is in the hybrid place that Firoozeh and her family begin their presencing. Being on the boundary means obtaining new identity and introducing creative invention into existence. This sense of newness is the necessity of living in a different culture. Firoozeh and her family can manage to live beside the Americans with their new identities that they acquire in the third space. However, Firoozeh's presencing is privileged because unlike her parents who did not learn English and were faithful to most Iranian values, she embraced hybridity.

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# Disciplining the Devotees in *The Temple*: George Herbert as a Poet-Priest-Politician

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**Abstract** George Herbert's *The Temple* is generally acknowledged and praised for its religious admiration of God and the spiritual journey the poet undertakes to reach closer to his Creator. The countless studies dedicated to Herbert's opus magnum have aimed at unraveling the various religious aspects while discarding or undermining the political influence behind his work. The accumulated scholarship has depicted a dedicated man of God who had turned his back on any political involvement in life. This paper peruses a different path projecting *The Temple*'s political participation in aiding the Anglican court and church by attempting to bring about docile bodies susceptible to control and domination. Within a Foucauldian perspective, the researcher exposes the dominant power's influence in the priest's poetry with the use of primary sources such as *Discipline and Punish*, *The Elizabethan World Picture* and *The Book of Homilies*. The study looks at the role of disciplinary power and its mechanisms in order to map out the anatomical structure of discipline through "the art of distribution" and "the control of activities," before tracing the functions of hierarchical order and observation, normalizing judgment and finally the examination.

**Key words** George Herbert; Michel Foucault; disciplinary power; Jacobean Era; *Book of Homilies*; Anglicanism

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Famed for his dedication to God and passion for poetry, Welsh-born English poet and Anglican priest George Herbert (1593-1633) is considered to be one of the finest devotional poets of English literature. His centerpiece *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculation*, a carefully-crafted sequence of some 170 poems, has made him one of the most notable literary figures of the Caroline Age. However, most of the attention and academic focus has been drawn toward the religious themes and aspects of his work with very little concentration spent on the political purposes that lie beneath. Nevertheless, apart from Herbert's efforts to praise and pass on his cherished Anglican belief through poetry, *The Temple* shows to possess another function as well, and that is disciplining and guiding its readers. His work is designed and scripted in a way to help remind followers not to go astray, and follow the path of God and Jesus Christ. It teaches them to abide and obey divine and religious laws and order, in order to assist them in perfecting themselves into better docile Christians, all without the need of torture and punishment. Therefore, a Foucauldian outlook has been adopted in order to highlight how the poet promotes and utilizes disciplinary mechanisms to bring about docile Christians susceptible to, and objects of, the dominant power.

**Organising Discipline**

According to Foucault, discipline is "centripetal" and isolates defining segments. Having a multiplicity of centripetal disciplines draws subjects towards it, creating spaces and enclosures in order to concentrate and focus more efficiently on subjects without any limit (*Security* 67). In other words, it permits disciplinary power to separate and analyze "individuals, places, time, movements, actions, and operations." In this way, it is able to observe these "components" and control or modify them (84). Such a mechanism of power has existed in places such as "monasteries, armies [and] workshops" and from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the technology of disciplines transformed into methods utilized for domination (*Discipline* 37); religious institutions have made use of churches and temples since they are effective and isolated spaces that give much room for discipline to work efficiently on individuals. *The Temple* gives way to the influence of religious discipline, conforming to the technique of separation, classification and control. In his poems, Herbert welcomes its readers to sacred and religious sites in order to unify the masses. By attending church to be preached about how to behave and how to serve the lord should be seen as an attempt to discipline individuals. As

an Anglican priest, Herbert also endorses this disciplinary technique in his poems. In "The Forerunners," the poet speaks of old age and his declining ability to produce poetry. In this deteriorating state, the speaker also addresses "his sweet phrases" and "lovely metaphors" which seem to be leaving him:

> Farewell, sweet phrases, lovely metaphors:
> But will ye leave me thus? When ye before
> Of stew and brothels only knew the doors,
> Then did I wash you with my tears, and more,
> Brought you to Church well drest and clad:
> My God must have my best, e'en all I had. (186; lines 13-18)

He asks them whether they are leaving him, even though he used them to serve a virtuous path, in order to please his God. He transformed his "sweet phrases" and "lovely metaphors" washing them with his tears, and taking them to church "well drest and clad." By dressing it in different clothing, the poet expresses a change in style and manner of writing; a manner that suits a more religious audience and more importantly God's taste. By taking it to church, this transformation takes effect. The poet personifies his poetic devices as an individual who attends church in order to embrace a religious disciplining procedure that would label him or her a good Christian. The poet portrays the church as this space responsible for changing or disciplining of the poet's poetics in favor of ecclesiastical interests.

Herbert explains in "The Church Militant" that it is when "the Church shall come, and Sin the Church shall / smother" (208; 280). The church does not tolerate sin, smothering it on site. In the "The Church Porch," the church becomes this space that deals with disciplining sinners and keeping the disciplined in order: "He that by being at Church escapes the ditch / Which he might fall in by companions, gains" (16; 442-43). For the speaker, the church is the instrument toward the right path as he mentions "Praise": "I go to Church: help me to wings, and / I Will thither fly" (55; 5-6). Here he explains that by attending church, he expects to have an opportunity of being granted "wings" to "fly" toward divine dwellings. As the speaker explains in "The Church Porch," the church is "either our heaven or hell" (15; 426), depending on which side one takes, the delinquent against the religious order or the faithful follower striving to become a salvaged soul.

Furthermore, these religious enclosures generate "architectural, functional and hierarchical" spaces. Within these enclosures, individuals become subjects to ranks, classes or other forms of categorization (Smart 103). As a result, it becomes easier

to assign roles to these specific groups and classes, while at the same time making its supervision much more efficient (*Discipline* 147). In a church, the priest or pastor possesses the highest position of authority and is responsible for the disciplining of his subjects. As he monitors his audience and preaches, he is assisted by altar boys and nuns that carry out other duties, giving him more time to focus on the task at hand. Nevertheless, there exists a hierarchical structure with every individual assigned to a specific task. Furthermore, within such enclosures, church goers are taught about this hierarchical structure. Herbert's era, which was also a part of the Elizabethan epoch, relied on the great chain of being, a hierarchical organization of all matter and life placed in specific categories. According to Tillyard, the medieval philosophy of The Great Chain of Being survived even up until the Elizabethan age (6). In his *The Elizabethan World Picture*, Tillyard outlines this structure, placing God at the top and working its way down to inanimate objects (23). As God takes the throne, angels (fallen or renegade) and celestial objects (such as stars and the moon) follow respectively in the hierarchical chain. Subsequently, terrestrial beings and objects make up the rest of the structure. First come humans in this particular order: kings, queens, princes, nobles and commoners; and then creatures, starting with wild animals and then followed by domesticated animals, trees and other kinds of plants. The bottom part of the structure is made up of inanimate objects with precious stones receiving higher importance and then followed by precious metals before finally ending with different kinds of minerals. This is the hierarchal structure that Herbert also takes up, mainly due to the religious influence and ideology prevalent at his time. He adopts this world picture, placing God at the pinnacle of this hierarchal structure. For Herbert, it is by God's decree the universe exists and has been given this order of importance, and it is only he who has the power to control it. He expresses this belief in "The Priesthood": "Blest order, which in power dost so excel, / That with the one hand thou liftest to the sky, / And with the other throwest down to hell" (167; 1-3). Through grace one receives salvation, but also through his grace, one can also be disciplined and docile to do so; for the poet, as he mentions in "Antiphon," it is only God that occupies the throne: "My God and King" (46). For Herbert, God is his king and he reiterates such a declaration both in the "Praise" and L'envoy": "King of glory, King of peace, / I will love thee" (151; 209). It is his most important companion in "The Elixir" that teaches him, and all he aims to do is strictly serve his king:

> Teach me, my God and King,
> In all things Thee to see,

And what I do in any thing
To do it as for Thee: (195; 1-4)

Next in line to follow the hierarchal chain are the angles in which Herbert refers to as "Oh glorious spirits" in his "To all Angels and Saints" (74). The speaker states that all their "bands / see the smooth face of God, without a frown / Or strict commands" (lines 2-3). He then continues to express the importance of these celestial beings referring to them as kings that "hath [their] crown / If not upon [their] head, yet in [their] hands" (lines 4-5). As a man with the position of a priest, Herbert praises the angles placing them above him, understanding and respecting the religious order and ranks. Angles "art the cabinet where the jewel lay: / Chiefly to thee would I my soul unfold" (lines 13-14), however, this is not permitted by God, and therefore the speaker does not "crave" for any "special aid" from angles (line 7). As an Anglican, he does not ask these heavenly dwellers (angles, saints or the Virgin) for aid, nor does he place them above God (Strier 132-35). In "To all Angels and Saints," it is God who receives praise from both man and heavenly dwellers, and by his order or "injunction . . . angles move as wing":

Chiefly to thee would I my soul unfold.
But now, alas! I dare not; for our King,
Whom we do all jointly adore and praise,
Bids no such thing:
And where his pleasure no injunction lays,
('Tis your own case) ye never move a wing. (74; 15-20)

When turning the focus from celestial to terrestrial beings, it becomes obvious where Herbert places man in his hierarchical structure. Man is ranked higher than animals and for the poet; he is the "priest for all creation" (Hodgkins 69). In "Providence," man becomes the "voice to all creation" (118; 68): "Man is the world's high Priest: he doth present / The sacrifice for all" (lines 13-14). According to the speaker, "of all the creatures both in sea and land," "only to man" has God made his ways known (lines 5-6). He is the only "Secretary" to praise the creator of all since he is the only creation that God "put the pen alone into his hand" (lines 7-8). This makes man the only mediator or the priest who speaks to God on behalf of the animals and trees:

Beasts fain would sing; birds ditty to their notes;

Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To thy renown: but all their hands and throats
Are brought to Man, while they are lame and mute. (lines 9-12)

The speaker explains that the beasts, birds and trees would praise God but since they are "lame and mute," all their "hands and throats" have been given to man. It is evident that the poet puts man above other terrestrial beings such as animals and plants, and such a viewpoint is also emboldened in Herbert's other poem, "Man." His anthropocentric verses state that "man is every thing" compared to other creations of God:

For Man is every thing.
And more: He is a tree, yet bears no fruit;
A beast, yet is, or should be more:
Reason and speech we only bring.
Parrots may thank us, if they are not mute. (89; 7-11)

To the speaker, man is a tree, beast and more since he is gifted with speech and reason. Parrots should thank man for teaching them to speak. The speaker continues to stress the importance of man, expressing that everything is there to serve him: "Herbs gladly cure our flesh … for us the winds do blow … the earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow … waters united are our navigation … The whole is, either our cupboard of food, / Or cabinet of pleasure (lines 23-38). It becomes obvious that the speaker truly believes "each thing is full of duty" to serve man (90; 37). Foucault asserts that discipline is "an art of rank," assigning individuals to positions. The one with the highest rank is usually responsible for distribution and circulation of individualized bodies in a position within a network of relations (*Discipline* 146). In this way, individuals assigned to a specific set of functions become more efficient in the "economy of time," and maintain these "organised social spaces" (148). Herbert's poetics portrays a world view in which God gives the order to those below, while priests take orders from God and the king to distribute to man, which in turn aims to turn man into a more efficient and useful Christian.

By drawing individuals toward these enclosures, disciplinary power is able to organize a unit of individuals to engage in the same activity within specific timetables. In this scenario, individuals are required and taught to carry out the similar set of movements simultaneously (O'Farrell 103). Discipline, therefore, sets up "rhythms," "occupations" and "cycles of repetition" in groups, and the religious

orders have for many years been the "masters of discipline" and "specialists of time," rhythm and activities. Foucault explains that forming of "congregations" is a key ingredient in the success of an efficient and productive unit of individuals (*Discipline* 149). Herbert exhibits a preference for service since it brings together individuals performing specific rituals such as prayer, hymns and the last supper as a group. In "The Church Porch," it states that "though private prayer be a brave design," "public" prayer or congregations "hath more promises, more love" (14; 404-05). It is worth mentioning that The Act of Uniformity 1558 required every individual to attend Sunday service (Guy 262). Even though Herbert does not mention the act of congregation in the "Sunday," he does, on the other hand, stress the importance on performing prayer on this day. Herbert dedicates an entire poem to this weekly gathering addressing it as the "day most calm, most bright" (70; 1). The speaker compares this day to other days as being the most worthy for afterlife: "The fruit of this, the next world's bud" (line 2). According to the speaker, the good deeds planted on Sunday will surely bear fruits in the "next world." The poet stresses its importance and describes it as "the pillars . . . on which heaven's palace arched lies" (71; 22-23). To him, rest of the days "fill up the spare and hollow room with vanities" (lines 24-25). The speaker does not directly state that individuals should attend Sunday service, but he does declare that on "Sunday Heaven's gate stands ope; / Blessings are plentiful and rife" (lines 33-34). However, by Herbert's insistence on public prayer and the importance of acknowledging Sundays as a sacred and holy day, it could implicate the poet's attempts to endorse and encourage the act of this organized activity. After all, in "The Thanksgiving" Herbert aspired to see "That all together may accord in thee, / And prove one God, one harmonic" (28; 11-12); and that is best achieved when all gather together as one.

**Herbert's Norm**

Normalization or the normalizing judgment is where authority exerts a system of "individual control" utilizing a category of binary oppositions such as the "mad /sane; dangerous /harmless; normal /abnormal" (*Discipline* 198), and aims to transform or draw individuals closer toward the norm, in an effort to make them homogeneous. This mechanism of disciplinary power works in a system of gratification-punishment and places the actions and behaviors of individuals "in the field between good and bad marks, good and bad points." It differentiates the action of subjects based on the norms, and punishes those who receive "bad points" or deviate from the norm by subjecting them correction and training, and rewards those who act accordingly by granting them "good points"(180). It, therefore, allows

the individual to manoeuvre through hierarchal ranks of "quality, skill or aptitude," or to close in on the gap, in regards to the norm (181). Herbert's work projects a binary classification between the sinner and the saint and by endorsing Christian rights and wrongs through his discourse; he also endorses the norms separating it from that of the abnormal or the outcast. Actions that go against these norms and standards which are not in line with Christianity, in religious terms, is most usually labelled as a sin, and those committing these actions, are most usually labelled as the sinner. His norm can be traced in *The Book of Homilies*. These two books "contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine" and should be taught "diligently and distinctly" to individuals (Thirty-Nine Articles XXXV). *The Book of Homilies*, like all religious references, separates the saint from the sinner and sees those who commit the seven deadly sins as rebels against God, the outcast in his kingdom and the sinner bound to hell:

> All God's laws are by rebels violated and broken, and that all sins possible to be committed against God or man be contained in rebellion; which sins if a man list to as name by the accustomed names of the seven capital or deadly sins, as pride, envy, wrath, covetousness, sloth, gluttony, and lechery . . . (517)

He takes up a didactic voice preaching his readers and reminding them to abstain from the temptations of original sin in order to reach or remain within the "normal" group. He uses the "The Church Porch" as an example where the poet addresses his readers to "beware of lust" since it "doth pollute and foul" and as a result "the holy lines cannot be understood" (1; 4, 7). The poet adds that unlawful sexual desires or extramarital relations are lustful and one should "wholly abstain, or wed" since these are the only "choice of paths" the "bounteous Lord allows" (2; 10-11). His advice to his readers, stated in the "The Sexton," would be to "cleanse thou our sin-soiled souls from the dirt and dust / Of every noisome lust" (302; 13-14). Herbert agrees to the fact that lust is a grave sin and one must avoid committing such an act of rebellion. Apart from his stance on lechery, the poet also alerts his readers of the other original sins such as pride. In the "Charms and Knots" the speaker stresses the importance of being humble for he or she "looks on ground with humble eyes, / Finds himself there, and seeks to rise" (95), meaning that through humbleness one can rise toward heaven. And when one's "hair is sweet through pride or lust" one will forget who and what they are: "The powder doth forget the dust"; after all according to the teaching of the bible "God formed the man from dust" (Gen. 2:7), and Herbert's main aim is to remind the readers that we are all made of dust;

one should remain humble and all of mankind is part of God's family. For Herbert, humbleness is the virtue and pride the sin, as he explains in "The Flower" that it is Gods wonder to open one's eyes and witness that his people are of beauty like "flowers that glide," and if one can prove himself to God and find his place in heaven then why would he or she "forfeit their paradise by their pride" (174-5; 43-49). The speaker sees pride as a hurdle on the path to paradise and indicating that it should be eluded. Humbleness is what brings a person closer to the norm, closer to God and will lead one on the path to a "place in heaven," while pride is that trait that will send one in the opposite direction. In "The Church-Stile," the speaker claims the Pride is "prodigality of grace" (282), and not only does pride prevent one from paradise but he also explains in "The Church-Porch" that it makes "the way a road" to hell (3; 72).

Another act of rebellion the poet includes in his poems is sloth; in the fourteenth stanza of "The Church Porch," the speaker speaks out against idleness, expressing that if those who waste their day, "the sun will cry against" them. God has given his people "brave wings" and they should put them to use, rather than "into a bed, to sleep out all ill weathers" (4; 81-84). For the speaker, such a sin has taken over his motherland: "O England! full of sin, but most of sloth" (line 91). By the use of personification, the speaker addresses and advises England to "spit out" its "phlegm" and instead fill it with "glory" (line 92). The speaker believes that England must revive the values of the church or its "native cloth" since "most are gone to grass, and in the pastor lost" (4; 93-96). In the "Business" the speaker begins with a rhetorical question addressing the listener as a sinner for being idle and not attending his or her duties: "Canst be idle? canst thou play, / Foolish soul who sinn'd to-day?" (113; 1-2). He reminds the listener that everything has a purpose stating that "rivers run, and springs each one / know their home," and "winds still work: it is their plot, / be the season cold, or hot" (lines 3-10).

Regarding wrath, Herbert didactically counsels his readers in "The Church-Porch" to "be calm in arguing" for "fierceness" and anger is a "fault" and perceives it as an unfortunate calamity an individual has to bear like "sicknesses" and "poverty":

> Be calm in arguing: for fierceness makes
> Error a fault, and truth discourtesy.
> Why should I feel another man's mistakes
> More, than his sicknesses or poverty? (11; 307-10)

It is as though the poet sees an individual filled with anger as being misfortunate. Instead through "love," one must "gently move," since "calmness is great advantage" (11-12; 312-13). In regards to covetousness, the speaker asserts in stanza twenty-six of "The Church Porch" that one must "Be thrifty, but not covetous" (6; 151). The speaker also advises the reader or listener not to be greedy and contribute his value to his needs, his honor and his friend. One with a sheer passion for money and only keeps it for himself is not a "brave man" (153). The poet explains that money gain its value because of man granting it such significance and worth (156). In "Avarice" the poet acknowledges the bilateral extremes money offers: "bane of bliss and source of woe" (73). As the speaker explains about its origin and the process it undertakes in the first half of the poem, he then concludes that the greed for money is responsible for the downfall and sinning of man: "Man calleth thee his wealth, who made thee rich; / And while he diggs out thee, falls in the ditch" (lines 13-14). As man gives money its value and richness, making it his "his wealth," and seeks to dig it out, at the same time he falls in the same ditch he had dug himself. Herbert does not forget other sins such as gluttony or indulgence either. In the "Lent," the poem states that abstinence brings "cleanness" and efficiency in terms of "quick thoughts and motions," while with "fullness" there follows "sluttish fumes, / Sour exhalations, and dishonest rheums" (84; 19-24). The poet portrays indulgence as the cause of immoral behaviours and intentions (Min 34). In the "The Journey," he stresses that Envy is just as important to avoid in this journey of life; just like other sins such as lust, covetousness and avarice, envy also lurks waiting to attack and bring one to his "perdition":

> Our footsteps are our thoughts, our words, our works:
> These carry us along; in these there lurks
> Envy, lust, avarice, ambition,
> The crooked turnings to perdition. (351; 13-16)

The speaker places these sins on the same level of importance and negativity and all of them must receive the same priority of avoidance. He explains in the "The Church Porch" that by envying "greatness" one could become the reason of their own destruction: "for thou mak'st thereby / Thy self the worse" (10; 260). The speaker warns that one should not be their "own worm," referring to self-destruction. The only form of jealousy the speaker approves is the type that does not hurt others but instead "may make [the person] better" (261). Jealousy which improves the self and does not harm others is the only form of jealousy the speaker

approves.

Through his words, Herbert aims to correct those who commit these rebellious acts against God, and in a way aims to "reduce the gaps" between the reader and the norms. His didactic approach is an aim to keep the moral and docile Christian closer to the norm as possible, wanting them to uphold the virtues of his Anglican faith. When it comes to correction, his poems persist on the importance of abstinence. It becomes evident that the original sins and virtues, described in *The Book of Homilies* and incorporated into his poems, make up Herbert's "field of "good and bad marks." Those who commit virtuous acts gain "good point" and will be rewarded with heaven and labelled as a good Christian and those who receive "bad marks" should be reminded that eternal damnation awaits them. There is an opportunity for the individual to manoeuvre within these ranks through this gratification-punishment system depending on the behaviour and deeds. Furthermore, "this will make the lazy more encouraged by the desire to be rewarded in the same way as the diligent fear punishment" (*Discipline* 180).

**The Eye of Power**

Another mechanism of disciplinary power is the notion of hierarchal observation. This form of discipline is exercised by a position of authority without the need for torture (*Michel* 46). In Foucault's own words, this mechanism makes "it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly" (*Discipline* 107). When the individual is under constant surveillance he takes "responsibility for the constraints of power" and at the same time plays this constraint "upon himself." In this way, the subject "becomes the principle of his own subjection" (202-03). This field of visibility is responsible for reminding individuals that any action is always under surveillance. Foucault draws upon examples of explaining how such a concept works within various areas of society:

> If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future . . . if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise . . . (201)

*The Temple* also exploits such a disciplinary mechanism in its poems. In some poems, the speaker describes an authority and superior position to have the ability to penetrate within the minds and hearts of his or her subjects. Michael Schoenfeldt's

rich exploration, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship*, details how Herbert's poems incorporate "the gaze of a God" that has the ability to penetrate "behind the bed-curtains, and inside the brains, of his creatures." He explains that in the "Misery," Herbert puts an end to the thought of one thinking they have any privacy at all (Schoenfeldt 136): "No man shall beat into his head, / that thou within his curtains drawn canst see" (99; 15-16). Schoenfeldt points out another example of this "perpetual surveillance" in "The Church Porch" (137): "Do all thing like a man, not sneakingly: / Think the king sees thee still; for his King does" (5; 121-22). Schoenfeldt also agrees that "seeing is a tool of control." Herbert alerts his readers that one is always under constant surveillance, giving them the feeling that any sinful intention will be sought out by the observer. In the "The Church Militant," what Herbert exhibits is an "image of God as a ruler whose vision and power encompass all levels of creations" (Schoenfeldt 135):

> All mighty Lord, who from thy glorious throne
> Seest and rulest all things e'en as one:
> The smallest ant or atom knows thy power,
> Known also to each minute of an hour: (201; 1-4)

Other instances of this gaze can be sensed in other poems also. The constant surveillance undertaken by God is indeed present everywhere and can observe everything, even into the souls of his subjects. Elsewhere in "The Church Porch," Herbert also reiterates God's ability to tap into the minds of his creatures:

> Sincerity; It blots the history
> Of all religious actions, and doth blast
> the comfort of them, when in them God sees
> Nothing but outside of formalities. (285; 9-12)

Sincerity reveals the true intention behind deeds and it "doth blast the comfort" of individuals when their sincere purpose come to light. God has the ability to look into their true intentions and thoughts hidden behind the "formalities."

Herbert also places Jesus Christ in such a position of possessing the authoritative eye of power. In "The Overseer of the Poor," the speaker addresses his Lord in a present tense, as though he is watching and listening to the speaker's admirations: "Thou gracious Lord, rich in thyself, dost give / To all men liberally" (304; 9-10). The speaker feels that his praise is being heard by Jesus as he

appreciates his Lord's unconditional and liberal aid to "all men." His lord's "eye is open upon all" and will welcome all while "upbraiding none" (lines 11-12). Christ's physical presence is not visible with the naked eye, but to the speaker, it is felt and seen through his spiritual perspective: "In thee (Jesus) we live, / we move, and have our being" (lines 12-13). In "The Collar," Jesus is being addressed once again, but this time with complaints. The speaker complains of hardships endured by remaining a faithful follower and that the lord would "wink" but "wouldst not see," feeling that his calls and complaints are being observed but also ignored (159). As the speaker grows restless toward his commitment to his faith, the speaker believes he has heard his Lord call him. Jesus' presence presents a position of authority that is observing the speakers complaints and cries. Herbert writes in "Obedience" that Lord "canst not choose" but only see his "actions" (103; 23). Therefore, it could be that his eye may not only be open to all in terms of assisting and aiding, but it may also be "open upon all" for the purpose of surveying subjects. With the presence of a constant surveying eye, both the speaker and poet feel that their deeds, intentions and secrets have no place to hide. They also remind the reader that such a gaze is always functioning and all Christians must be well aware of their behaviour and intentions before the perpetual gaze of God and Jesus Christ.

**The Examination**

From all the disciplinary mechanisms, the examination is one of the most highly ritualized; it is the technique of combining an "observing hierarchy" and the "normalizing judgment." Through this field of visibility, power is able to differentiate and judge subjects, therefore making it possible "to qualify, to classify and to punish" its targets (*Discipline* 184). Examples of these "examining apparatus" were eighteenth century hospitals, school and armies that constantly extracted information in order to judge and correct their subjects (185-86). In Foucault's study, he aimed to highlight how these institutes focused on individuality (by drawing subject into a field of documentation and turning them into a "case" of study and analysis) and how subjects become objects of power (184-92). This researcher highlights how Herbert's *The Temple* also encompasses Foucault's concept of the examination with its normalizing gaze, objectification and individuality.

As already discussed in section two, the gaze in Herbert poetry promotes not only a perpetual observing gaze but also a gaze with the ability to penetrate within the hearts and minds of its subjects (see the section for examples). However, the poet also describes that the everlasting observer also has the ability to judge and punish

his subjects. With its ability to look into the intentions of his targets, God can also classify them into saints and sinners and qualify them for heaven and hell. The poet makes it quite clear in the "Sighs and Groanes" that he "art both Judge and Saviour" (81). It is he who has the power and who "hast life and death at [his] command." Herbert's "Judgment" addresses his creator as the "almighty judge" with a gaze that can catch the attention of even those with the "heart of iron." To the speaker, the divine judge's look cannot be avoided or ignored: "Almighty Judge, how shall poor wretches brook / Thy dreadful look, / Able a heart of iron to appall" (198). For the poet, God possesses such a judging and normalizing gaze, a gaze that analyses and inspects. Under this field of visibility, every individual can be examined against the norm. Therefore, *The Temple* is an advocator of God's normalizing gaze, a gaze which works as a mechanism of disciplining the individual.

However, in Herbert's "Self-condemnation," he invites his readers to wear the normalizing gaze so as to judge themselves against the norms of the Christian faith: "Before the Lord of glory; / Look back upon thine own estate" (179). In "The Passion, or Good Friday" the poet instructs his readers to "open thine eyes, / Sin-seized soul, and see" (325; 43-44). He wants the individual to judge himself and see the sins he or she has committed and "what cobweb-ties / They are, that trammel thee" (45-46). In "The Church-Porch," he explains it is his sins that are blocking his path to paradise, and the speaker wants individuals to look upon themselves with a normalizing gaze: "Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear. / Dare to look in thy chest: for 'tis thine own: / And tumble up and down what thou find'st there" (6; 146-48). In "The Bible," they are to assess themselves through the teachings of the bible since it is the "Looking-glass of souls" where:

> All men may see,
> Whether they be
> Still, as by nature they are deform'd with sin:
> Or in a better case,
> As new adorn'd with grace. (293; 25-30)

Here, once again Herbert's literature encourages another important theme of Christianity, self-discipline. The good Christian is to beware of his deeds and judge his actions, and by asking his reader to wear such a gaze, Herbert's readers are able to do so. They can examine themselves to see if they are "deform'd with sin" or "adorn'd with grace."

Despite the fact that the poet encourages the reader to judge him or herself

based on specific criteria and preferences, in this case being Christian beliefs and biblical teachings, the poet discourages a judgmental perspective turned on those in the position of authority. For the poet, never should the subject judge those in the position of power. It is only expected to work in a one-way direction. In stanza seventy-three of "The Church-Porch," the speaker stresses that one must not judge his preacher even if he or she dislikes him: "Judge not the preacher: for he is thy judge / If thou mislike him, though conceives him not" (15; 433-34). The speaker speaks in favour of preachers, which also shows that he favours a one-way gaze held by the position of authority. Simultaneously, this means that the speaker is aware of the fact that it is possible for anyone to wear such a gaze and turn it toward others. Therefore, the poet acknowledges that a gaze of judgment can be utilized throughout the power relation among individuals of all classes and positions. It is possible for those in a position of authority to be placed under such a gaze and be judged and questioned. This will make all those higher in the ranks that hold a specific position to assess themselves as well, keep themselves in check against the norm since they too can be examined. This is an issue the poet acknowledges as he explains to his readers in "A Paradox" not to look at preachers or others in their surroundings but rather only themselves: "Cease then to judge calamities / By outward form and shew, / But view yourselves, and inward turn your eyes" (213; 25-27).

As a result, every individual can become a place where power is enacted. They possess the knowledge of norms and rules passed on by preachers and scripture and roam around equipped with an examining gaze, a look that distinguishes rights and wrongs or virtues and sins and applies it to his or her surroundings. In this way, every individual from the highest rank to the lowest should be cautious of their actions. It will force the subject under examination to perform certain acts, prevent certain acts, and behave in a way to hinder certain actions by others, such as censoring certain discourses or rituals not in line with established norms. The mechanism takes over the subjects individually, training them to act according but also have an effect on those around them in the relationship, making every individual in this relationship an object of power. Herbert teaches how one should use the biblical teaching to judge and correct the self, which, as an effect, provides the recipe for a normalizing gaze. He can only discourage readers to avoid unleashing it in every direction, but he has no power in stopping it from being practiced.

Apart from persuading his readers to self-train themselves into objects of power, Herbert too should be considered as an object working in favour of power,

allowing such accepted discourses to flow through his work. As he wears his normalizing gaze, his pen writes every line; his examining gaze is responsible for the emission and inclusion of accepted and disapproved discourses, making Herbert and his *The Temple* a place in which power is enacted; they become instruments of power, allowing power's influence and effects to work through his poetry.

Furthermore, Foucault also explains that the examination places the individual "in a network of writing" engaging the subject "in a whole mass of documents" that captures and fixes him (*Discipline* 189). Identification and description are some methods of documentations. It is this mechanism of power that accumulates documents and writings of its subjects where the individual is described, judged, measured and compared with others, in his very "individuality" and in turn "has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded, etc." (191). In Herbert's time, such a technology of gathered documentation concerning individuals had not yet reached the fully developed form that Foucault describes, however, there existed a cruder version of extraction and accumulation of documentation from people. Such a tactic of extracting and gathering information of the individuals' details was confession. Christianity is a religion of confession among other things with its follower having a "duty to know who he is." The confessor is "obliged" to reveal faults, temptations and desire, to his creator or his fellow followers. In this way, through self-knowledge can the soul purify itself (Foucault, *Ethics* 242). Confession can be done verbally or written; it could be done in person (face to face), or behind a screen. However, its written form, which contains secrets and details of the subject, is what can contribute much to the "network of writing" and adding to the "mass of documents."

The writing of and about the self is what Foucault categorizes under "the technologies of the self" (225-26). In its Christian form, which is confession, the Christian confessor is necessitated to "memorize laws" so as to discover his sins (237). The written confession usually becomes a "transcription" of the examination of the subject's conscience. Foucault further details that in Christianity "the examination of conscience begins with this letter-writing" and it focuses on "the notion of the struggle of the soul" (234); furthermore, other concepts such as "diary-writing" and "bad intentions" were later added to such self-examinations and Christian confessions (234, 237). The concept of confession demands the confessor to bring to light his darkest thoughts, which could be "one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles . . . with the greatest precision" (*The History* 59). If one is constantly confessing, observing and describing himself almost on a daily basis and making available such information on paper, then in

a way, the confessor is making him or herself into what Foucault terms, "a case." The subject becomes "a case" when he is "linked by his status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the 'marks' that characterize him" (192). Through the written confessions, the subject makes available his or her individuality, his difference from the norm and gaps, and can be compared, measured or marked; the self would self-examine his own conscience regularly and revise it in order to better and correct himself. The subject enters into a field of documentation, volunteering to hand over information of his individuality, and all this is caused by the obligation of his faith. As a result, these documents can be handed over to various positions of power.

*The Temple* is also regarded as Herbert's confession among other things. His confessional poem puts him into this field of documentation as he describes his thoughts and complaints, measuring his actions and deeds against the norms and contemplating on filling the gaps to salvation. He too becomes a subject of power, handing over details of himself and his thought, his ideology and his concerns, allowing his work to become a piece for examination and comparison. He is also an object of power since he promotes this act of volunteering documentation and information of the self. The poet encourages all to follow the obligation of his faith to confess. He does not stress on any particular form of confession, written or verbal, but rather stresses much on confession itself in "Trinity-Sunday": "Purge all my sins done heretofore: / For I confess my heavy score, / And I will strive to sin no more" (62). In "Inundation," Herbert sets an example before asking others to join him, calling on all the followers of the faith to confess before God and his representatives: "And we must need / Confess indeed" (347; 12-13). He, therefore, welcomes others to become a part of the field of documentation, persuading them to confess. In "Confession," the poet explains that by avoiding transparency and hiding sins, God's afflictions find their way "into man . . . and fall, like rheums, upon the tenderest parts … like moles within us" (128). He champions confession as the only solution against these afflictions: "Only an open breast / Doth shut them out, so that they cannot enter." The speaker admits to sins and faults and asks the lord to dispose of the "plagues" since he chosen to admit to everything: "Wherefore my faults and sins, / Lord, I acknowledge; take thy plagues away." The poet persuades his readers to hand over all sorts of information from confessions of committed sins, contemplation on illicit desires and escape to realms of forbidden temptations. This gives way to a possibility in which the positions of power such as The Church or the state can have access to self-extracted information from their subjects. With the accumulated documents of details and desires of the subject, the priest is then able

to judge the confessor based on the norms of the Christian faith and guide or correct him or her in the process towards eternal bliss.

## Conclusion

The study reveals how the mechanisms of disciplinary power present themselves in Herbert's *The Temple* and aim to remind Anglicans how to remain disciplined and docile and non-Anglicans to become subservient to their king, the Church and God. Firstly, the poet appears to inspire individuals to attend church, a place in which rituals of Christianity and discipline work more efficiently. The attendees can then be preached about divine orders, commandments, rules and conducts, while also listen to sermons, perform prayer and sing hymns all as a group. Herbert aids both traits of disciplinary power's "the art of distribution" and "the control of activities" by inviting his readers to attend religious enclosures and take part in religious group activities. Other concepts of disciplinary power also function in his work such as normalization, since the poet preaches about refraining from committing original sins. His didactic voices had been intended to push his readers closer to the norms of Christianity by persuading them to correct themselves, so they can perfect themselves and practice to remain within Anglican standards. Hierarchal observation is also another concept that Herbert promotes informing his readers that they should be aware of their actions and thoughts since someone is always observing them. Herbert and his work should be seen as an instrument of disciplinary power, as he also teaches his readers to do the same by turning them into objects of power, instructing them to examine themselves and each other against the norm. In this way, every individual then becomes an examining instrument of power. Subsequently, it turns its subject toward a single and unified direction, to serve God and his representatives, Jesus Christ, the king and priests. Herbert's disciplinary measures that extracted time and demanded practice from its readers aimed to produce positive and "useful forces" that would have benefited the Anglican society and its growth (Discipline 154). The poet had succeeded in aiming to fashion every Englishman to serve as a unit of docile bodies, weakening any form of subversion against the dominant power.

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