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The Local and the Global: Introduction

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Abstract The local and the global are not as clear-cut terms as they might appear to our common sense or everyday use. But once we understand that where we stand or sit is part of the globe, we see that the globe is made up of many locales and that each depends on point of view, the vantage of the person that is in his or her locale. So the global is local, and the local global, even if we know that one is at the extreme of the other. Rather than try to impose anything on the issue, I have sought to open up vistas, so that the contributors can explore their interests and speak to the theme in this context. The Introduction briefly presents a few voices to suggest that the local and the global are still open for debate in various fields and not simply in literary studies. The literary, then, is just one field with which to examine questions of the local and the global, often under the guise of globalization. World literature will be the context in which this special issue explores the local and the global and related matters.¹

Key words global; local; globalization; world literature; postcolonial

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,

¹ This "Introduction" and the following two articles by Theo D'haen and Vladimir Biti, actually, should have been included in the Sept. special issue "The Local and the Global." The reason why they are missing is that there has been a breakdown in communication between the editorial office and the editor. Here they come out as a further promotion to the thematic study of "The Local and the Global." The editorial office will send all contributors to the special issue an electronic and paper copy of both the issues, September and December, so they can see the intent of the issue as a whole.

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).

The local and the global are not as clear-cut terms as they might appear to our common sense or everyday use. Our front step or garden is local, and the global is the stretch away from there — the whole globe perhaps. But once we understand that where we stand or sit is part of the globe, we see that the globe is made up of many locales and that each depends on point of view, the vantage of the person that is in his or her locale. So the global is local, and the local global, even if we know that one is at the extreme of the other.

That is the spirit of this special issue in a journal that provides a valuable forum for a discussion of world literature. As guest editor, I have taken the idea of a forum seriously, and therefore have sought out contributions from important scholars in their fields and have not sought to give them any more guidelines than the topic of local and global within the context of world literature. Rather than try to impose anything on the issue, I have sought to open up vistas, so that the contributors can explore their interests and speak to the theme in this context.

Here, I will introduce briefly a few voices to suggest that the local and the global are still open for debate in various fields and not simply in literary studies. In the field of leadership and human resources, an aspect of business, Josh Bersin declares: “While we certainly live in a highly interconnected world, the business world is not as ‘flat’ as Thomas Friedman once predicted. Quite the contrary in fact. There is no ‘global market’ for goods and service, rather there are now a set of globally connected ‘local’ businesses” (see Bersin). Business economics is, then, a matter of locally connected businesses across the globe. In other words, the globe is a sum of a series of locals/locales/locations. In computer programming, there are global variables and local variables, the former being declared at the beginning of a program, where they can be used in any subroutine or procedure in the program,

and the latter being declared within programming blocks or subroutines, where they can be used only within those blocks. Global variables need to be employed with caution as they continue to use memory even after a program is no longer needed, whereas local variables release memory when they are no longer running. Whether this is a parable for the relation between the global and the local generally is an open question, but it shows how these terms are employed differently in different fields, or at least in distinct specific and general contexts within the disciplines.

In sociology, Emile Durkheim saw the importance of the world as perceived through society. Later, Niklas Luhmann and Roland Robertson view the local and the global and globalization in terms of cognition of the self-descriptions of society, something also brought out in the work of Jean-Sébastien Guy.¹ The representational and constructivist views of world-making affect how one sees the local and the global as opposites or two sides of the same thing. The question becomes one of language and mathematics and their relation to reality or the world and to the world of the mind.² There is a historical dimension to the local and the global and to globalization, especially in terms of European expansion and of otherness, both of which I have written about at length before, so I will spare repeating that work here and in my contribution to the issue³. There are other aspects of globalization and the connection between the local and global that can be considered, such as the role of women or feminism, a field of great range.⁴ Class is a long discussed aspect of the issue of the global and the local in work on sociology, economics, politics and other fields, and in the past fifty years, race has been more and more debated in local, national and global terms.⁵ The literary, then, is just one field with which to examine questions of the local and the global, often under the guise of globalization. World literature will be the context in which this special issue explores the local and the global and related matters. Briefly, here, I have tried to provide a wider context simply as a reminder of a larger horizon or context.

The issue has an array of distinctive approaches to our topic. Here in brief is the movement of the issue. It begins with Jean Bessière's discussion of literature in a global age and in terms of partial connections, of universals and particulars, fictions and globalization. Theo D'haen examines this dynamic between the local and the global in an analysis of anthologies of world literature in translation. Next,

1 See Luhmann, Robertson and Guy.

2 See Guy and also Appadurai, Bauman, Beck, Giddens.

3 See Hart, *Empires and Colonies; Poetics of Otherness*.

4 See Ackerly and Attanasi; Merry; Moghadam; Mohanty.

5 See Marx and Engels; Harris; Hoogvelt; Clarke and Thomas.

Vladimir Biti discusses the worlding and unworlding of literature in light of zones of indistinction and traumatic constellations. I explore the local and the global through poetry, philosophy and history, and in the context of the particular and the universal. Kristof Kozak's article analyzes cosmopolitanism in relation to Aleš Debeljak's interculturality as well as to the local and the global. David Porter looks at the local and global in the context of Neo-Latin poetics, a leading transnational language. Cindy Chopoidaló writes about Wole Soyinka's analysis of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* as both the local and the global and as something important for the colonial and the postcolonial, in the Arab world as well as in England and elsewhere. Christian Riegel examines indigenous identity, ideology, the liminal and global colonialism in Joan Crate's *Foreign Homes*. These articles include theoretical views and close analyses of critical and literary works, thereby providing frameworks as well as textual examples in the consideration of the local and the global. Some articles focus on an author to exemplify the theme or topic of the issue. In what follows, I will discuss each contribution in more detail.

In "How Can Literature Respond to A Global Age? From Globalization to the World's Universality and Poetics of Partial Connections," Jean Bessière argues that universalism is not the same as the universal but is one of many universalisms. He reads postcolonial novels, fictions of the posthuman, the anthropological and the world novel — in this case, *Cloud Atlas* — and its relation to globalization and the local. He thinks that it leads to the question of how to identify and describe places, and to recognize that neither the local nor the global subsumes. Bessière warns against reducing the local and global to a questioning of power and dominant relations, a confrontation of these two universalisms. For Bessière, the world's universality, which he defines in a reading of *Cloud Atlas*, makes it possible to relate the local and the global to the many reciprocal perspectives, and he argues that this approach invites ways to reinterpret postmodern and postcolonial works. Moreover, he constitutes his 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, exemplifying these bifurcations and interpreting them in the world and in the local, whose duality prevents the suggestion of any kind of universalism, reveal that writers recognize many kinds of authenticity while they identify the duality between the local and the world. Bessière draws from Borges's fable "The Aleph" that the multiplicity and variability of the aspects of this duality challenge literary form: novels provides no final synthesis. Avoiding framing

the local and the world includes the commonsense world or “our most immediate views of the local and what is beyond it” and restores it through displacement and partial connections. This is Bessièrè’s response to globalization, its imagining and universalism. He points out another ambiguity: in *Cloud Atlas* and the postcolonial, posthuman and multi-anthropological novels that Bessièrè discusses, 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.” Bessièrè examines the imagination of the local and the world in *Cloud Atlas* and other novels responding to the imagined universalism of globalization. For him, “our experience of our structurally manifold commonsense world and its partial connections counterpoise any universalism.” Thus, Bessièrè suggests a realm of weights and counterweights in which the local and the global balance, but either cannot be universal.

Theo D’haen examines this dynamic between the local and the global in “Anthologizing World Literature in Translation: Global/Local/Glocal.” D’haen argues that translation is at the root of *Weltliteratur* because Eckermann says that Goethe thought of the idea as a result of his reading of a number of Chinese novels in translation. For D’haen, the issue of translation foregrounds the connection between the global and the local, and he notes: “The process of translation involves turning an ‘original’ or ‘local’ source text into a target text using another ‘local’ language.” Thus, according to D’haen, translation makes the original more accessible while also changing it, and if the target language is a *lingua franca* or world language, as with French and then English, the text may become accessible across the globe. D’haen also discusses anthologies of world literature, and avers: “Composing an anthology with, at least in ambition, worldwide coverage is an ideological act that serves political, social, ethical, and moral aims.” He also reminds us that the choice of the works for an anthology is at least partly founded on the aesthetic grounds of the original cultures. These anthologies establish a canon for their primary audience, undergraduates in the United States, and then all readers of English. As English is the world’s *lingua franca* at present, the canon of literature affects what is chosen, for example, in Chinese or Arabic — and is affected by anthologies of world literature produced in the US. D’haen also says that the literatures from which selections occur in these anthologies come, in part, to regard their own literatures in world literature in relation to these collections in English. The world literature anthologies rewrite and function as “translations, as re-configurations of the works concerned within an English-language world literature context, as re-configurations of the canons of the specific literatures anthologized

in the eyes of ‘the world,’ and as re-configurations of their canons in the eyes of native readers of these specific literatures themselves.” The global, as D’haen states, potentially influences the local, and he sees irony in the effect of such interventions on those cultures and literatures that world literature is intended to promote: those not of the West. D’haen calls attention to Martha Cheung, who argues that globalization in literary studies, science and scholarship, has meant that Western methods and theories have in practice become “universal” because the flow of ideas is in one direction. The non-Western scholar internalizes the Western view of things, and sees his or her literature that way, thereby losing identity and representativeness for his or her literature despite the anthologizers ostensibly having the opposite aim. In light of Chinese theories of translation, Cheung puts together an anthology in English to affect the target culture and the source culture. D’haen imagines the benefits of following Cheung’s example in regard to anthologies of world literature. A range of glocal anthologies, as D’haen suggests, would provide a more global perspective on “world literature.” In D’haen’s view, national literary and cultural historiography no longer work as patterns: Western literatures and cultures have been active constituents of globalization from early modernity. D’haen also stresses that globalization is an equivocal development, and world literature has many “generous proclamations” but produces different kinds of imparity in which, in trying to bridge gaps, the anthologies and world literature empower some and dispossess others.

In “The Un/worlding of Letters: Literary Globalization’s “Zones of Indistinction,” Vladimir Biti also addresses the worlding and unworlding of literatures in globalization. Biti picks up on his earlier argument that “the contribution of the modern idea of literature to the Western globalization of time, space, and meaning” occurred in a discriminatory framework. He argues that literary works respond to “particular traumatic constellations” to do with nation, society, economics, culture and gender. Biti states: “Rather than performing sovereign actions, literary authors respond to an injury experienced at these axes’ intersection,” and with Western modernity, “they find themselves relegated to ‘zones of indistinction’, the non-judicial states of exception, which the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben interprets as the excluded enabling domains of legislated political orders.” Biti notes that literary authors articulate inarticulate others before identifying with them, and says that because these others are “threatening spectral appearances,” they must be domesticated, providing an additional insight: “It is only after they lose their *unheimlich*, namely, their uncanny or unhomely character, that the traumatized authors make themselves into the medium of these others’ revelation

or performance.” Rather, it is the traumatic constellations of these authors, which they hide in front of both the others and themselves,” that speak involuntarily through them. Biti argues that “instead of unveiling this veiling that inheres to their analytical objects, the interpreters of the works of ‘world literature’ compulsively reenact it.” In other words, these readers identify with their authors in the same domesticating manner that these authors identify with the others. Moreover, Biti examines some works at the intersection of trauma and memory studies before taking issue with Emily Apter’s proposal, which is influenced by Walter Benjamin’s concept of untranslatability. Biti makes “distinction and indistinction into closely interdependent incommensurables,” and he also asserts: “How traumatized they will feel depends on how they, at a given moment, experience their situation located at the intersections of various axes of distinction (or homeliness) and indistinction (or unhomeliness).” He states that the idea of traumatic constellation prevents homeliness or unhomeliness from becoming a universal condition of all the constituencies of the world. For Biti, Apter’s rethinking of world literature centers on a common denominator — unhomeliness (itself discriminatory) — while it argues against large-scale and systemic projects of world literature because they give literary works and literatures a determinate location. Biti introduces his idea of a traumatic constellation to avert Apter’s repetition of discrimination. For him, the researcher of literature’s worlding should not subsume the dissensus that underlies it under consensus, but advocates a “*politics* of research, which implies readdressing, reaffirming and reinstating this dissensus.” Biti sums up his call to research: “world literature’s systematic production of dispossessed alterity, as well as its consistent perpetuation of an inferior alternative, must not be obliterated, but untiringly disclosed.” Disclosing the world of literature and literature of the world is a matter of disclosure and not obliteration, a location of the world rather than an erasure of it.

My own article, “The Local and the Global: Poetry, Philosophy and History,” assumes that “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.” I argue that in literature, fictional worlds, such as those of William Faulkner and Margaret Laurence, represent local places but, to the extent that they are still read across time and cultures, that they seem, at least in part, universal to readers. Plato and Aristotle wrote about universals and, from the 1960s onward in the West, universals have been questioned by Derrida, Lyotard, Said and others. Through the connections among poetry, philosophy and history, I examine the ground of this dispute between

the local and the global, the particular and the universal, and demonstrate the significance of both. Locally and globally, works “represent and misrepresent and are read and misread, interpreted and misinterpreted, often at the same time.” The expansion of Western European states across the globe intensified from 1415; their local views could seem global, and their particulars universal, amidst misrecognition and recognition. Examples occur in early modern or Renaissance literature, such as in Shakespeare’s *Othello*. In the tradition of Herodotus and Pliny, Othello “speaks a story of travel and natural history, his exotic diction calling up cannibals and Anthropophagi,” and I add: “Travel and otherness come home to help create a local theatre in London, which, being the centre of England, becomes a national theatre.” Both Richard Hakluyt the Younger and Shakespeare employ translation to forge a national language, literature and culture. The localization of the global can create the national, which mediates between the local and the global. To summarize: “All three circulate and overlap in their interplay.” Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* involves a classical Virgilian echo of an island in the Mediterranean and an allusion to Bermuda in the New World. In Shakespeare, the otherness of the past and exotic locales helps to make or identify London and England through the local, national and global. Like Shakespeare, Ezra Pound and Ted Hughes also represent these three spaces, and these two poets also translated poetry from other cultures. Asia and the Asian are also keys to the local, national and global, even in the Renaissance. Nicola Trigault in the seventeenth century and Louis Gallagher in the mid-twentieth century both translated Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit who lived in China and wrote about it. Joy Kogawa and Bei Dao also show a duality or multiplicity of places and cultures. To some extent, local cultures become global and global cultures are rooted in the local. The local and the global modify each other, bound up in a dynamic operation over time and space, and often inextricable. We read and write in a world of spaces or locales, small, medium and large, all at once.

Kristof Kozak’s “The Dialectics of Cosmopolitanism: Aleš Debeljak’s Interculturality” focuses the local and the global through the dialectical cosmopolitan in one figure. Kozak observes that we often think about the ideas of “local” and “global” as opposites, the small and the far-reaching, but this opposition is harder to maintain in culture: “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.” Kozak sees culture being rooted in the local and wonders why we hold on to nation in this realm. He also says: “The distinction, it appears, between local and global cultures rests on their quantity, intensity and distribution, not on their respective quality.” This view leads Kozak to imagine different ideas of culture,

one without isolation but, rather, with integration. He then provides an example of this integration: the late Slovenian poet and essayist Aleš Debeljak, who defends a mingling of cultures, a lived “interculturalism.” According to Kozak, Debeljak built bridges among cultures, which enabled the formation of Debeljak’s personal and cultural personal identity, something he called “cosmopolitanism.” When Debeljak was working on establishing his cosmopolitan identity, he experienced a catastrophe with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, important to his identity because it was a multicultural country. As Kozak says: “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.” Global culture, for Kozak, is a matter of dominance of one culture over others, in this case of the West, especially of the United States, over other cultures. This situation leads Kozak to ask what “global” means, but suggests that despite the answer, the only position that can take advantage of the multiple cultural traditions is the position of *between*, “the intercultural perspective.” History is taken away and leaves a void of identity, and Debeljak explores this in his poetry and essays and sees the answer in art or individual creation, as an opening of self or person to the world. The possibility, Kosak says, of going between the local and the global helps develop the individuality and enrich the identity of a person. Cosmopolitanism, “which reveals itself as the identity of no single place and all places at the same time,” involves “a constant movement from one source to the other.” It is tragic when this open world vanishes and there is no space for those who prefer the local and the global to nationalism. The work of Debeljak suggests that accepting and tolerating others and otherness is the best way to live.

In “Local and Global Contexts: Some Aspects of Neo-Latin Poetics,” David Porter examines a leading transnational language and says that “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.” Porter observes that even though Latin is less common in discourse and education, it is easier than ever to find and read rare works in Latin. Porter advocates for later Latin literature in the canons of world literature. For Porter, the Latin works of multilingual canonical authors such as Joachim du Bellay, George Herbert and Giovanni Pascoli often rival their vernacular compositions and the works of Johannes Secundus, George Buchanan, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski and John Owen (Audoenus) need reclamation. Porter says that surveys and anthologies of western and world literature should take into

consideration more of post-classical Latin beyond medieval Latin lyrics and Thomas More's *Utopia*. Latin is a global or an international language, and to regain "Latin vitality and connections to various local contexts in time and place often require[s] reclaiming." The humanist Latin of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was central in Europe, but in the nineteenth century, when Latin had a strong presence in education but not in international communication, it was the language of scholarship. Porter discusses poetry, including Francis Paget's poem *Sol Pictor* and another by Harry C. Schnur. Latin poets write in an ancient literary tradition that "provides them with a wealth of potential resources to draw upon and to respond to in the formation of their own poetry." For instance, Porter examines how Susius's translation of Petrarch's sonnet transfers it from Italian into the Latin of Northern humanism and provides another context, from one locale to another. Porter observes how Paget represents scientific views on light and photography using Lucretian diction, thereby showing how Latin can serve in a particular historical milieu. According to Porter, Schnur's Latin poem combines technical skill with moral outrage. Porter demonstrates how Latin travels between the local and the global and from past to present and sees the potential of Latin, with its long literary tradition, to reach a small but important group of people in an age of English across the globe. This approach might allow a past *lingua franca* to create space in a world of a new one, and to avoid some of the more recent ideological questions that English has raised in the wake of Anglo-American expansion over the past four centuries or so.

Cindy Chopoidaló's "World(s) in Balance in *Antony and Cleopatra*: Wole Soyinka's 'Shakespeare and the Living Dramatist' Revisited" argues that "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." Chopoidaló sees these responses as reminders that a writer who represents a culture not his or her own in a literary work balances between the two extremes of idealization and demonization of that culture. She maintains that it is impossible for writers and readers to escape their own biases and worldviews, especially in regard to canonical texts. For Chopoidaló, many African and particularly Egyptian readers have found themselves in a delicate position between acceptance and rejection when encountering Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, which she calls "an archetypal example

of ‘Western’ literature.” According to Chopoidaló, Cleopatra is both other and heroine, so that *Antony and Cleopatra* represents a world or worlds in delicate balance. Chopoidaló focuses this matter on how Egyptian and African readers respond to *Antony and Cleopatra*, something Wole Soyinka addresses in the essay “Shakespeare and the Living Dramatist” (1982, published 1983). Among other things, as Chopoidaló says, Soyinka notes the many translations and adaptations of the play into Arabic and how many Arabic readers have taken up Shakespeare by trying to connect to the life of the playwright his fascination with imperial Roman and Egyptian history. Chopoidaló avers that Soyinka’s essay employs “the Shakespeare-as-Arab hypothesis as a way into his ‘celebrating dramatic poetry anew’ with his reading of *Antony and Cleopatra*” and ends with “several playful responses to the ‘Shayk al-Subair’ theory” (with its play on Shakespeare’s name in a bilingual pun). Thus, as Chopoidaló states, the desire of some Arab readers to see Shakespeare as a transplanted Arab or as the descendant of one, writing in English does, to some extent, stem from an English writer contributing to a non-English culture, particularly after the British occupation of Egypt. Thus, the colonial and postcolonial affect how Shakespeare was and is performed and read. Shakespeare is local and global, of his time but timeless, as Soyinka observes. Chopoidaló notes that Shakespeare’s work elicits various analogous responses throughout the world.

In “Joan Crate, Indigenous Identity, and the Reach of Global Colonialism in *Foreign Homes*,” Christian Riegel discusses a volume of poetry, *Foreign Homes* (2001), by a Canadian Metis poet, who suggests a liminal status that relates to colonialism, from first contact to the present. According to Riegel, “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.” Riegel points out that Crate sees that this local sense of identity occurs in wider global concerns. *Foreign Homes* emphasizes the difficult existence of indigenous peoples within Canada, suggesting their multiple identities and what Riegel calls “the uncertain narrative of indigeneity in contemporary Canada.” In Riegel’s view, Crate also considers how indigenous identities are formed globally and how they were shaped through colonial contact and the imperial expansion of European states. The volume’s title, according to Riegel, when invoking a home that is also by its otherness a foreign space, embodies this tension between identity and place. Riegel thinks that this tension is liminal (of thresholds) and suggests that a person’s status as an indigenous person within Canada is bounded by global and therefore foreign forces, which in turn run interference with a longstanding

sense of rootedness or place. Riegel argues that for Joan Crate, “the play of local and global is expressed as a form of liminality,” a form of betwixt and between socially and being both this and that. For Riegel, Crate’s articulation of Canadian indigenous identity, since the time of colonialism, is being in an in-between state, neither local nor global, but this identity is also both. Riegel, then, sees that sense of place and displacement co-exist with the ongoing effects of colonialism, which is part of a trauma. In Riegel’s view, Crate’s *Foreign Homes* represents the trauma of indigenous peoples in Canada in the context of global forces. The Beothuk genocide, as Riegel says, is something that Crate articulates as a part of “less overt forces of destruction that flow through contemporary Indigenous experience.” Crate’s local or “home” is “foreign” because it performs the “ongoing global forces of colonialism resulting in a seemingly endless liminal status.” In fact, as Crate and Riegel imply, the aboriginal peoples of Canada are part of a wider group of the indigenous inhabitants in the Americas and globally, and these people have been invaded and assaulted through invasions not of their invitation or making. The trauma of disease, violence and death is something that Europeans such as Bartolomé de Las Casas and Michel de Montaigne chronicled in ways that criticized their fellow Europeans for their barbarity. Global forces impinge on the local while the local is also global, and Riegel’s article reminds us that this is true of the indigenous peoples and not simply the Europeans (or the Africans they so cruelly enslaved).

This special issue examines various sides of the local and the global in the context of world literature. The literary is both textual and contextual. These articles include discussions of canonical authors like Shakespeare, but also writers from literatures of lesser diffusion like Debeljak and an indigenous author like Crate. Moreover, what is home and what is not, the colonial and postcolonial, as well as trauma are central to some of the articles, while worlding literature or not concerns others. The global expansion of Europe haunts some of the other contributions from the Renaissance or early modern period to the present. Translation is also a leitmotif in articles, including discussions of Latin, French and English each as a *lingua franca*.

What emerges from this special issue is that the local and the global, although opposites, are intertwined. Even though the articles have overlapping concerns, they are distinct. In a sense, they have their own local place, their *topos*, while being part of a more global framework. My own admiration for these contributors and their work is partly because of the theoretical and critical insights they have as well as perceptive readings of individual texts of works less known, whether a poem in Latin about the holocaust, an essay of Soyinka’s, the work of a writer from Slovenia

and poems by an indigenous poet from Canada. While pushing back the boundaries of scholarship, the contributors also give a sense of the history of and some of the key current debates in world literature.

The world of literature is here and there, then and now as we move into the future with its unknown unfoldings. Literature and literary theory, criticism and practice are something rooted but mobile, as stories are born in a place but migrate along trade and migration routes, and have for some time. Since the intensification of globalization and Western expansion from the early fifteenth century (and in the past century, this has been even more intense with each decade), there has been a coming out from the local and global pressure on the local in connected networks of various locales/local places/locations. The local and global can always be considered from different places and times, in different languages and cultures, so that this special issue is just one way to approach the topic. Despite this caveat, as there would be for any collection on this subject, the insights in these articles and in the special issue globally — as a whole— should provide readers with something to consider and savour. The particular and general perform apart and together in a drama of meaning. That, at least, is my hope.

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Anthologizing World Literature in Translation: Global/Local/Glocal

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Abstract Anthologizing world literature and translation are inseparable from one another: most texts selected will always be inaccessible in the original to most readers. Translation, however, always brings with it the danger of “naturalizing” the foreign as domestic, and of appropriating the world to the target language culture. As anthologizing always presumes selection, the latter moreover risks being steered by target culture conventions or expectations. At the same time, anthologies, especially when overlapping, also — willingly or inadvertently — work towards a world literary canon. As such, anthologies in “world languages,” and in our day primarily in English, not only influence the idea of what the canon of national literatures other than English is for both native speakers of English but also for “third”-language and culture readers. In fact, they even cannot help but influence how non-English national literature readers come to consider their own national canon in a world literature perspective, possibly leading to a radical dissociation of an “internal” and an “external” canon of their literature. Concomitantly, the “national” literature of the anthologizing culture assumes almost inevitably greater weight and centrality in the thus-created world literature canon. A possible balancing act might consist in performing similar operations from other language cultures upon both English-language and third-culture literatures, effectively “glocalizing” world literature.

Keywords world literature; anthologies; global; local; glocal

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Both the question of the position of literatures from various parts of the world — or to put it more simply, from Europe, or more broadly, “the West” and the “Rest” — and the question of translation have been troubling what we now know as “world literature” from the latter’s very beginnings.¹ To take the first issue first, for the longest time, European literature *was* in fact world literature. Goethe, who popularized the term *Weltliteratur* in 1827 in his famous conversations with his amanuensis Johan Peter Eckermann, as reported in the latter’s *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836), repeatedly equated European literature with *Weltliteratur*.² In an address to the Congress of Natural Scientists in Berlin in 1828, he referred to “a European, in fact a universal, world literature” (eine europäische, ja eine allgemeine Weltliteratur) (Strich, *Goethe and World Literature* 250). If this can still be interpreted as enlarging the reach of world literature from Europe to the world, in 1829, in his own journal *Über Kunst und Ältertum* (*Art and Antiquity*), vol. 6, part 3, Goethe revised what first he had called “World Literature” as “European, in other words, World Literature” (Strich, *Goethe and World Literature* 250). And on 12 August of the same year, Goethe’s conversation with the German historical novelist Willibald Alexis (pseudonym of Georg Wilhelm Heinrich Haring, 1798–1871), “there appeared references to a common European or World Literature” (Strich, *Goethe and World Literature* 251). Still, Fritz Strich, one of the most astute readers

1 Especially in the first part of this article, I re-use, albeit slightly differently phrased, various paragraphs from my *Routledge Concise History of World Literature*. The framework within which I use these paragraphs, however, is completely different from that in which I used them earlier.

2 See Eckermann.

of Goethe on world literature, and from whose *Goethe and World Literature* I copied the English translations of the three instances I just quoted, has maintained, mostly on the basis of the 1828 passage, that for Goethe,

world literature is, to start with, European literature. It is in process of realising itself in Europe. A European literature, that is a literature of exchange and intercourse between the literatures of Europe and between the peoples of Europe, is the first stage of a world literature which from these beginnings will spread in ever-widening circles to a system which in the end will embrace the world. World literature is a living, growing organism, which can develop from the germ of European literature, and in his *West-Eastern Divan*, which was to throw a bridge from East to West, Goethe himself began the task of incorporating in it the Asiatic world. (Strich, *Goethe and World Literature* 16)

With the mention of the *West-Eastern Divan* of 1819, we have at the same time also arrived at the second issue, that of translation. In fact, translation is at the very root of *Weltliteratur*, because Eckermann also reports that Goethe first thought of the very concept as an immediate result of his reading of a number of Chinese novels in translation. That I found it necessary to also quote the 1828 passage in the original German in order to avoid any misunderstanding because of translation issues only underscores the point. At the same time, the issue of translation also immediately foregrounds the relationship between the global and the local. The process of translation involves turning an “original” or “local” source text into a target text using another “local” language. As such, translation makes the original more widely accessible, albeit not without necessarily changing it. If the target language is a “world language” or lingua franca, as is presently the case with English, as previously with French, the text in question potentially becomes “globally” accessible.

For Goethe himself, it is now generally agreed that *Weltliteratur* covered the rapidly increasing exchange of literary goods and ideas among Europe’s intellectuals at the close of the Napoleonic era. Very quickly, however, and especially in academic parlance, the term came to stand for either all of the world’s literature(s), present, past and future, or for a canon of the best of the world’s literature or literatures. The former concept gave rise to a series of histories of world literature, perhaps better referred to as world histories of literature, at first primarily in Germany and later also in the Scandinavian countries and elsewhere. The latter concept became especially relevant when it came to actually devising

courses in world literature, requiring handbooks and anthologies on the subject. The latter problem posed itself particularly urgently in the United States, where, especially from the end of the First World War, courses in world literature, under varying denominations but in practice covering much the same material, became institutionalized as part of undergraduate curricula. Given the inevitable linguistic limitations of American undergraduates, the materials included in these anthologies were of necessity given in translation.

It is against this background that Richard Green Moulton, an English academic working in the US, at the University of Chicago, published *World Literature and Its Place in General Culture*, the first book-length publication on the subject in English, in 1911. For Moulton, “whatever of universal literature [by which he means all literature from all the world, actually close to the French usage of *littérature universelle*], coming from whatever source, has been appropriated by our English civilization, and made a part of our English culture, that is to us World Literature” (297). Building on Matthew Arnold’s ideas about the Hellenic and Hebraic origins of European civilization as well as upon then-current theories about the linguistic and racial relationships of Europeans, and especially the English, to the rest of the world’s peoples, Moulton divides the world’s literatures into a number of categories dependent upon their relevance to the literatures of the “English-speaking peoples” at the beginning of the twentieth century. In a general introduction, Moulton first singles out the two “civilizations” that he saw as directly feeding into the culture of the English-speaking peoples via their Hebraic and Hellenic components: the “Semitic” and “Aryan” civilizations. From these, he includes a number of works or authors for discussion: the *Quran*, the *Arabian Nights*, and Omar Khayyam. Next, he lists as “extraneous” civilizations, such as the Chinese and Japanese, that he deems not to have had any influence upon English literary culture, and whom consequently he does not discuss at all. In his next to last chapter, Moulton draws a parallel between national literature and world literature in the sense that if national literature is, as “is generally recognized” (429), a reflection of the national history of the country in question, so “World Literature is autobiography in the sense that it is the presentation of civilization in its best products, its most significant moments emphasized as they appear illuminated with the highest literary setting” (437). Precisely because it is the “Autobiography of Civilization,” *their* civilization, Moulton argues in his “Conclusion” that world literature should be part of American students’ general education, “not to be considered as an option that may be taken late, but as an essential in the foundation stage of education, part of the common body of knowledge which makes the election of optional studies intelligent” (447).

Courses that went by the label “World Literature” and that resembled what Moulton had had in mind were pioneered in the late 1920s by Philo Buck, professor of comparative literature at the University of Wisconsin. Sarah Lawall labels Buck’s 1934 *Anthology of World Literature*, based on his class teachings, “the first single-volume academic anthology to attempt global scope” (59–60), comprised of a multitude of shorter works and passages from longer works in an effort to achieve some representative historical and geographical coverage. Still, Buck, as Moulton had advocated, focused on the European tradition, while including some Indian, Persian, and Arab materials while, again like Moulton, excluding works from China and Japan on the grounds that their “vital influence upon the European tradition has been negligible or very recent” (Buck v). In later editions, he did add some Chinese works.

As early as 1940, Albert Guérard, French-born but professionally active in the US, and more specifically at Stanford, lamented in his *Preface to World Literature* that in what commonly passed as the canon of world literature, “the East is woefully under-represented” (34). In other words, Guérard said, “the term *World Literature* is an obvious exaggeration,” though it might be retained “as the voicing of a distant hope” (Guérard 34). In the meantime, he suggested, it would be more accurate to call the field “*Western World Literature: a literature for Westerners, wherever they may be, and for Westernized Orientals*” (Guérard 34).

After World War II, and particularly after the end of the age of colonialism and empire, roughly speaking as of the 1960s, this exclusive, or almost exclusive, attention to European literature under the terms of what passed for world literature came under attack. Already in 1959, at a Conference on “The Teaching of World Literature” held at the University of Wisconsin, the Swiss-American comparatist Werner Friederich humorously but also scathingly proclaimed that “sometimes, in flippant moments, I think we should call our programs NATO Literatures — yet even that would be extravagant, for we do not usually deal with more than one fourth of the [the] 15 NATO-nations” (14–15), that is to say, next to English, French, German, and for good measure also some Spanish and Italian literature, all of them studied in translation. Next to this traditional European domain, Friederich called for attention to the cultures of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. That this was done very much in the spirit of the Cold War that was then raging may become clear when we consider that Friederich argued that the United States, with its mixture of races and cultures, its history of migration, its geographical location, and its world leadership in matters military, economic and political, was uniquely well placed to take the lead also in matters cultural, and part of this leadership would be a greater

opening to the world beyond Europe and the US itself. This argument would return in the twenty-first century, but not without a twist.

A more hard-hitting critique of what would eventually come to be called “Eurocentrism” was unleashed by the French comparatist René Étiemble in “Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?” at the Fourth World Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association held in Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1964. This essay discussed an inquiry that the French writer Raymond Queneau had conducted at the time on the *Bibliothèque idéale*, or ideal library, for which he had asked several dozen writers, overwhelmingly French, to pick their ideal library of one hundred titles from a list of approximately 3500 works. Étiemble noted that of the one hundred titles selected, 60 were French, 9 were English or American, 8 (ancient) Greek, 6 German, 6 Russian, 4 Latin, 3 Spanish, and one each of Arab, Danish, Hebrew and Italian. “As Apollinaire’s *Alcools* is inadvertently cited twice,” Étiemble cheekily suggests that “instead of one of these two *Alcools* we should insert the [Japanese] *Genji monogatari* [*Tale of Genji*], the [Chinese] *Hong leou mong* [*The Dream of the Red Chamber*, also called *The Story of the Stone*], the [Sanskrit] *Pançatantra* [Five Principles], the [Sanskrit] *Jataka*, the [Japanese] *Tzurezuregusa* [Essays in Idleness, also called *The Harvest of Leisure*], the *Zhuangzi*, Wang Chong, the *Prolegomenon* [Muqaddimah] of Ibn Khaldoun, or one or other of the thousands of titles that are worth more or at least as much as *Alcools*?” (21–22). And if one should argue, with the German scholar Werner Krauss, one of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s “grosse Romanisten,” that until the nineteenth century French literature has been “serving as example to all other literatures” [*Für alle andern Literaturen beispielgebend gewesen*], Étiemble replies “that another literature has enjoyed, and continues to enjoy, and this since millennia, a situation that is as privileged as ours has been for eight centuries: the Chinese, which is not represented, not even with one title, in the *Bibliothèque idéale*” (22).

Across a distance of more than two generations, Guérard’s, Friederich’s and Etienne’s laments are stridently echoed by Shu-mei Shih, from UCLA. Spurred on by the sudden upswing in attention being given to world literature in US departments of comparative literature as of the turn of the third millennium, Shih posits in a 2004 PMLA article on “Global Literature and the Technologies of Recognition” that “while many scholars resuscitating th[e] concept [of world literature] offer a nominal apology for its Eurocentric origins, this Eurocentrism’s [or Westerncentrism; as she calls it a little further on] constitutive hierarchies and asymmetries are seldom analyzed” (16), a task she then takes upon herself. Discussing what she calls “technologies of recognition,” which she defines as

“the mechanisms in the discursive (un)conscious — with bearings on social and cultural (mis)understandings — that produce ‘the West’ as the agent of recognition and ‘the rest’ as the object of recognition, in representation” (17), with regard to world literature, Shih concludes that a Western-centred world literature in the worst case simply non-recognizes what is distant to itself, neglecting, ignoring or silencing it, and at best mis-recognizes the non-West by what Shih calls “omnipotent definitions.” This recalls Edward Said’s branding of “orientalism” as a power discourse enabling and legitimizing Europe’s suppression of the non-West under colonialism and imperialism.

Shih specifically focuses upon a 2000 article by Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” which she sees as a prime example of the technology of recognition that she calls “the return of the systematic.” What Shih finds “most curious” about Moretti’s article is that “even as the author frequently admits his limited knowledge about literatures outside Western Europe [...] these caveats become not so much obstacles as enabling mechanisms for sweeping generalizations” (19). Specifically, she faults Moretti for having hastily applied his theory of the spread of the European novel to the rest of the world as a combination of “foreign *plot*, local *characters*, and then, local *narrative voice*” (Moretti 65, cited in Shih 19), and also to Chinese literature, via his “distant reading” approach:

A cursory look at Chinese literature would [...] have led Moretti away from taking one scholar’s work in English as the authoritative last word on the Chinese novel and from taking the Chinese novel at the turn of the nineteenth century as representative of the entire period from 1750 to 1950. Any genealogy of the modern Chinese novel has to examine its relation with the classics of the genre, which include (if we limit the list to Moretti’s period) *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (1791), *The Scholars* (1803), and *Flowers in the Mirror* (1828), as well as the late-nineteenth-century novels that Moretti refers to. (Shih 19)

Obviously, similar objections could be raised in the interest of other non-Western or non-European literatures.

Moretti’s article lambasted by Shih, and the many articles and books that have followed it, can be seen as more recent attempts to address one of the avatars that *Weltliteratur* assumed after Goethe, that is to say as a cover-all for all that has ever been written anywhere in the world. Moretti advocates a systemic approach using what he calls “distant reading” to bring some order to the amorphous mass of the

world's literatures or, even more ambitiously, to what Moretti himself only half-jokingly refers to as the "great unread" of all the world's writing that flies under the radar of what we usually call "literature." Succinctly put, Moretti tries to map the various relationships between the world's literatures in terms of production, dissemination, and translation, without proffering judgments of value or quality. The other dress *Weltliteratur* cloaked itself in, it will be recalled, was that of a canon of the best of the world's unwieldy mass of literature(s). This is what Pascale Casanova turns to in *La République mondiale des Lettres* (1999). For her, the world's literatures, and their works, range themselves into a canonical constellation ruled from Paris, with its literary establishment busily and authoritatively selecting, filtering, translating, and reviewing. The canon implicitly resulting from this, in Casanova's interpretation, is a reflection of the quality of the works so ordered according to the supposedly autonomous, and therefore objective, standards of a Bourdieuan world literary field anchored in Paris.¹ Accordingly, the world literary canon may, and in many cases effectively does, assign different values to a work or an author than does the national literary canon. Avoiding the pitfalls of both positions, and drawing upon the commercial vocabulary so frequently also invoked by Goethe himself (and somewhat later by Marx and Engels when speaking about world literature), David Damrosch, in *What Is World Literature?* (2003), defines the latter as what circulates beyond its source language/culture, either in translation or in the original if in a language that is sufficiently well-known abroad, which in our era in practice means in English. In essence, Damrosch advocates an updated version of a mode of reading particular to American academe, especially at the undergraduate level, which is to say a form of "close reading" such as was popularized already as of the 1930s and 1940s by the so-called New Criticism, but which historically was applied primarily to English-language literature. Damrosch now extends it also to other literatures, albeit not without some modifications, to which I will turn later. In theory, both Casanova's and Damrosch's takes on world literature are open-ended. In practice, Casanova's approach calls for a concrete listing of which authors and works are part of her canon at any which moment in time, with all problems of limitations of numbers and other things that this implies. Damrosch's approach in fact also calls for a pinning down of which works or authors fulfill his criterion of "circulating" at any given time. The actual form such pinning down takes is that of the anthology.

Until the first decade of the twenty-first century, the anthology most widely used in US academe of what in practice was deemed to be world literature was the

1 See *La République mondiale des Lettres*.

Norton *World Masterpieces: Literature of Western Culture*, which first appeared in 1956, and which through its sixth edition, from 1992, and in spite of minor name changes, largely remained focused on Western literature. An *Expanded Edition* appeared in 1995. In 2002, this expanded edition became *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Second Edition (Lawall et al.). Though earlier editions of the Norton anthology had also already responded to claims, for example, from feminist, multicultural and postcolonial quarters, for wider representation, the *Expanded Edition* of 1995 basically added an equal number of pages of non-Western texts to the earlier exclusively Western edition. In early 2012, a third edition of the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* appeared, this time under the general editorship of Martin Puchner,¹ featuring, in many cases, completely new selections.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Norton has had to face competition from various other anthologies of world literature, the best-known of which is the six-volume *Longman Anthology of World Literature*, with David Damrosch as general editor.² Elsewhere, I have pointed out that with the “provincializing” of Europe, to use Dipesh Chakrabarty’s famous term,³ in the “new” world literature, with the quite understandably and rightly so raising of the world’s other “major” literatures, such as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Indian, to equality with those of the “old” European, or latterly perhaps rather Euro-American, center or “core,” Europe’s minor literatures, which already did not receive much attention in earlier “Eurocentric” or “Western-centric” versions of world literature or comparative literature, simply disappear from sight, and literally “fall off” the world. Thus, one form of inequality is simply replaced with another. Be that as it may, both the recent Norton and Longman anthologies “balance the books” when it comes to a fair representation of Western and non-Western literatures. Or we should say, rather, that when it comes to representing each “major” or “world” region’s “major” literatures, the “minor” literatures of Asia, Africa, and elsewhere suffer the same neglect as their European counterparts.⁴

Apart from the understandable and legitimate claim, from a theoretical angle, for fairer representation at least across major regions and literatures of the world in order to truly warrant the label “world literature,” one can also, I think, ask the legitimate question of the reason for the sudden interest in a topic that otherwise had lain largely dormant for several decades, particularly in American academe.

1 See Puchner.

2 See Damrosch, 2004, 2009.

3 See Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*.

4 See D’haen, “La literatura,” “Minor Literatures.”

One explanation is that recent American interest in world literature is at least partially motivated by a desire to make the world more comprehensible to twenty-first century generations of college students by giving them greater exposure to the varied cultures of the world than was the case for earlier generations. The events of 9/11, for example, painfully brought home to the United States that it is not, as it had been accustomed to thinking, distinct from the rest of the world and invulnerable behind its two oceans. On the contrary, it is very much a part of that world, and therefore, to better understand this world is vital also to US concerns. To a certain extent, this is the thrust of both Edward Said's posthumous *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004)¹ and Emily Apter's *The Translation Zone* (2006), both of which explicitly refer to 9/11 as having influenced their arguments, with Apter particularly insisting on the need for knowing foreign languages, and for increased efforts of translation, as keys to a more equal relationship between the US and the rest of the world.²

Interestingly, then, the renewed popularity of world literature has also brought issues of translation to the fore again. In many ways, this is not surprising. Earlier, I mentioned that courses in world literature, especially as taught in US colleges and to US undergraduates, of necessity relied upon translation. Indeed, in his 1940 *Preface to World Literature*, Guérard called translation "the indispensable instrument" and insisted that even if something is inevitably lost in translation the essential quality or message, what he calls the "living" part of a work, is preserved, at least if we are dealing with a good translation, and that it is only through translation that most of the world's literatures are accessible to us. A later practitioner of comparative literature, indeed one of the founders of what we now call translation studies, André Lefevere, eventually came to see translation as only one form of what he calls a work's "refraction" through which it projects itself into the world. Lefevere posited that "the refraction [...] is the original to the great majority of people who are only tangentially exposed to literature" ("Mother Courage's Cucumbers" 246). Lawrence Venuti bluntly posits that "for most readers, translated texts constitute world literature" (191).

One would expect theoreticians and proponents of translation, then, to be enthusiastic about the possibilities offered by the re-emergence of world literature and its use of translated literature in anthologies of world literature. While this is true for some, most notably Damrosch, who boldly claims in *What is World Literature?* that world literature is literature that gains in translation, almost the

1 See Said, 2004.

2 See Said and Apter.

opposite is true for others. Gayatri Spivak, herself a gifted translator, specifically from the French with her early translations of Derrida, and from Bengali, has vehemently opposed the new world literature in translation in her 2003 work *Death of a Discipline*. The discipline to which the title of the book refers is comparative literature, and Spivak sees the turn to world literature strongly manifesting itself in the early years of the twenty-first century, and which she sees as intimately linked to globalization, as a threat to that discipline. However, more geopolitical concerns also play a role here. Already in a 1992 article on “The Politics of Translation,” Spivak had argued that “in the act of wholesale translation into English there can be a betrayal of the democratic ideal into the law of the strongest [...] this happens when all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translatese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan” (“Politics” 182). Following the same logic, in *Death of a Discipline* she vehemently opposes “U.S.-style world literature becoming the staple of Comparative Literature in the global South” (*Death* 39). Spivak’s impassioned plea seems triggered by the same fear that led Erich Auerbach, in his 1952 article “Philology and World Literature,” to lament that “man will have to accustom himself to existence in a standardized world, to a single literary culture, only a few literary languages and perhaps even a single literary language [...] and herewith the notion of *Weltliteratur* would now be at once realized and destroyed” (Auerbach 127).

In *The Translation Zone*, Emily Apter radically proposes to reground the discipline of Comparative Literature in “the problem of translation” (*The Translation Zone* 251). A “new comparative literature,” she professes, “would acknowledge [the] jockeying for power and respect in the field of language” (“Global *Translatio*” 244–245). In a 2008 article, Apter seems to be at the same time echoing and questioning Spivak’s concerns about the hegemonic dangers of English for new postnational paradigms (such as world literature) when she feels that “postnationalism can lead to blindness toward the economic and national power struggles that literary politics often front for, while potentially minimizing the conflict among the interests of monocultural states and multilingual communities (as in current U.S. policy that uses an agenda of cultural homogeneity to patrol ‘immigrant’ languages and to curtail bilingual education)” and that “though planetary inclusion may be the goal of new lexicons in contemporary comparative literature, they often paradoxically reinforce dependency on a national/ethnic nominalism that gives rise to new exclusions” (“Untranslatables” 581). Like Spivak, then, precisely because she is so acutely aware of the problem of translation, in *Against World Literature* (2013)

Apter advocates the study of what she calls “untranslatables,” that is to say, those works that resist translation, and thereby homogenization and assimilation into a hegemonic worldview.¹ For the same reasons, Spivak advocates learning and teaching local languages and gaining an intimate knowledge of the local cultures. When translation is necessary, it should “make visible the import of the translator’s choice” (Spivak, *Death* 18). Here, of course, Spivak is touching upon the old discussion whether translation should naturalize or, on the contrary, “make strange” the original.

In the Note on “Uebersetzung” (translation) he appended to the *West-oesstlicher Divan*, Goethe outlined the three “Arten” or kinds of translation he discerned. The first kind is that which “acquaints us with the foreign according to our own lights, a simple prose translation is most suitable here” (526). Translation here is a purely “functional” exercise; the only thing that matters is the content of the original without bothering about style, versification or other matters. The second stage is that “where one is concerned with entering into the foreign situation, but really only with the intent of appropriating to oneself the foreign and to refashion it according to one’s own lights” (Goethe 527). Here the translator “naturalizes” the original within his own literary target system. Finally, there is the third stage: “a translation that aims to identify itself with the original finally approaches the condition of an interlinear version and much furthers understanding of the original, it leads us back to the original text, stronger, it forces us back to that text, and thus finally the circle is closed in which the foreign and the native, the known and the unknown move closely together” (Goethe 532). This third kind of translation does not strive to naturalize the original in the target language, but instead aims to preserve the former’s strangeness, its foreignness. Translators and theoreticians of translation from Walter Benjamin to Lawrence Venuti have elaborated upon this tripartite scheme of Goethe’s, with most of them favoring Goethe’s third stage. Obviously, this is also what Spivak has in mind, but which — rightly or wrongly — she does not see present-day anthologies of world literature as practising.

If translation, then, is a major issue when it comes to the relationship between the “local” and the “global” character a specific text assumes, the same thing also applies more generally to the literature from which a particular text originates. Venuti, summarizing a lot of recent discussions on the role of translation in literary studies, and referring to Casanova (1999, 2004)² and Moretti (2000) amongst others, Venuti concludes that “to understand the impact of translation in the creation of

1 See Apter, *Against World Literature*.

2 See Casanova, *La République mondiale des lettres*, 1999, and *The World Republic of Letters*, 2004.

world literature, we need to examine the canons developed by translation patterns within the receiving situation as well as the interpretations that translations inscribe in the source texts” and that “to be productive, to yield the most incisive findings, this sort of examination must combine distant and close reading of translations to explore the relations between canons and interpretations” (191). There is no room in the present article to engage into any such combination of distant and close reading. I do, however, want to reflect briefly upon the first part of the above quotation from Venuti.

Citing Gideon Toury (2002a 2002b, 2003) and Itamar Even Zohar (2002),¹ the editors of *Translation in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th Centuries)*, when discussing the functions, purposes and types of anthologies in their introduction to the volume, stipulate that anthologies “may be considered tokens of culture planning” (Seruya et al. 5). As such, they constitute, in the words of Even-Zohar again as quoted by the editors (Seruya et al. 5), a “deliberate act of intervention, either by power holders or by ‘free agents’ into an extant or a crystallizing repertoire” (Even-Zohar 45). Culture planning, they conclude,

seems to function as a convenient umbrella for several possible functions and purposes for anthologies and collections. Among such sometimes opposed functions, the following are worth mentioning: pleasure purposes, educational purposes (either as teaching anthologies directed at young readers since the 18th century and created with the explicit purpose of educating taste or associated with the dissemination of mainstream ideological, political, social, ethical, aesthetical, and moral values); preservation purposes (representativeness of a given literature; anthologies work as a repository or means of creating a national cultural memory and canon as well as a universal canon (Bloom); innovation purposes (re-evaluation of texts and canon as well as introducing novelty into a system); protection purposes (literary production of minorities tends to become available and known by means of anthologies, since it seldom reaches autonomous publication or a wide reading public); structuring purposes (as a means of structuring a branch of culture); accessibility purposes (to make a structured selection available to a wide reading public); dissemination purposes (to make literary and textual models available so that they may become productive); subjective purposes (particularly powerful or prestigious cultural agents use anthologies to disseminate personal predilections although often implicitly claiming a certain

1 See Gideon Toury (2002a 2002b, 2003) and Itamar Even Zohar (2002).

representativeness and excellence); profit purposes (certain anthologies and collections aim to meet a generalized taste or preference with the purpose of making profit for a publisher). As such, anthologies and collections become very important first order objects for the study of the underlying criteria for selection and restructuring, the underlying taste of individual agents or of the community they belong to, of publishing and book-market mechanisms, of fluctuations in cultural importance, as second order objects. (Seruya et al. 5)

It will be clear from all I have said earlier about the world literature anthologies hitherto mentioned that they primarily serve education, preservation, and profit purposes. Interestingly, for educational purposes Seruya and her co-authors distinguish between “educating taste” and “the dissemination of mainstream ideological, political, social, ethical, aesthetic, and moral values.” In the early versions of world literature anthologies used in US academe, the first purpose would have been assumed to be the “natural” one. However, much of what has been going on in US academe over the past fifty years or so has been aimed at debunking said purpose, arguing that precisely in its unspoken assumptions, such a stance revealed political and social biases serving the worldview, and the power structure, of a specific part of US society. In the present sociopolitical and academic US context, the second purpose seems more likely, with the *caveat* that what passes here for “mainstream” is what US academe has deemed as such, in line with the theories and practices of multiculturalism and postcolonialism, or in short “political correctness,” that since the end of the twentieth century have been dominant in the US academy.

In fact, from the perspective just adopted, we can see that two things are going on at the same time in those anthologies. Composing an anthology with, at least in ambition, worldwide coverage is an ideological act that serves political, social, ethical, and moral aims. At the same time, the selection of the items to be included in such an anthology is at least partially based on the aesthetic grounds of the cultures from which these items originate. As far as their preservation function goes, the world literature anthologies discussed here serve two purposes at the same time. They establish an overall canon of world literature for their primary audience, in first instance US undergraduates, and further for all readers of English, whether native speakers of the language or not. As such, they clearly function as what Even-Zohar defined as a “deliberate act of intervention” by “power holders” in the US academic system, *in casu* the editors/composers of the anthologies and their publishers, in a wider English-language context. But they also establish a more restricted canon of each of the literatures from which items are included

within that same context. Furthermore, they do so in English. If one objects that nothing precludes that there exist other, and more comprehensive, anthologies, serving other purposes, of a specific literature in a language other than English, this is undoubtedly true. However, of many even major literatures, there do not exist anthologies in all, or even most, other languages, and this is often because of limitations imposed by the restricted size of the market in such languages. For the same reason, there do not exist truly comprehensive world literature anthologies as yet in many, or even most, languages. This also means that in many third cultures, namely, non-Anglo cultures, but also cultures different from the literature from which the items in question have been selected and translated, yet for which English-language materials, due to English being the world's *lingua franca* at present, serve a mediating role, the canon of the literature in question — such as Chinese or Arabic — in relation to “world literature” consists of what is included in English-language, and in practice US-produced, anthologies. This process is even reinforced if there is considerable overlap between the various world literature anthologies in English competing with one another at any given time. In fact, things go even further than this. The literatures from which selections are included in these US world literature anthologies at least partially come to regard their own literatures, as far as their relation to world literature is concerned, in light of the restricted canon of their literatures put forth as such in English. In other words, the US power holders, by their “deliberate act of intervention” in their own literature and culture, also “intervene” in other literatures and cultures, even if un-deliberately so. If, as the editors of *Translation in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th Centuries)* claim (Seruya et al. 4), anthologies, like translations, function as what Andre Lefevere termed “rewrites,” the world literature anthologies mentioned do so fourfold: as translations, as re-configurations of the works concerned within an English-language world literature context, as re-configurations of the canons of the specific literatures anthologized in the eyes of “the world,” and as re-configurations of their canons in the eyes of native readers of these specific literatures themselves. The latter in first instance holds for such native readers with the ability to read English, but at least potentially, it may also influence the shape a native canon may assume in future under “world literature” pressure. The global, then, at least potentially again, hugely influences the local — and this holds true even if the third kind of translation, the “foreignizing” one is stuck to, and *a fortiori* if the second kind, the naturalizing one, is opted for.

Ironically, the effect of such interventions is perhaps strongest with those cultures and literatures that the renewed interest in world literature was intended

to promote: those of the “non-West” or the “Rest.” As Martha Cheung argues in her contribution to *Translation in Anthologies and Collections (19th and 20th Centuries)*, globalization in literary studies, as in science and scholarship in general, has meant that Western theories and methodologies in practice have become “universal.” In other words, the flow of ideas is not reciprocal, but rather one-directional, from the “West” to the “Rest.” This means that the non-Western scholar internalizes the Western view of things, and sees her or his own literature “through Western eyes.” In the case of the anthologies discussed, the non-Western scholar, or student, comes to appreciate his her or his own literature according to the criteria that determined the *raison d’être* and the selection of materials for these anthologies. The result is not only a loss of representativeness for her/his literature, notwithstanding the avowed aim of the Western — or in this case US — anthologizers to increase the representativeness of such literatures, but also a loss of identity on her or his part.

Cheung’s own remedy, in her particular case with respect to Chinese theories of translation, is to put together an anthology, in English, herself, meant as an intervention in both the target culture and the source culture. In the target culture her anthology introduces materials previously unknown, or previously unknown in this particular constellation. But, she insists that her

[a]nthology is also meant to serve a function in the source culture. I wanted to put to positive use the perspective from the fringe that is often regarded as the curse of the marginal being. The space at the fringe is, as Homi Bhabha has noted, “not the space of a celebratory, or utopian, self-marginalization” (4), rather it is imposed marginalization and it bestows on its inhabitants a heritage of inferiority. For them, the space at the fringe is an existential reality that is often filled with anxiety. At the same time, as Homi Bhabha has also pointed out, the space at the fringe is also the space for experimentation, subversion, transgression, heresy, and productive hybridity. This means, then, that marginality can be reconceptualized and the negative energy of anxiety can be converted into positive power. In real terms, this means that in addition to functioning in the target culture as a potentially effective force against Eurocentric bias in theorizations about translation, the Anthology can perhaps also function in the source culture and participate in the cultural politics of China, not least by opening up possibilities for a radical re-reading of traditional Chinese discourse on translation. This way, rather than to “Think global, Act local, and Speak global”, I can “Think global, Act local, and Speak

glocal.” (Cheung 84)

Following Cheung's example, one can think of similar initiatives also for world literature anthologies: in English, but selected by non-native speakers of English, the latter moreover not active in US academe but in their own native cultures, or in “third” cultures. By this I now mean not only non-Western cultures or literatures, but also so-called “smaller” European literatures, and preferably following foreignizing translation principles. The result, to use Lefevere's term, would be doubly “refractive.” It would lead the anthologizers to reread their own literary tradition, and its canon, from a world literature perspective informed, but not necessarily dominated, by Western-centrism. And it would lead to a rereading of the English-language tradition, which now often, even if only implicitly, seems to serve as reference or benchmark, and hence also to a reconfiguration, from a “foreignizing” perspective, of the English-language canon. A range of such glocal anthologies, especially if studied in comparison — even subjecting them to the “combination of distant and close reading” Venuti advocated — then would provide at the same time a more truly global perspective on what constitutes “world literature.”

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The Un/Worlding of Letters: Literary Globalization's "Zones of Indistinction"

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Abstract Connected with the rise of Western modernity, globalization is an equivocal project. As it eliminates one set of inequalities, it deepens another. A considerable number of its participants are thus relegated to "zones of indistinction" (Agamben 63), the non-judicial states of exception that sentence them to inarticulate lives. Nonetheless, according to Agamben, their exclusion makes the citizens' articulate lives possible. Following him, I propose these conjoined disjunctive realms of Western modernity, which not only condition but subvert and dislocate each other, to be taken as the point of departure for recent discussions of the "globalization of literature." In my interpretation, traumatic constellations that violently separate their authors from their familiar community by directing them toward a new, remote one on the world's looming horizon, nurture ethico-politically committed modern literary works. They open themselves to distant otherness in order to heal the traumatic experience of indistinction characteristic of their authors' dispossessed present. To demonstrate the manner of this opening, I attentively reconstruct Benjamin's idea of the traumatized subjects' interlocking memory chips. Such involuntary globalization counters the dominant systemic models of today, which render globalization a Western strategic project. In such a way, the model of globalization from below, which characterizes alternative, postcolonial or post-traumatic conceptualizations of world literature, opposes the model of globalization from above, which characterizes the large-scale systemic paradigms. In the final part of my paper, however, I interrogate this rigid opposition itself.

Keywords World literature; globalization; zone of indistinction; traumatic constellation; memory

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The feeling that the pattern of national literary and cultural historiography no longer works is growing in literary and cultural studies today. The evidence that Western literatures and cultures have been active constituents of the processes of globalization, from early modernity onwards, is burgeoning. However, the question remains open as to the manner with which this state of affairs must be dealt. The answer depends on the angle from which globalization is approached. There is an obvious disjuncture between the celebratory perspective of its proponents and the traumatized perspective of its victims, making globalization an equivocal development. As it eliminates one set of inequalities, it deepens another. In spite of its supporters' generous proclamations, imparity seems to be its essential element. Being at continuous pains to bridge up the existing gaps, it empowers some and dispossesses others.

In *Tracing Global Democracy*, I argued that the contribution of the modern idea of literature to the Western globalization of time, space, and meaning took place within this discriminatory frame. In this book, I focused on discussions about what "proper" literature ought to look like. Here I will also argue that literary works, primarily those that lay claim to "properness," emerge in response to particular traumatic constellations, that is, "political arena(s) characterized by asymmetries along (their) many intersecting and overlapping axes" (Biti, *Tracing* 5), such as national, social, economic, cultural and gendered. Rather than performing sovereign actions, literary authors respond to an injury experienced at these axes' intersection. Their works emerge from "poisonous knowledge" acquired in shattered social relationships (Das 54). "History is what hurts" (*The Political Unconscious* 102), Fredric Jameson famously remarked, and I would only add to this, especially for some of its participants. With the rise of Western modernity, they find themselves relegated to "zones of indistinction," the non-judicial states of exception, which the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben interprets as the excluded enabling domains of legislated political orders (*Homo Sacer* 63, 112, 181). Although this relegation

deprives them of their former identity attributes and political rights by reducing their human lives to bare life (*nuda vita*), Agamben leaves no doubt that it is their now inarticulate lives that provide the very condition of possibility of the acknowledged citizens' articulate lives. He claims that, within the constellation of Western modernity, "bare life has the peculiar privilege of being that whose exclusion founds the common being of men" (10; trans. modified, *la città degli uomini*). According to him, the political life's *rule* and bare life's *exception* make up the conjoined disjunctive realms of Western modernity, which not only condition but subvert and dislocate each other.

Agamben is not the only contemporary political philosopher who pairs modern political rule with exception. The French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari had already noticed that it is necessarily engulfed in the whirl of exception, which it cannot but "disgorge [...] everywhere" (*What Is Philosophy?* 46–47). In place of a continuous history, this produces a discontinuity of "between-times (*entre-temps*), between-moments (*entre-moments*)" untranslatable into one another (Deleuze, "Immanence" 5; *Pure Immanence* 29). Following them, in *Homo Sacer*, Agamben transforms modern history into an unpredictable succession of the thresholds of indiscernibility (*soglia d'indifferenza*) or zones of indistinction (*zona d'indistinzione*)¹, in which an ongoing deterritorialization of given political territories, disengagement of their engagements, and reconfiguration of their configurations take place. In the somewhat later *State of Exception*, he claims that such states of exception entered the public political sphere with the French Revolution and, in response to them, the sphere of private self-exemption with Kant's aesthetic.²

Since then, the clandestine non-judicial self-exemption counteracted the public juridical state of exception, enfranchising many more collectives and individuals in the continual refashioning of their identities. Inspired by this "revolutionary atmosphere," Kant put every human under pressure to pull him/herself out of the communal constraints that were established by determining judgments in order to accomplish individuality by way of a postponed reflective judgment. Individuality is, by definition, a state of exemption that cannot be shared with others or translated into regular states. Whereas determining judgments spontaneously apply a common rule as shared with the familiar others, this explains why reflective judgment, guided by the distant others, consistently exempts itself from this rule's application³. Since

1 See *Homo Sacer* 4, 9, 18, 27–28.

2 See *State of Exception*, 37–39.

3 See *Critique of Judgment*, 15–16; 134–39.

the law of reflective judgment exists exclusively in its inapplicability, it is doomed to an eternal itinerancy. It requires an unremitting evacuation of prejudgments, which is a demanding and interminable task.

I interpret this inextricable intertwinement of the public juridical state of exception and the clandestine non-juridical self-exemption that was introduced into Western history by the French Revolution as a traumatic constellation that nurtures modern literary works. Banned by this historical development into "zones of indistinction," their authors are violently separated from their familiar community and forced to search for a new, remote one on the world's looming horizon. However, such an opening toward the unknown and inarticulate others would be unimaginable without the previous establishment of commercial and communicational networks, as well as the invention of new technologies from the Renaissance onwards. Communicational, mercantile, monetary, and spiritual mobility foster and accelerate each other. To take just three well-known examples, Paul Gilroy emphasized the role of slave shipping in the establishment of Western modernity,¹ Benedict Anderson pointed out that print-capitalism enabled growing numbers of people to relate themselves to others in profoundly new ways (36), and Arjun Appadurai clarified to what extent the rise of mass media increased the influence of imagination in the shaping of global processes: "Even the meanest and most hopeless of lives, the most brutal and dehumanizing of circumstances, the harshest of lived inequalities are now open to the play of the imagination" (54). This is how those who find themselves drawn into the "zones of indistinction" experience the need and gain the opportunity to exempt themselves into a spatial, temporal, cultural and/or political "elsewhere." By compulsively meeting this need and using this opportunity, literary works enter the process of worlding. This answers Thomas Beebee's fundamental question from his discussion of Nietzsche's skeptical stance about world literature: "[W]hom is world literature consoling, and in what way?" (Beebee 376). Literature opens itself to distant otherness in order to heal the traumatic experience of indistinction characteristic of its authors' dispossessed present.

However, contrary to the dominant renderings of this turning toward the distant others, literary authors do not identify with these inarticulate others without previously articulating them. There is no identification *with* the distant others without an identification of these others *as* familiar beings; a sort of self-assertion inheres to any self-exemption.² Since the distant and inarticulate others are, by

1 See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*.

2 For the inextricable intertwinement of these two kinds of identification, see Borch-Jacobsen 164–172 and Fuss 11–16. For "idiopathic identification" that interiorizes the other within the self and "heteropathic identification" that goes out of one's self to align oneself with another, see Silverman 185.

definition, threatening spectral appearances, they must first be domesticated. It is only after they lose their *unheimlich*, namely, their uncanny or unhomely character, that the traumatized authors make themselves into the medium of these others' revelation or performance. This preliminary and surreptitious taming of the distant others results in an operation of "inverse ventriloquism" (Anderson 198). In contrast to the literary authors' sacrificial self-presentation — since they claim to be victimizing themselves for the others — the distant others do not speak through their selves, but their selves speak through the distant others. That which involuntarily "speaks" through them is, more accurately, these authors' traumatic constellations, which they hide in front of both the others and themselves. This means, as Eric Santner notes, that their covert sacrificial narratives are "unconsciously designed to expunge the traces of the trauma or loss that called that narrative into being in the first place" (144) or, as Paul de Man states, that their passionate attachment to the distant others "veils a defacement [...] of which it is itself the cause" ("Autobiography" 81). As I will try to show in the following, instead of unveiling this veiling that inheres to their analytical objects, the interpreters of the works of "world literature" compulsively reenact it. That is to say, they identify with their literary authors in the same domesticating way that these authors identify with the distant others. Instead of analytically disaggregating their authors' experience of unhomeliness, to consecrate their own experience of unhomeliness they turn these authors into its passive victims. Endorsing their subjects' "naturalist fallacy" (Alexander 13) in this way instead of dismantling it, they continue to naturalize an experience that is all but natural.

Giorgio Agamben's argument sketched above is a case in point. It came in the immediate shadow of 9/11, which triggered the West's ill-reputed "war on terror" that he articulates in his thesis of modern Western history as a discontinuous succession of states of exceptions. Even if the West was armed to the teeth, its fortified wholeness was subject to anxiety about the prospect of its durability, which drove it to repeat the gesture of the French Revolutionaries toward "strangers" and to deprive of legal protection what it regarded as "subhuman creatures," as its alleged enemies.¹ Agamben accordingly claims that it is only today's world that "fully develops" the rule of the states of exception, which characterizes Western modernity (*State of Exception* 13). However, he stresses that the First World War had already contributed substantially to its extension (7). My point is that Agamben

1 For the thesis that the French Revolution's definition of the citizen establishes an external barrier against foreigners while it abolishes many internal barriers, see Arendt, *Origins* 299-300, Febvre 213-214, Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood* 46-47.

charts this genealogy of the present, apparently universal state of exception — or the historical narrative of its rise via the Holocaust — in order to present his rendering of bare life as its culmination point. Amidst the whimsical discontinuity of political states of exception, he thus establishes a transhistorical moral community of their victims and acts as their spokesperson.

In fact, his rendering of bare life as the ferment of revolutionary change continues, in the delineated atmosphere, to naturalize Walter Benjamin's consecration of *bloßes Leben* from the famous essay "Critique of Violence" ("Zur Kritik der Gewalt" 202–03), which itself emerged in the sinister atmosphere following the collapse of the Second German Empire. Benjamin's essay is not only haunted by war trauma, but also by the crisis of parliamentary democracy in the defeated Germany, as well as the phantom of the "final solution" that had begun to rise on the horizon. After all, when Agamben stated that "World War One (and the years following it) appear as a laboratory for testing and honing the functional mechanisms and apparatuses of the state of exception" (*State of Exception* 7), he might have had in mind the East-Central European post-imperial space in which, after the First World War, consecutive strikes, upheavals and revolutions induced a permanent state of exception.¹ In this turbulent region, the traumatic "zone of indistinction" was unleashed from its former relegation to the imperial borderlands, invading the public political space rather than just the scattered dispossessed groups and individuals, as had been the case in the aftermath of the French Revolution².

When Benjamin postulated in "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1940) that the "'state of exception' in which we live is the rule" ("Über den Begriff" 254), I claim that he compulsively acted out, rather than worked through, the specific traumatic experience of post-imperial Europe's victimized groups and individuals. This constellation visibly affects his argumentation, all the more so the more he hides its particularity. The breakdown of the imperial patterns of collective action paved the way for their ideological reordering by charismatic leaders who requested their followers to forgo their short-term individual interests in favor of allegedly common long-term benefits.³ By knitting together various groups' frustrations into new political platforms, they managed to mobilize the masses for their skillfully

1 See Berend, 201.

2 See Fritzsche, 12–54.

3 See Hanson, xv.

amalgamated nationalist, socialist, and religious agendas.¹ By adapting the old patterns of religious victimhood to the imperial victims' national and social injuries, and by galvanizing their adherents for war against their "perennial" tyrants, these leaders succeeded in establishing post-imperial Europe's, as it were, permanent state of exception.

Their unprecedented unleashing of "state violence" stimulates Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" to advocate revolutionary self-exemption as the method of salvation from such a state of exception. He legitimates this self-exemption, in a typical maneuver of transference to distant and inarticulate others, by postulating an allegedly prehistorical "pure violence." However, by treating this pure violence as an unquestionable state of exception, he surreptitiously exculpates the violence of the revolutionary self-exemption as its supposed resumption. This makes his argument into an involuntary mirror inversion of that of his political opponents. Whereas the engineers of the political state of exception promise a future bereft of differences, Benjamin, as the engineer of individual self-exemption, evokes an equally undifferentiated past. Like the first project's abolition of differences, Benjamin's abolition also relies on an endless postponement because the very violence that promises it repeatedly exempts itself from it. Since the distinction thus stubbornly reenters and subverts the promised indistinction, Benjamin's critique ultimately takes recourse to a weak messianic guideline that might be formulated as: "Persist in your search for indistinction even if you can never reach it!" In accordance with it, he introduces into his argumentation numerous distinctions such as the one between pure (or divine, or revolutionary, or bloodless) violence and state (or mythic, or fateful, or bloody) violence — or between legislative and executive power, justice and law, and revelation and representation, for that matter — only to deactivate them by a violence that itself escapes such a deactivation. In such a way, this violence comes to be exempted from the same contaminating differentiation which it imposes upon all others. Positing an ethical obligation toward it, Benjamin establishes a moral

1 The ideologically extremely hybrid populist profile of these charismatic interwar leaders was already prefigured by the politicians of disaggregating empires toward the end of the nineteenth century. See, for example, Schorske's analysis of the "politics in a new key" (116–180), in which he says of Georg von Schönerer that he "constructed his ideology out of attitudes and values from many eras and many social strata: aristocratic elitism and enlightened despotism, anti-Semitism and democracy, 1848 *grossdeutsch* democracy and Bismarckian nationalism, medieval chivalry and anti-Catholicism, and guild restrictions and state ownership of public utilities. Every one of these pairs of values the nineteenth-century liberal would have seen as contradictory. But there was a common denominator in this set of ideational fractions: total negation of the liberal elite and its values" (132).

community of the victims of political and social distinctions in the same way that we have seen his follower Agamben do in his aftermath.¹

In the post-imperial state of overall instability, uncertainty, and indeterminacy, Benjamin thus turns indistinction from a harsh fate imposed upon those relegated into its zone, into a godlike privilege for all creatures, a sort of a sacred state of exception. This results in a paradoxically passionate attachment to the inflicted dispossession. He titles his essay "*Zur Kritik*," or "*Toward a Critique*," because his critique, due to its endless deactivating meanderings in the name of this indistinction, amounts to an interminable abolition of all distinct identities, including that of the critic's own self. Inasmuch as this critique's horizon eschews ultimate identification, Benjamin assumes a distance from Kant's proposal made in *Critique of Pure Reason*, to authorize it by the critic's given present. Any such present is for him, an adherent of the Romanticist advocacy of victims, a traumatic constellation from which the critic is invited to exempt himself or herself in the name of those whom it bereaves of distinction. Anticipating Agamben, Benjamin therefore authorizes his own critique by the zones of indistinction, which he however, without using this specific term, disaggregates and transfers from the realm of collective political existence to the realm of individual memory. He speaks of individual "memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" ("*Über den Begriff*" 253), in which "danger" refers to the state of indistinction imposed upon this memory's subject. Endangered memory takes possession of the respective subject by catapulting him or her out of this historical state and relegating him/her into the now-time (*Jetztzeit*). Benjamin defines this now-time as an uncanny fusion of history's divergent epochs, the far-removed "chips" of which suddenly reverberate with one another, entering curious "elective affinities" (253). Pressed by this divine spark of similarity into an unexpected proximity to one another, the indistinction of some suddenly ameliorates the indistinction of others. Thus, the extraterritorial and extemporal now-time becomes the refuge for these frustrated subjects, which pulls them out of their traumatic constellations.

It is in this context of a spontaneous interlocking of indistinct individual mem-

1 Benjamin thus resumes the gesture of French revolutionaries who, by positing a "moral community [of mankind] justified in terms of virtue" "set out to destroy the landmarks of the past, churches, castles, and the graves of the French kings at Saint-Denis" (Fritzsche 18) because they did not fit this moral community's parameters. By raising the revolutionary groups and individuals to the status of a morally authorized assembly, Benjamin obliterates the devastating character of their liberation. I therefore agree with LaCapra's claim that his essay is not so much exemplary, as Derrida reads it in "*The Force of Law*," but rather symptomatic (LaCapra 160–61). It acts out his specific individual and group trauma.

ories that Benjamin uncritically consecrates bare life (*das bloße Leben*), a concept that Agamben's thesis of the modern proliferation of the zones of indistinction then continues to naturalize. Considering that zones of indistinction nurture the first works of what is today called "world literature," Benjamin's idea of interlocking memory chips deserves a closer reconstruction here. By dispersing the zone of indistinction, it promises a more specific approach to the question of literature's worlding. According to Benjamin, no subject, due to his or her constitutively divided memory archive, fully belongs to his or her present time and space, but partially also to the distant times and spaces that meet in the one and the same non-time and non-space. Benjamin explains in his 1939 essay on Baudelaire how this functions, borrowing the distinction between voluntary and involuntary memory from Bergson, Freud, and Proust. If voluntary memory connects a subject with his/her respective present, involuntary memory pulls him/her out of it into a plural and heterogeneous non-time and non-space in which s/he joins temporally and spatially distant subjects. Following this distinction between the voluntary disconnection (*Entbindung*) from the ancestors in the name of the present and the involuntary (re)connection (*Bindung*) with them in the name of the future, Freud stated in his essay "Moses and Monotheism" (1939) that the human psychic life contains not only that which an individual has him/herself experienced, but also the "pieces of phylogenetic origin" transmitted to him/her at the moment of his/her birth. He called this inborn relationship with the "experiences of earlier generations," this "inheriting of the memory traces" of "our ancestors" ("Der Mann Moses" 545), an "archaic heritage" (547). It draws the human being into an interminable chain of transmissions by reducing its distinction from the animal, for animals cannot really survive without inheriting their instincts from their ancestors.

Freud's idea of reuniting the human and animal beings in the subconscious dimension of survival (*Überleben*), as opposed to the conscious sphere of life (*Leben*) that separates them from one another, is very close to Benjamin's project of de-anthropomorphizing the notion of life through that of survival and living-on (*Überleben, Fortleben*)¹. By opposing the then-dominant philosophy of life inspired by the Enlightenment attachment to the present, Benjamin, in the wake of Romanticist addiction to the past, resolutely reconnects human life with its immemorial 'animal' origins. In his interpretation, life establishes a dense network of relations between its creatures, which they unconsciously depend on since it escapes their conscious insight and control. This network comes to expression in all of its subjects — the animate ones such as humans and animal beings, and the inanimate ones

1 See "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers" 9.

such as languages and artworks — in the form of their constitutively escaping origin that subverts their autonomy and sovereignty.

This is where Benjamin's "bare life" — a counter-state of exception to the official political one, as it were — finds its field of operation. It circulates through this infrastructure of involuntary memory archives that relates its creatures to one another in a non-identifiable time and space, enabling their self-exemptions from their presents. At stake is an all-encompassing network of corporeal memory archives, which embraces not only humans, animals, languages, artworks, and all kinds of phenomena and objects, but also crosses spatial (such as geopolitical, cultural, and/or linguistic) and temporal (such as historical, epochal, and/or generational) borders. Benjamin's all-embracing bare life enables the most divergent memory archives of its constituents to establish concordances, resemblances and "elective affinities" with one another by means of spontaneous, instantaneous, and unpredictable "side leaps" out of their particular locations. In sharp contrast to goal-directed, unidirectional, and ordering history, this unconscious network of memory traces is dispersive, multidirectional, and vertiginous. One cannot trace it back to its origin because any origin proves to be a trace in itself, which leads to another origin, and so on. In *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin accordingly evokes in the German word for the origin, *der Ursprung*, the etymological meaning of "primordial leap" (*Der Ursprung* 226). This implies that creatures and phenomena have their source not in an identity but, on the contrary, in a leap out of it into an endless network of relations. They contribute to world-making from their very beginnings, even if they are unaware of or unwilling to accept this. Although Benjamin's concept of bare life has the character of an unfinished draft, considering its universalist ambition I would risk the thesis that the sketched interlocking of involuntary memory traces is how he imagines the process which we today call globalization or worlding (*mondialisation*).

Benjamin's and Agamben's concepts of an involuntary globalization rooted in an apparently universal bare life are well fitted to counter the dominant systemic models of today. Benjamin's understanding of globalization as an unpredictable interlocking of dispersed historical victims' memory archives, in particular, substantially differs from its triumphant understanding as a Western strategical project. Opposing such a model of globalization from above, the postcolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo proposed a model of globalization from below. Whereas the colonial model of globalization "connects from the center of the large circle outward, and leaves the outer places disconnected from each other" (Mignolo 765), the postcolonial model of globalization imagines "Western civilization as a large circle with a series of satellite circles intersecting the larger one" (Mignolo 765). It "connects the

diverse subaltern satellites appropriating and transforming Western global designs” (Mignolo 765). Transferred into Benjamin’s and Agamben’s terms, globalization is conceived here as a mobile and heterogeneous network of relations within which the clandestine non-judicial self-exemptions or unconscious memory archives, through their interlocking, continuously subvert the public juridical state of exception or the official memory archive.

Even if he does not go this far, considering the preliminary and sketchy character of his idea, Benjamin in fact alludes to this ineffable network of relations as the ultimate potential horizon of any particular memory when he says that in any memory an “immemorial prehistory [...] murmurs” (“Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire” 640). By drawing memory into such an immemorial or murmuring zone, he wants to emphasize an ultimately indistinctive profile that resists all attempts to distinguish the subject to whom a particular memory “belongs.” In Novalis’s terms, no subject has a natural origin but only a retroactive and therefore artificial one (*Schriften 1* 253). In Freud’s terms, there is something uncanny or unhomey (*das Unheimliche* means both)¹ in any memory archive that, under traumatic circumstances, unexpectedly steps out from its apocryphal, hidden existence.² Its sudden resurfacing disconcerts memory’s distinctive reality in the form of an indeterminate “sense of a déjà vu” (*Empfindung des schon einmal Erlebthabens; Die Psychopathologie* 295). In Benjamin’s closely affiliate terms, the necessary precondition for the sudden manifestation of the individual memory’s transindividual latency zone is the traumatizing depriving of human subjects of their “I” (*Der Begriff der Kunst-kritik* 40), “reflexive consciousness” (*Der Ursprung* 81), or “face” (*Der Ursprung* 218), all of which anchor them in their distinctive presents. The “expressionless” (*ausdruckslos; “Goethes Wahlverwandschaften”* 181), “undefinable” (*undefinierbar; “Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire”* 639), or “unapproachable” (*unnahbar; 647*) profile that they acquire through such a dispossession,³ mobilizes operations in their suppressed memory archives. These gradually activate the hitherto dormant connections with the distant subjects’ memories. Rising in the shadow of historical or personal catastrophes, in these defaced subjects the new and explosive “relation at a distance” thus wins the battle against the relation to familiar beings and phenomena

1 See *das Unheimliche*

2 See “Das Unheimliche”, 232.

3 This series of Benjamin’s negating attributes — expressionless, undefinable, unapproachable — indicates that self-exempting operations link the liberation with the annihilation of their subjects. In Dominick LaCapra’s critical view, they threaten to “disarticulate relations, confuse self and other, and collapse all distinctions” in a kind of “post-traumatic acting out” that is “caught up in a compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes” (La Capra, *Writing History* 21).

in their immediate surroundings. In the splintered world after the catastrophe of the First World War, Benjamin's marvelously abundant compensatory phantasy does not merely turn indistinction and dispossession into a privilege, but makes them celebrate the ultimate triumph.

This might be the reason why his and Agamben's visions of "globalization from below" have become so attractive for the alternative, postcolonial or post-traumatic conceptualizations of world literature. The latter criticize the large-scale systemic paradigms, which are characteristic of the colonial-imperial model of globalization, for reducing temporally and spatially distant literatures and cultures to a market-driven common denominator.¹ They use this "self-evident" criterion to establish geographical, cultural, and/or axiological hierarchies between world literatures and cultures in the same manner that, for example, money establishes a hierarchy between various commodities' values. Through such an all-equalizing systematization, they allocate to literatures and cultures their proportional distinctions, or determinate places, thus transforming their irreducible differences into the pure varieties of one and the same substance. This approach "from above" ignores the literary works' fundamental indistinction, which figures centrally in the alternative model of "globalization from below." As Haun Saussy, one of the adherents of the latter model, cautioned, literary experience resists accommodation, location, or mapping because it "negates determinate space and time" (292). Following this thread, in her 2013 book *Against World Literature*, Emily Apter proposed a plurality of "untranslatable" world literatures, an idea that was already underway when she published it, especially in the transdisciplinary field at the intersection of trauma and memory studies.² Works such as Daniel Levy and Nathan Sznajder's *The Holocaust and Memory in a Global Age* (2006)³, Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), Gabriele Schwab's *Haunting Legacies* (2010), Azade Seyhan's *Writing outside Nation* (2011), Ottmar Ette's *TransArea: Eine literarische Globalisierungsgeschichte* (2012)⁵, and Marianne Hirsch's *The Generation of Post-Memory* (2012) drew attention first to dispersed memories (in contrast to unified history) as the working field of modern literature, and second to the modern memory's affilia-

1 I have taken issue with these paradigms in *Tracing Global Democracy*, 33–56, 133–178, which is why I have skipped this discussion here and concentrated merely on the alternative paradigms.

2 See *Against World Literature*

3 See Daniel Levy and Nathan Sznajder

4 See Seyhan.

5 See Ottmar Ette.

tive structures across the self-enclosed familial and national bonds. In an enlarged global arena that is nowadays structured by media networks and constituted through the flux of contacts between people and technologies, these authors claim that memories cross the perennial lines of difference, establishing correspondences and connections between isolated personal and group histories.

Let me take a closer look at some of these intriguing works at the intersection of trauma and memory studies before I take issue with Apter's proposal, which directly leans on Benjamin's concept of untranslatability. Focusing on the histories of victims, Michael Rothberg discusses "transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance" (11), the ways in which traumatic memories' unpredictable intersections initiate new alliances and collectivities. By opposing multidirectional with competitive memory, he highlights the former's "nonappropriative hospitality to histories of the other" (*Multidirectional* 25). He argues "that far from blocking other historical memories from view in a competitive struggle for recognition, the emergence of Holocaust memory on a global scale" (6), by cutting across diverse spatial, temporal, and cultural sites, "has contributed to the articulation of other histories" (6). However, he realizes that his thesis of the nonappropriative opening of one traumatic memory toward its counterparts is contradicted by Freud's thesis of "screen memory", which states that, whenever we turn to other histories of suffering, we tend to suppress or obliterate our own history (13–14). Although Rothberg expresses his conviction that screen memories cannot prevent cross-referential acts of empathy and solidarity between memories, it should be recalled that Freud defined the *Deckerinnerung*, at least in its covering (*verdeckende*) version,¹ as linked with repression, displacement, and inhibitions². Following him, Marianne Hirsch described screen memories as "[t]he images already imprinted on our brains, the tropes and structures we bring from the present to the past, hoping to find them there and to have our questions answered" (42). In their transference to the memories of the others, they "mask other images and other, as yet unthought or unthinkable, concerns" (Hirsch 42) by remaining open only to that in other memories, which offers them a consolation.

Whereas Rothberg's coalitional politics of multidirectional memories focuses only on the histories of victims, Gabriele Schwab's intercultural dynamic of memory also includes the histories of perpetration. She claims that the "shock of recognizing the atrocities committed by one's own people may prepare the ground for poten-

1 According to Freud, there is also a more positive, or covered (*verdeckte*), version of screen memories.

2 See "Über Deckerinnerungen" 536–37, 551.

tial alliances with the victims" (27). It is easier for them to come to terms with their past if they displace this confrontation onto other histories of violence. Through an "engagement with other violent histories" (Schwab 29), the confrontation with one's own history becomes "psychically more manageable" (29). "I am indeed arguing that histories of violence can be put in a dialogic relationship with one another, thus creating a transferential dynamic for those who participate in, witness, or inherit those histories transgenerationally" (Schwab 29). This means that memories "are always already composites of dynamically interrelated and conflicted histories, [...] conflicting fields" of "transversal encounters" (Schwab 30). Such palimpsestic rendering of memory takes into account the "increasing global interdependency, [...] the fact that we live at the intersections of so many histories of violence that the trauma we experience may well be compared to a 'cumulative trauma'" (31). Schwab's principal thesis is that only "through the detour of displaced yet related memories of violence" can we engage in a proper working through of our own past or a "true politics of mourning" (31). She agrees with Judith Butler who asserts that "struggle must be waged against those forces that seek to regulate affect in differential ways" (*Frames of War* 52), namely, through an identitarian memory politics. Nevertheless, how does this activist ethical program accord with her thesis that "much of how we process violent histories is bound to operate on an unconscious level" (Schwab 30) because of our traumatic amnesia or powerful defense mechanisms based on our feelings of shame and guilt? Does the grade of our responsiveness to suffering at a distance come as a result of our personal willingness and readiness or, probably, the different grade and kind of room for maneuver that is allocated to us in the network of global interdependencies, in other words, from the state of affairs that we cannot be held responsible for? If the starting positions are unavoidably immensely different, do we not inappropriately level them down by confronting them all with the same ethical imperative? And does such an inconsiderate equalization not remind us of systemic approaches?

The same neglect of mechanisms that unconsciously screen a traumatized memory's opening toward other memories characterizes the argument of Marianne Hirsch, another instructive theorist of the plural networking from below. She realizes that intersecting memories tend to "occlude or erase each other" (20), confronting the researcher with the task of "turn[ing] competitive or appropriative memory into more capacious transnational memory work" (21), in order to prevent this from happening. Her proposal is to think "different historical experiences in relation to one another to see what vantage points they might share or offer each other" (24–25), or to juxtapose ones with others to reconfigure their apparent indifference. Hence, their

linking and superimposing is intended to provide them with alternative possibilities of knowing that would otherwise escape them. However, Hirsch is aware that memories offer resistance to such a broadening of their familiar horizon since they passionately adhere to it. To underpin this, at the beginning of her argument, she distinguishes between memory as a personally embodied knowledge and postmemory as a knowledge that is inherited at a generational remove and therefore transferred and traumatic (1–5). Whereas memory belongs to those who have lived an event, “post” implies a troubling continuity: we are distanced from that with which we are profoundly interrelated. Due to traumas, wars, exterminations, exile, and refugeehood, today people live in a world of ruptured continuities and broken heritage lines. Post-memorial work is engaged to counteract this loss of the once familiar past (32–33).

According to Hirsch, there are two ways to deal with this traumatic condition with which we are faced. The first is *familial* postmemory, a defense reaction that is at pains to reestablish an affective connection with the family past that was violently destroyed by history. This kind of postmemory endeavors to regain possession of the “living” relationship to others, for example through literature, photography, and testimony (32–33). The second way is *affiliative* postmemory, which is oriented toward establishing, via various technologies and social institutions, connections with distant, unknown yet affiliate beings in order to encompass a larger collective in a web of transmission (35–36). Although many people stick to the first option, tending to retrieve the sense of family and safety by projecting an image of family onto emerging affiliative institutions, for Hirsch such family pictures operate as screen memories that mask an unbearable visual landscape too difficult to look at. They are retroactive and wishful projections of the world before its destruction. Therefore, like Schwab, she opts for affiliative postmemory which exposes the disjunction, incongruity and incommensurability between the present and the past¹.

Despite their different distribution of accents, Rothberg’s, Schwab’s and Hirsch’s arguments correspond in their prioritizing of the self’s “nonappropriative” identification *with* the distant others over the self’s “appropriative” identification of others *as* familiar beings. In the posttraumatic situation of enforced unhomeliness in which we live today, their thesis reads, experiencing the other as a permanent invitation to our self-exemption is a more appropriate option than experiencing him or her as an object for our self-assertion. In my view, there are two principal problems with this argument. The first is that it distinguishes between the “mythical” world *before* the apocalypse and the historical one *after* it, and the second is that it renders two kinds of identification as freely available alternatives. I believe that, on the contrary,

1 See Hirsch, 51–52, 63.

the self's appropriation of the other and the self's transposition into the other are, from the very beginning of human phylogenetic and ontogenetic history, not free but compulsive and not separable but interdependent operations. In *Tracing Global Democracy*, I have discussed these operations in terms of phylogenetic history, under the labels of Roman imperial and Greek elitist cosmopolitanism, and in the frame of ontogenetic history, under the psychoanalytic labels of libidinal desire for the other-as-object and emotional identification with the other-as-model¹. It turned out that, since one is conscious and the other preconscious, they do not "dialogically interact" as two autonomous operations but one operation acts as the other's suppressed enabler/disabler. Such a peculiar *disjunctive conjunction* between them calls into question not only their historical succession — before and after the apocalypse — but also the proclaimed autonomy of each of them. Since one kind of identification smuggles itself into the unconscious zone of the other, this indistinctive zone haunts, disturbs, and contaminates the respective identification's autonomy and distinction.

Hence, *pace* Hirsch, it is not so that memory comes first as the embodied knowledge of those who have lived through an event, and postmemory comes second as the traumatic knowledge of those whose continuity with the event has been violently ruptured. Living an event does not mean introjecting it without any social mediation on our part. Suffice to recall Lacan's warning that the total symbolic net envelops human life long before a human being enters the world² or Althusser's reminder that each human is always a subject, even before his/her birth, predestined to become such by his/her firmly ideologically structured family configuration.³ No family offers a safe transhistorical shelter to its members without simultaneously imparting its historical restrictions upon them, which means that trauma already inheres to it rather than being simply inflicted on it by history. Even if personal memory is often engaged against historical traumas, this does not mean that its "affect, embodiment, privacy, and intimacy" (Hirsch 16) are protected from the influence of history. Despite the memorizers' projections of their personal oases of freedom, their memories are necessarily shaped by historical tensions, conflicts, and ruptures. This is how the self's preconscious identification *with* distant others contaminates his/her identification of others *as* familiar beings.

The same hybridization holds for the apparently nonappropriative identification with inarticulate distant others. Their defaced, spectral appearance must first be

1 See *Tracing* 17–18, 20, 57, 83.

2 See *Ecrits* 279.

3 See Althusser, 128.

domesticated through the attribution of a familiar face and voice, in other words, the assignment of a home to their unhomeliness. By appropriating the distant others in such a preconscious fashion, the self makes his or her identification-*as*, or self-assertion, into the hideous prerequisite of his or her identification-*with*, or self-exemption. To give an example from my *Tracing Global Democracy*, Kant only identified with all the diverse members of *Menschenrasse* after he had made this human race into an embodiment of the divine *ratio*. Using the Enlightened ideal of rationality as a “self-evident” criterion, he then distinguished not only between the human and animal races, but also between rational and irrational human beings, such as women, children, and barbarians. In the final analysis, he abandoned all individual or collective subjects who proved themselves unable of meeting this ideal to all kinds of sufferings connected with this failure. He did not hesitate to consider them responsible for such “immaturity” (*Tracing* 14).

I interpret such a tacit and discriminatory introduction of one kind of identification into the other as the unconscious establishment of a zone of indistinction, which becomes a ferment that persistently haunts and disturbs the achieved distinction. Instead of relegating identification-*as* into the pre-traumatic realm of distinction and identification-*with* into the post-traumatic realm of indistinction — separating them from one another by a traumatic event, as Rothberg, Schwab, and Hirsch do — I thus make distinction and indistinction into closely interdependent incommensurables. They meet in a disjunctive conjunction of agencies and enablers that is, as I have spelled out at length in *Tracing Global Democracy*, genuine to all traumatic constellations.¹ Due to the imparity at their core, such constellations are merely *potential* generators of trauma. That which one group of their constituencies experiences as trauma is neither in nature nor in degree a universal experience. Put in the frame of a constellation, traumas are instead multilateral constructs, which come into being “in circumstances [people] have not themselves created and which they do not fully comprehend” (Alexander 4). How traumatized they will feel depends on how they, at a given moment, experience their situation located at the intersections of various axes of distinction (or homeliness) and indistinction (or unhomeliness). While people feel at home with regard to one group of the constellation’s constituencies, they can simultaneously feel not-at-home with regard to another such group. This feeling, although sometimes knowingly devastating, is not a homogeneous given, but a complex and changeable variable.

This means that the concept of traumatic constellation prevents either homeliness or unhomeliness from becoming, each for its part, a universal condition of

1 See *Tracing* 5–6, 70–72.

all the world's constituencies. Homeliness, which generates identification-*as* or self-assertion, and unhomeliness, which generates identification-*with* or self-exemption, are instead taken to be closely interrelated but incommensurable projects of the world's commonality. If we conceive the world as a traumatic constellation, this disjunctive conjunction permeates each and every one of its innumerable and manifold constituencies. This is why, within it, one type of commonality cannot but be launched at the expense of another. In order for one constituency that pursues one type of commonality to acquire distinction, the other constituency that pursues the other type must be banished into indistinction and unhomeliness. In these terms, the world would be no longer interpreted as a consensual space, but a dissensual one that underlies (re)configuration from any of its equally asymmetric regional constellations, in the same way that these constellations are persistently reconfigured by national, social, and individual constellations as their internally divided constituents. There would be no *one* world, but rather, *many* nodes of its overall network that align with some against others in their political efforts to adapt the whole, or at least their particular segment, to their specific needs. To the degree to which one such node manages to acquire worldliness, it sentences other nodes to unworldliness.

This is the point at which my rendering of literature's worlding diverges from Emily Apter's advocacy of many incommensurable world literatures. She makes Benjamin's concept of untranslatability in his essay "The Task of the Translator" (1923), which was elaborated by a number of its commentators, into the main principle of literature's worlding. For Apter literatures and literary works, like languages and cultures, are untranslatable into one another. This is not because each of them is singular and unique, but because their common denominator is missing. In his earlier essay "On Language as Such and on the Languages of Man" (1916), Benjamin stated that the languages of men emerged after the collapse of the language as such, a breakdown that was accompanied by the fall from the linguistic mode of revelation (*Offenbarung*) into that of communication (*Mitteilung*). However, since *Mitteilung* means both "communicating" and "sharing with," all "languages of man" necessarily share with one another the "language as such" to which they once belonged. As this language does not "mean or express anything" and extinguishes "all information, all sense, and all intention" ("The Task" 81), it resists *communication*. If the translation wants to assure an afterlife for itself — and this is, after Benjamin, what it is all about — it must *mime* this language of truth as the generator of the untranslatability of human tongues. By miming the language of truth as the missing unifier of the languages of men, the translation "makes visible" the fleeting "reciprocal relationship between languages", their "kinship" and "convergence" (77);

it shows how “interrelated” they are “in what they want to express” (77); and it lets both its own language and that of the original “undergo a change”, a “maturing process”, which assures them afterlife and “abundant flowering” (77).

Benjamin thus endows the translation with the “special mission” (78) of “a transformation and a renewal” of both languages (77). We learn from his later essay “Doctrine of the Similar” (1933) that its ethical task is to enliven in alienated human tongues the remnants of the language of truth as repositories of the “most fleeting and refined substances” (“Doctrine” 68). In such a manner, translations raise their originals “into a higher and purer linguistic air” (“The Task” 79). Ultimately — and we are now approaching the only spot at which the concept of untranslatability appears in Benjamin’s essay — “meaning attaches to them” so fleetingly that they “prove to be untranslatable” (82). What Benjamin wants to say is that their mode of intention (*die Art des Meinens*) goes far beyond the object intended by their producers or users (*das Gemeinte*). This can be compared with the way in which life goes far beyond its manifestations. Once drawn into the process of proper translation, human tongues cannot control their modes of intention because they are first “in a constant state of flux” and second continuously supplement each other (78). They do not envelop their content naturally, like the skin of a fruit, but artificially, like a “royal robe with ample folds” over the body of a king (79). Put in terms of Benjamin’s other simile, they let their sense resonate as loosely as the wind makes “an Aeolian harp” resonate with its touch (82). It is precisely this highly elusive “mode of intention,” or horizon of latency, that makes languages untranslatable, even if these languages’ users ceaselessly translate them into “intended objects”. In fact, with regard to this fleetingness connected with their horizon of latency, Benjamin’s essay draws a systematic parallel between languages and artworks. To point out the degree to which the mode of intention genuine to artworks also goes far beyond the object intended by their authors and receivers, he already states in the first paragraph that “no poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener” (75). Their sense transcends their meaning.

It is this parallel, I would say, that stimulates Apter to rethink world literature in the frame of translation studies. She insisted in *The Translation Zone* that literary works cease to belong to single, discrete languages, becoming fleeting and untranslatable to the degree to which they are forced by various historical traumas to enter “a perpetual state of in-translation” (*The Translation Zone* 6–7). However, Benjamin cautions that fleetingness is not equally distributed among artworks and languages, but depends on their ability to activate the “element that does not lend itself to translation” (79) of their originals. In fact, the originals prolong their life

only to the degree that their untranslatability, placed beyond the horizon of their producers, gets translated. Benjamin warns that the translational activity retains its "possibly foremost significance" if it is not focused "exclusively on man" but rescues from oblivion that which men "proved unable to translate" (76). It does not serve men, but rather life, the transmission of which artworks are better qualified to take care of than creatures (76), languages better than their users, and some languages better than the others that lead the undignified life of pure information (82). Not everything is "credited with life" (76), Benjamin tells us, but only that which has "a history of its own, and is not merely the setting for history" (76). To have a history of one's own means to be able to assure "potentially eternal afterlife in succeeding generations" (77). Nobody will translate a work that has not "reached the age of its fame" (77), that is, has exempted itself from history and its determinate location into the extratemporal and extraterritorial now-time.

Untranslatable as it is, life establishes clear criteria of translatability for its manifestations. Only those that foster its uncanny or unhomely stream of becoming deserve this afterlife; those who fall as its victims do not. This means that with life — and the language of truth as its representative — Benjamin introduces a divine horizon that enjoys an unquestioned "state of exception." From this extraordinarily privileged position, this divine "state of exception" establishes a clear hierarchy of its manifestations within the human "regular state." Since Absent God can announce itself merely "in an indirect and negative way" (Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking" 146), the more indirect and negative a given manifestation comes to be and the more intense feeling of unhomeliness it induces, the higher reputation it enjoys in Benjamin's and Apter's view. This is why, in her earlier works, Apter favors, with Homi Bhabha, literature of exilic consciousness characterized by non-consensual terms of affiliation, hybridity, liminality, and in-betweenness¹. Along the same lines, in *Against World Literature*, she focuses on literature that emerges from a translation failure, mistranslation, the *contresense*, the unsayable, the inexpressible, and the nonsensical (*Against World Literature* 9–11). Both she and Benjamin authorize only such a translation of life into its manifestation that fosters and proliferates life's interminable labyrinths. Inasmuch as such translation "belongs fully to no one" but life that negates all property, it is for Apter "a model of deowned literature" (15) or "screwed-up literature" that turns the world of properties upside down (18). In accordance with this, literature is celebrated to the degree to which it exempts itself from the given determinate into a distant and indeterminate world.

In sum, while it argues against the large-scale systemic projects of world

1 See Bhabha 12-13; and Apter, "Comparative Exile" 92.

literature because they allocate literatures and works their determinate location, Apter's rethink of world literature is itself centered on another common denominator: an unhomeliness that is, though conceived in inverse terms, no less discriminatory. Promoting unhomeliness into the universal condition of the world's constituencies, it maps the world not as a space of dissent but, typical of the weak messianic tradition, as that of a postponed consensus. Whereas the systemic common denominator of world literature operates in self-asserting terms, this alternative weak messianic denominator operates in self-exempting terms. This means that both, in the final analysis, deny the world attribute to literatures that follow opposed terms. Instead of dismantling the discriminatory politics of literature itself in the bifurcated process of its worlding, both systemic and messianic projects thus compulsively reenact it.

I introduce the concept of a traumatic constellation in order to avoid this repetition of discrimination. Instead of opposing to one another the identification of the other as the self (the identification-*as* or self-assertion) and the identification of the self as the other (the identification-*with* or self-exemption), traumatic constellation establishes a relationship of disjunctive conjunction between them. In such a way, they become closely interdependent incommensurables. This means that, by privileging one type of identification and by looking for allies and adherents in order to institute it, a given literary work necessarily operates at the expense of the other type of identification, which makes its liberating *politics* gradually slip into an imposed *police*. By "politics" and "police," I am referring to Jacques Rancière's well-known dissymmetry. In his terms, this tacit metamorphosis of politics into a police takes place while an emancipating activity institutes a platform of commonality¹. Of course, such an often invisible transformation is by no means reserved for literature, but characterizes all political agencies. As I have tried to show, it smuggles itself into Benjamin's arguments and, in a compulsive reenactment of his theses, also into Agamben's and finally Apter's arguments in favor of a consistent self-exemption. The intention of the concept of traumatic constellation is to circumvent such an involuntary entrapment into alternative discriminatory patterns by instead examining what drives literature, in given historical and political circumstances, into accepting their bifurcating terms.

This means that, in my view, the task of the researcher of literature's worlding is not to subsume the dissensus that underlies it under consensus about *what world literature actually is* since this would amount to a *policing* or "democratic despotism" (Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy* 20). I advocate instead the *politics* of

1 See Rancière, *On the Shores* 11–20; *Disagreement* 21–42, 61–64.

research, which implies readdressing, reaffirming and reinstating this dissensus. Following Rancière's understanding of democracy, the disagreement between two paths of globalization — the one from above and the one from below — does not *precede* the problem-solving establishment of consensus, but *follows* it and ensues from it¹. This is because, in this conception, the world is not a desired state, but a *permanent practice of highlighting the denial* inherent in its political representations, and literature is but one of these representations. Persistently enacting the right to have rights, the world is never accomplished, but must be continuously implemented, untiringly opening its public space up to its suppressed and otherwise missed possibilities, creating possibilities for the emergence of new forms of participation, new accommodations and new agencies within it. This is why world literature's systematic production of dispossessed alterity, as well as its consistent perpetuation of an inferior alternative, must not be obliterated, but untiringly disclosed.

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1 See Rancière, *Disagreement*, 27.

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Japanese Ethical Changes and Literary Works after Disaster

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Abstract The Japanese people have experienced many changes in their lives from frequent natural disasters, including earthquakes and tsunamis. These changes are reflected in the literary works after the occurrence of natural disasters, which touch on ethical changes ranging from individual reflection to sociopolitical change. This paper explores the ethical changes that have occurred in Japan after natural disasters from ancient times to the present, and examines their influence on relevant literary works. The emperor reflected on his lacking virtue and devoted himself to exemplary government after the occurrence of natural disasters in the Heian period or the last division of classical Japanese history. But authority moved to the warrior class and the social trend of linking disasters with the unethical nature of the emperor weakened in the Middle Ages. Disasters began to be considered not as a punishment by transcendent beings but as a natural phenomenon caused by the harmony of the elements in nature. The characteristics of disasters included humor and personal appearance in Edo era or early modern period. And then there was a movement to pass or shift the responsibilities of failure in disaster prevention on to specific subjects to overcome disastrous situations at the beginning of the modern era. A lot of disaster literary works were written after 3.11. It means disaster literature has recalled the ethics and values that should not be forgotten by Japanese society.

Key words Japanese Disaster Literature; Ethical Changes; Earthquakes; Tsunami

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Introduction

The Great East Japan Earthquake that hit Japan on March 11, 2011 shocked not only its direct victims, the Japanese, but also people around the world who watched the disaster in real time through the media. Successive disasters — major earthquakes, tsunamis, and nuclear power plant accidents — put Japanese society in a state of lethargy, and writers began to describe the disasters in their own way, in a genre known as disaster literature.

Ancient disaster records were part of history. Municipalities recorded the cause of a disaster and a damage degree to control the country. These records are like TV news and newspaper nowadays. Therefore, writers tried to record only the facts excluding their feelings.

As disasters are emergency situations directly related to human lives, disaster literature contains vivid descriptions of human nature. Yet the genre of disaster literature is relatively unknown in academia, with little research on the topic. If ancient literature is also included, the proportion of studies on disaster literature is even smaller. This paper therefore analyzes Japanese disaster literature focusing on one common keyword: ethics. Through this diachronic study, the flow of disaster literature will be clarified and ethical changes in Japanese society for each age will be investigated.

Emperor to personal: From ancient to early modern

Ancient Japanese records include articles on natural disasters and the coping methods of repentance and prayer. *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀 , *The Chronicles of Japan*), for example, contains records of the drought that occurred in Kyoto in 642. According to that text, in order to overcome the continuing drought, people followed their priest’s instructions to slaughter cows and offer them to heaven as a

sacrifice and to pray to the river god, but there was no change. Soga no Emishi (蘇我蝦夷, 586-645)¹, a man of power of the time, said that people should read the Buddhist doctrine, repent their sins, and pray for rain in accordance with Buddha's teaching. However, according to the text, these acts brought only a little rain. Thus the emperor knelt down and prayed, and it rained for five days².

Nihon Shoki demonstrates the kind of efforts made by Japanese society to overcome natural disasters and how their endeavors changed over time. People believed that as human beings could not control natural disasters they had to rely on transcendental beings, such as local deities, Buddha, and the emperor. However, as can be seen from the description included in *Nihon Shoki* in which natural disasters were remedied by the emperor's prayer, Japanese people began to think that the emperor was responsible for natural disasters. This implies that Japanese society accepted Chinese Confucianism as a political ideology.

According to Confucianism, the emperor rules the country on behalf of heaven and the most important component required for an emperor is virtue. If the emperor lacks virtue, heaven can replace him at any time. The people and vassals can punish the emperor on behalf of heaven, and this was the foundation of dynastic revolutions.

Since disaster-prevention technology did not exist in ancient Japan, natural disasters beyond human knowledge were regarded as ominous signs and as heavenly punishment for the lack of virtue of the emperor. The emperor of Japan was also alert to disasters for the sake of maintaining his position. With disaster-prevention technology non-existent, the emperor reflected on his lacking virtue and devoted himself to exemplary government after the occurrence of natural disasters.

As exchanges with foreign countries increased in 735, smallpox began to spread around the Dazaifu³ region, the center of trade. The emperor aimed to govern wisely and reflected on his lacking virtue, saying, "Although I lack virtue, I am reigning over the people. My political ability is not good enough to rule my people properly. Recent frequent disasters have made me realize my lack of virtue, severely burdening me with responsibilities. I should stop the deaths of my people and take care of the poor. I must grant amnesty" (Zatshi-shya 680).

As shown above, disasters in ancient Japan were linked to the unethical nature of the absolute and were expected to be overcome through goodness. However, in the Middle Ages, authority moved to the warrior class and the social trend of

1 A Japanese statesman of the Yamato Imperial Court.

2 Kojima Noriyuki, et al.5. *Nihon Shoki*(3) 1998:63-65.

3 Dazaifu(太宰府) is a city located in Fukuoka(福岡) Prefecture.

linking disasters with the unethical nature of the emperor weakened. An essay written in the 12th century, *Hojoki* (方丈記, *square-jō record*), contains detailed records of disasters that occurred at that time. The author objectively recorded the damage of fires, gusts, and earthquakes, and analyzed, “Among the four elements that constitute the world, water, fire, and wind always cause damage...People are talking about the transience of life. Although it seems that their foolishness was also partly erased...” (Chyomei 25)¹. That is, he understood disasters as a part of natural phenomena and discussed the transience and futility of life through the loss of lives and buildings caused by disasters. Furthermore, as seen from “*Although it seems that their foolishness was also partly erased...*”² (25) with the occurrence of natural disasters, he even expected that individual ethics would be purified.

This tendency was related to Buddhism, a foreign religion, which became highly influential not only to the ruling class but also to the general public. Disasters began to be considered not as a punishment by transcendent beings but as a natural phenomenon caused by the harmony of the elements in nature. By showing the helplessness of human beings facing natural disasters, the author of *Hojoki* expected that people would be able to understand the Buddhist doctrine that human beings are finite.

During medieval times, Japan saw continuous wars as well as disasters. While witnessing the rise and decline of men in power through repeated warfare, people realized the finite nature of human beings by equating wars and disasters.

After the end of the long wars, there was a peaceful age of 260 years which lasted from 1603 to 1868, but even in this peaceful era disasters could not be avoided. At the time, commoners actively accumulated knowledge which they used to create and share various records. The records of disasters also skyrocketed. After the publication of *Kanameishi* (かなめいし, *Kaname Stone*) in 1663, the records of earthquakes began to have a common structure³: (1) describing the experience or learned information of earthquakes; (2) making it into a story by inserting sad stories or anecdotes of loyal subjects; (3) introducing various theories about the causes of earthquakes; (4) listing the records of earthquakes in Japan in a chronological format; (5) describing how wonderful it was now to have sufficient aid and relief. Among these, the second stage was the most important part. Authors

1 四大種の中に、水・火・風は、常に害をなせど、…人皆あぢきなき事を述べて、聊か、心の濁りも薄らぐと見えしか…

2 聊か、心の濁りも薄らぐと見えしかど…

3 Kitahara Itoko, *Nihon Saigai-si (History of disaster of Japan)* (Tokyo:Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2007) 239.

recorded in detail how people with different backgrounds encountered disasters and lost lives/survived.

Another feature of *Kanameishi* is that it depicts the damage of the affected people in a funny way. Ryoji Asai(浅井了意 , 1612-1691) who wrote *Kanameishi* was a Buddhist priest. He was also known as a prestigious writer of *Kanazoshi*(仮名草子), which is a genre of Japanese literature. He described people realistically, but did not forget to use the humor in his work. And at the end of the novel, he tried to teach a Buddhism lesson. These features also appeared in *Kanameishi* “Some man took hands of a prostitute and ran away because they thought that she was his wife. Some women escaped from her house with a jar because they thought that it was her son” (Asai 29).

Ryoji Asai humorously described people who were embarrassed when the fire broke out. Such a description is incomprehensible to the current ethics consciousness.

From the aspect of describing a disaster humorously, *Namazu* painting should be noted. *Namazu* is a catfish, which Japanese believed that it causes earthquakes. Especially, *Namazu* paintings were very popular when earthquakes happened from 1854 to 1855. These paintings also depicted disasters in humor as well as *Kanameishi*.

Japanese in the Edo era (1603-1868) accepted a disaster as an inevitable fate. Such ideas might be the influenced by Buddhism. But the relationship between humor and a disaster cannot be explained only in Buddhism. There was a lot of damages due to a disaster, but many more benefits. Reconstruction caused by fire and collapse resulted in economic revitalization. Thus, a disaster delivered people with both despair and hope at the same time. So, people could find humor in a disaster.

Another characteristic of the disaster record is the attention to individuals. Unlike previous records that focused on specific people, such as men of power or intellectuals, the records of disasters in the Edo period began to focus on unspecified individuals. Nanpo Ota (大田南畝)’s essay *Yume no Uki Hashi* (夢のうき橋 , *The Bridge of Dreams*) containing the record of the collapse of the *Eidai Bridge* (永代橋) in 1807 introduces big collapses in history and the anecdotes of the victims similar to *Kanameishi* . However, *Yume no Uki Hashi* is primarily comprised of individual episodes of the victims, and many episodes contain the accurate names, addresses, genders, and ages of victims.

- The owner of the shop in Benkei-Bridge died.

- The wife of Sankuro Mitani died in villa in Huka-gawa River.(Saito, 39)

Buko Jido-no-ki (武江地動之記 , *The Ansei great earthquake records in Edo and Musashi province*), the record of the Ansei Earthquake (1854-1855), also consists of narratives that identify the victims. It is like a memorial to honor the deceased and honor their victims. The writer writes down on the following reasons: “Many people died in the cry. Or there is someone who survived. I had heard a lot of stories, and recorded everything” (Saito 33). These records are regarded as a modern memorial containing the records of victims and their names.

Disasters and Ethics in Modern Japanese Society

During the pre-modern period, major ethical changes after experiencing disasters occurred in a sporadic form, leaving responsibility to the emperor or to transcendent beings, or engaging in individual ethical reflection. However, at the beginning of the modern period, a broader range of discussions about the responsibility of disasters began to take place on a popular level. This is related to the development of modern science and the role of the media as the mainstream discourse, which can be seen from the Kanto Earthquake in September 1, 1923.

Martial law was proclaimed on day following the Kanto Earthquake, and press control guidelines were delivered to various media. Meanwhile, after newspapers spread the groundless rumor that Joseon people had committed incendiarism and murder a massive massacre of Joseon people was conducted by the Japanese. The Kanto Earthquake was a catastrophe that occurred in the midst of national and international instability, including the rice riot in 1918 and the March First Independence Movement in 1919 in Chosen. The massacre of Joseon people that occurred at the time of the Kanto Earthquake can be seen as an expression of fatigue and anger of the Japanese who were suppressed under the depressed economy and social atmosphere, passing these responsibilities on to the Joseon people. This aspect is in stark contrast to that of the pre-modern period where people considered disasters as unavoidable or natural phenomena, seeking individual ethical reflection.

Such a change in the general public's ethos affected literary works, and the Great East Japan Earthquake was the most influential among disasters that occurred in modern times. The Great East Japan Earthquake (hereinafter referred to as “3.11”) that occurred on March 11, 2011 was a terrible incident that shook the foundation of Japanese society. Many changes occurred in Japan after 3.11 because of the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster (hereinafter referred to as nuclear disaster), which was an unprecedented incident worldwide. The political situation of Japan

has also drastically changed due to the aftermath of 3.11.

“When considering politics as a human relations-related issue rather than as just a humanity-related issue”(Lee 188), political ethics should be discussed not in relation to morality or principles but in relation to how well it can satisfy members of society and how effectively it can resolve social conflicts. In this presentation, what kind of political leadership was needed in Japan after experiencing this nuclear disaster and how the consequent political and ethical changes were presented in literary works will be examined.

In Yoko Tawada’s short stories *The Island of Eternal Life* (不死の島)¹ and *A State of Enlightenment* (彼岸)², the future political situation of Japan after experiencing significant changes caused by the nuclear disaster is depicted. These descriptions provide interesting interpretations of actual political and ethical changes that occurred in Japanese society.

The Island of Eternal Life, published after 3.11, begins with a scene in which the narrator living in year 2023 enters Germany. In this book, he has lived in Germany and had visited Japan once long ago. But, a German immigration officer to whom he hands his passport hesitates to even touch it, trembling with fear and horror.

The reason why Japan became an object of horror to the entire world is due to increased fear of radiation exposure. Nuclear power plants that had been suspended since March 11, 2011 renew operations, and thus Japan becomes an isolated country resulting from other countries’ fear of radioactive contamination. In 2017, another large earthquake and tsunami hit Japan, and all means of communication and transportation are destroyed. Now, Japan becomes a bizarre country where the elderly cannot die but must take care of young victims.

This story of Yoko Tawada looks surreal, but on the other hand, it is very realistic. Although they are only partial, political, economic, and public welfare issues after 3.11 are addressed. Later in 2014, Yoko Tawada published another book, *A State of Enlightenment*.

A State of Enlightenment begins with a scene in which a military transport aircraft crashes over a nuclear power plant. Japan has emphasized the safety of nuclear power plants since their reactivation after 3.11. However, another nuclear explosion occurs and Japan becomes a land of no living things. Japanese people who

1 It was included in Tawada Yoko’s *March Was Made of Yarn* a collection of short stories. This paper quoted from *March Was Made of Yarn* published in 2012.

2 It was first published in *Waseda Bungaku* (2014, Fall), and later, included in Tawada Yoko’s *Kentoshi*, a collection of short stories. This paper quoted from *Kentoshi* published in 2014.

left their country arrive in China as refugees and are required to clear immigration. *A State of Enlightenment* seems to be a story occurring sometime between 2011 and 2023, that is, between 3.11 and the year when Japan becomes the island of eternal life.¹

In *The Island of Eternal Life*, the major political leaders of Japan appear, such as the emperor and the prime minister of Japan. One day, the close allies of the emperor and the prime minister, who oppose the operation of nuclear power plants, suddenly disappear, and the Japanese government carries forth the activation of nuclear power plants.

Sometime after the prime minister disappeared, in 2015, the Japanese government became privatized. An organization, self-styled as Group Z, bought the shares of the government and began to operate it as if it were a company. Broadcasting companies were also taken over, and compulsory education disappeared (*The Island of Eternal Life* 16).

An interesting point in this story is that the new government that tries to activate nuclear power plants is a privatized government, which is just like a company. One goal that the privatized government, which believes in neo-liberal market order, seeks is profit creation. “The Japanese government strongly promotes the operation of nuclear power plants as a national policy” (Koide 178). “Greedy economic rulers try to fully make use of their country for securing and expanding their interests” (Kamakura 162) and are helped by the tacit approval of Japanese people who have participated in creating the safety myth and the growth myth.

Kurihara Akira points out, “From national prosperity and military power in the Meiji period, production increase in wartime, and high economic growth after the war to today’s global marketization, productivity nationalism was the core of Japanese politics” (2012, 335). Productivity nationalism refers to an ideology claiming that an increase in productivity brings prosperity and happiness, and it is necessary to make the whole pie (GDP) larger first in order to increase the size of each piece of the pie.

The revival nationalism that emerged after 3.11, also known as disaster nationalism, is similar to productivity nationalism. The mindset of only cheering for Japan without reflecting on their behavior or thinking, as seen in the quote, “It was us who caused this nuclear disaster” (Takahashi & Morimura 232), and impatience to go back to the Japan prior to 3.11 as soon as possible are other forms of

1 See Tawada Yoko, 2014.

productivity nationalism that seek revival. Based on these sentiments, the Japanese government promoted the reactivation of nuclear power plants. Actually, on August 11 in 2015, the No. 1 nuclear power plant in Satsumasendai city in Kagoshima was reactivated.

Without any time to think about the future, the next earthquake hit. The government announced that nothing was leaked from the four broken nuclear power plants, but I can't tell whether the announcement is reliable because it is a privatized government (*The Island of Eternal Life* 19-20).

As if it can foretell the future, *The Island of Eternal Life* depicts the state of Japanese society where the operation of nuclear power plants is resumed. Under the leadership of the privatized government, nuclear power plants are reactivated. However, another severe earthquake occurs and it causes a successive nuclear disaster, which is irreparable. After all, Japan is exposed to extreme radioactive contamination and becomes a peculiar island where the immortal elderly must look after sick young people — an isolated island without a future.

Another aspect of revival nationalism that emerges after the disaster is the chauvinism that accompanies the excessive admiration of Japan. While anxiety is spreading after the nuclear disaster, the “rediscovering Japan” boom starts. Beyond the dimension of loving and cherishing Japan, it has the potential to produce chauvinistic discourses.

Following this trend, the political parties declare the end of radioactive contamination and the restoration of nuclear safety and actively formed the discourse on the admiration of Japan: Japan will not only overcome the disaster but also become a stronger country and even a paradise on earth. In addition, Japan adopted a hostile attitude towards neighboring countries, such as Korea and China, and thus diplomatic conflicts with these countries were deepened more so than before the disaster. Japan also attempted to amend the constitution in order to become a stronger country.

Sede (瀬出), a character in *A State of Enlightenment*, is a politician who does not hesitate to spew reckless remarks on nearby countries, such as China. Sede starts making such ludicrous comments on China for a very personal reason. When being asked a sharp question on foreign policy from a newspaper reporter, in a fit of anger, Sede accidentally utters insults about China. At that moment, he realized that his genitalia are clearly responding, which had been inactive for a while:

Sitting in a chair in the waiting room, Sede was contemplating how to make an excuse for the misstatement he just made. He tried to cross his legs as usual, but it did not work. Due to the strange feeling in the lower part of his body, he gently lifted his fat belly, holding his breath. Soon, he realized that his long-time worry was resolved. Sede slowly moved his right hand from his knee to his private part to check. (*A state of Enlightenment* 213)

And “The strong nationalism that emerged in Japan after losing the war to the U.S. is closely related to its attempt to restore masculinity, which was ruined by the U.S., and building a new national identity” (Cho 341). Japan, which was castrated after the war, tried to recover its masculinity in order to remove the wounds and memories of defeat, seeking strengthened nationalism and national integration. In order to build masculinity, there must be a feminine subject who can arouse masculinity. Both before and after the war, other East Asian countries, such as Korea and China, were forced to be the feminine subjects that enable Japan to restore its masculinity.

The above scene in which Sede realizes that his genitalia responds to his absurd remarks about China reminds us that Japanese nationalism was actually established in order to suppress other East Asian countries. After confirming that his masculinity is recovered, Sede comes to indulge in insulting China. Such behavior of Sede conveys the psychology of Japan, which tried to affirm its existence through chauvinistic nationalism discourses after the nuclear disaster and the political actions that tried to use this psychology as a ground for political ethics.

The nuclear disaster and consequent radioactive contamination have caused an irreversible situation in Japan. Nevertheless, Japan tried to chase the illusion of an unchanged Japan even after the nuclear disaster, and this sentiment is related to the changes in political ethics. After the nuclear disaster, Japanese politics responded to the public demand for a stronger Japan (or the government made use of such a sentiment to maintain the regime). As a result, chauvinistic diplomacy has deepened, and nuclear power plants have begun to be activated again.

Yoko Tawada’s *The Island of Eternal Life* and *A State of Enlightenment* directly depict political activities based on revival nationalism rather than universally valid political ethics and values. It is important to note the conclusions of these books. The privatized government promotes the reactivation of nuclear power plants, and Japan becomes an isolated island due to another nuclear disaster. As a result of the people’s implicit consent to productivity nationalism, Japanese society faced

a dreadful accident, a nuclear disaster. Nonetheless, the Japanese government still focuses on the formation of nationalism discourse, which seems to be a form of self-comfort, by announcing the completion of the restoration of the nuclear disaster and pushing forward with the preparation of the Tokyo Olympics.

Conclusion

From ancient times to the present, various disaster literary works have been created in Japan. By providing records of the diverse aspects of disasters and the stories of the people who experience them, these disaster literary works allow people to predict changes in Japanese society after disasters strike. Among the many aspects that can be explored through disaster literature, this paper focused on post-disaster changes in ethos.

Changes in ethics after disasters relate primarily to the reasons for the disaster and the responsible parties. In the pre-modern era, people tended to accept natural disasters as inevitable phenomena caused by transcendental beings. In addition, the nature of the ruling class and the dominance of particular religions and academic philosophies greatly affected attitudes toward disasters. Before the Middle Ages, as seen from the records containing the belief that the emperor's lack of virtue caused natural disasters, people attempted to blame disasters on the unethical nature of those with absolute power, whereas this tendency weakened as warriors seized power in the Middle Ages. Upon realizing that natural disasters are not punishment from transcendental beings but inevitable natural phenomena, people began to expect individual ethics to be purified instead of shifting responsibility on to the absolute.

However, at the beginning of the modern era, there was a movement to pass or shift the responsibilities of failure in disaster prevention on to specific subjects to overcome disastrous situations. The massive massacre of the Chosen people at the time of the Kanto Earthquake was an extreme case which resulted from this tendency.

After the occurrence of the catastrophic 3.11 disaster, universally valid ethics and values were buried under the fanatic cries of, "Cheer up, Japan," led by the government and the mainstream discourse of the media, disregarding the irrevocable reality of radioactive effluent caused by nuclear accidents. In this regard, disaster literature after 3.11 has indicated and described this phenomenon and recalled the ethics and values that should not be forgotten by Japanese society.

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The Genesis and Evolution of Modern Turkish Drama

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Abstract This statement refers to Turkish studies carried out in Ukraine in order to initiate a systematic analysis of artistic and literary phenomena in Turkey. The aim of the paper is to analyse historical periods of development of ancient Turks' drama, review the stages of Ottoman folk theatre's evolution, investigate the pre-conditions of Turkish author's drama's appearance, define the influence of European dramatic tradition on Turkish drama, distinguish the periods of Turkish drama's development and point out the main trends of Turkish author's drama's evolution. It is used such research methods as analysis and synthesis, functional, systematic, comparative, historical methods. The research revealed that Turkish dramatic tradition traces back for many years as there are many references to ancient Turks' dramatic performances of pre-Ottoman period, that the tradition of dramatic performances enriched with the elements of Sufis' rituals originated at the times of the Ottoman Empire, displayed that the basics of Turkish author's drama had been formed between the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century under the influence of Ottoman rulers' reforms and gradual Westernization of Turkish culture. Having combined the achievements of folk drama and B. Brecht's "epic theatre," Turkish drama managed to create its repertoire and gained fame abroad. At the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century Turkish drama acquired a range of new themes and genre innovations, became really national and took its place in the world's dramaturgy.

Key words literature of Turkey; dramaturgy; author's drama; formation and gradual development

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Modern drama is still supposed to be a unique kind of art. Due to its nature, drama focuses on visualization of national processes that reflect the most typical features of spiritual and cultural life. This peculiarity of drama completely corresponds to the mainstream of oriental studies, particularly to basic trends of Turkish drama of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Despite that fact that the world's major Orientalists confirmed ethnic and esthetic significance of Turkish drama with its original structure, conditioned by both, the ambivalence of Turkey's geopolitical position and its contradictory historical, cultural and social development, the research of it, as well as the analysis of other types of art, is not considered to be a priority.

Turkish author's drama appeared as a result of activity of writers who reviewed the concept of historical memory in an artistic way, realized the status of westernized drama of their countries and wrote their works searching for their national identity. Being the main scientific problem of this article, the analysis of Turkish drama's genesis and evolution corresponds to modern studies in the field of literary science. In Turkey the theoretical models of Turkish drama's reception are represented in monographs and particular articles of such researchers as N. Akı, Z. Aldağ, M. And, O. Belkis, M. Buttancı, İ. Yenigün, Z. İpşiroğlu, M. Kırıcı, V. M. Kocatürk, Ş. Kurakul, M. Mengi, O. Nutku, H. Nutku, N. Özdemir, İ. Ortaylı, S. Sokullu, A. Çalışar, S. Şener, Z. Ünal etc. However, the majority of scientific works is devoted to modern drama, while post-modern drama is revealed fragmentary. Ukrainian Orientalists did not dedicate their researches to Turkish author's drama in particular. Almost the same can be said about oriental investigations carried out in Russia. The only exception is represented by O. Oganova's monograph and researches upon the history of folk drama made by I. Borolina, H. Horbatkina and V. Hordlevsky.

In this article we analysed the assemblage of new topics typical for Turkish dramatists who attempted to integrate Turkish literature into the context of the world's drama. We aimed to clarify the phenomenon of Turkish drama, characterized by the synthesis of traditional Turkish elements inherent to different levels of literary works, with something new and different, primarily reflected in peculiarities of European theatre's reception. We also intended to point out the specific features and dynamics of drama's development revealed at all of its stages. Thus, the detailed research of those Turkish dramatists' works that represent the most typical trends of Turkish drama, is strongly needed. We aimed to distinguish the originality of Turkish drama as a kind of art, conditioned by the syncretism of epic and traditional folk drama.

In this article we used such research methods as analysis and synthesis, func-

tional method, systematic method, comparative and historical methods, cultural and historical approaches, method of deconstruction, sociological method, method of associative and conceptual analysis, modeling of associative and semantic field, method of receptive aesthetics and communicative stylistics of literary text.

The History of Turkish Drama: The Problem of Periodization

Drama is considered to be one of the oldest kinds of art developed by people. All rites and rituals associated with human beliefs, life and death must be treated as a root of drama since all of them embrace an element of it (Nayenko 158). If we define drama as an expression of some situation or event with the help of gestures and moves, it means that ancient people who applied these approaches as an attempt to communicate with each other were making drama (Nutku, *Tiyatro* 18). Dwelling on the evolution of Turkish drama it is necessary to analyse historical periods of ancient Turks' dramatic art's development and differentiate the evolution of Ottoman dramatic art (made by Oghuz Turks) and Turkish drama (made by representatives of the Turkish nation). Oriental researcher Talat Sait Halman (13), who wrote a pre-ambule to the Encyclopedia of Chicago, traces the evolution of Turkish drama since religious and traditional rituals and performances till the emergence of author's drama in 1980s. In this scientist's opinion, the periodization of drama corresponds to historical events:

- 1) pre-Islamic period (till the 21st century);
- 2) pre-Ottoman period (till the 18th century);
- 3) Ottoman period (since the 18th century till the middle of the 19th century);
- 4) Westernized Ottoman period (since the middle of the 19th century till 1923);
- 5) Republican period (since 1923) (15).

Unlike Talat Sait Halman, O. Karaburgu offers a sort of simplified periodization focused on the period of Tanzimat:

- 1) Turkish drama (Turkish theatre) before the period of Tanzimat;
- 2) Turkish drama after the period of Tanzimat (Karaburgu 312).

M. And, famous Turkish researcher, who analyzed the periodization of Turkish, in a more specific way, presented another chronology given below:

- 1) traditional Turkish theatre;
- 2) the theatre of Tanzimat and tyranny (also referred to as “istibdat”) (1839–1908);
- 3) the theatre of Constitutional period (1908–1923);
- 4) the theatre of Republican period (1923–) (And, *Osmanlı* 14–15).

Thus, M. And relates this periodization to those events, which played an important role in the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. Such periodization seems to be reasonable as far as these events made a strong impact on cultural life of the country. At the same time, A. Çalışar is convinced that there was no Turkish drama before a kind of author’s drama appeared. He reckons that “Traditional Turkish theatre is a theatre without drama. A sort of theatre that has no ties with a written text. There was no dramatic literature at the time of the Ottoman Empire. It means that there was no comedy or tragedy, but there were just folk jokes” (Çalışar 12).

The periodizations offered by Turkish scholars are mostly based on historical and political events. Working over our periodization, we paid attention to both facts and trends of drama’s development in a peculiar historical period. In our opinion, Turkish drama went through the following stages:

- 1) pre-Ottoman period (till the 18th century), when ancient Turks’ dramatic art and the development of Oghuz Turks’ dramatic performances were dwelled on for the first time;
- 2) Ottoman period (since the 18th century till the first half of the 19th century), characterized by dramatic performances, which reflected traditional rites of Sufi orders (also known as tariqats) and the emergence of traditional Turkish theatres, such as “Karagöz,” “Orta Oyunu,” “Kukla Oyunu” and “Meddah”;
- 3) the period of origination and development of author’s drama which can be traced back to the 19th and 20th centuries. One of the most typical features of this period, famous thanks to its first plays, is considered to be the influence of the French literature on the Turkish one. Sultans used to share their opinions about literature’s development. This period can be divided into several sub-periods given beneath: a) author’s drama of Constitutional era (1908–1923); b) author’s drama of Republican era (1923–1960);
- 4) Turkish drama of the 20th century, also referred to as “a period between two revolutions” (1960–1980);

5) the origination of modern and postmodern drama (end of the 20th century – beginning of the 21st century), when classical drama experienced some genre transformations;

6) postmodern drama (2000–2014), associated with contamination of genres.

Taking all this into consideration, we completely agree with the statement of O. Karaburgu who claimed that it was impossible to distinguish each stage of Turkish drama's evolution clearly as a process of switching from one period to another lasted for quite a long time (Karaburgu 32). Our periodization is relative, but as far as it is based on facts, it will enable the readers of this article to form a general impression of Turkish's drama's evolution and trace the way it was transformed from traditional dramatic performances of Turkic nations into classical Turkish theatre and, finally, into author's drama.

The Evolution of the Turkish Drama: From Folk Theater to the Drama of Post-modern Eve

Dwelling on pre-Ottoman period of Turkish drama's development, it is necessary to admit that, in opinion of B. Tuncel, Turkic nations were acquainted with dramatic art represented by performances even 4000 years ago. The researcher declared that there were two kinds of theatrical performances during that period (Tuncel 67). Serbian scholar M. M. Nikolich, who analysed Turkish dramatic art of pre-Islamic period, also mentioned it. According to him, four hundred years ago Turkic nations already were highly civilized and educated. Their rulers managed to protect their art and create conditions for its progress (Nikolich 16).

Turkish researcher N. Sevin is also convinced that national Turkish drama's roots can be traced back for many years. Basing his research on historical documents, he proved that Seljuk Turks used to entertain themselves by means of dramatic performances called to demonstrate the way one of the Komnenos behaved in a ridiculous manner (Sevin 674). According to M. And, the dramatic art of Anatolian Turks came up under the influence of five major factors, such as place, genus, empire, westernization and Islam (And *Geleneksel* 9). He also thinks that this kind of art was embodied in rural and folk theatres (And *Geleneksel* 43). Despite that fact that rural theatre had no written dramas, professional actors or exact place for performances, its art was always accompanied by changing of costumes, music, ceremonial speeches etc. M. And emphasized that the inhabitants of remote Anato-

lian villages managed to save the elements of their ancestors' cultures and traditions in the best way (And *Geleneksel* 9). As for Turkish folk theatre, it was developing in the cities, particularly in Istanbul. As far as this kind of theatre was supposed to entertain low and middle classes' representatives, its traditions and style tended to change drastically. The majority of dramatic performances of those Turks who inhabited Middle Asia was based on beliefs, epos and legends. Such performances as "sığır," "yuğ" and "şölen" may be defined as the first examples of national drama of Turkic nations.

Shamans who played a role of spiritual leaders used to act as directors and actors. The sacred rituals of ancient Turkic people were accompanied by theatrical elements like declamations (when Shamans read a prayer for ill people to help them recover faster), music (they used iron sticks to recreate some rhythmic melody) and dances. Shamans may be referred to as first actors and primary poets (Şengül 56). To sum it up, Turkish scholar A. Şengül defines Turkic people's religious rituals as a real dramatic work. Later on such performances became traditional, so far people started organizing them for entertainment. One of them iron forging, described in "Ergeneqon" (Turkic epos) (Abdülkadir 231). Thus, Turkic drama's roots can be traced back to preliterate period of Turkic ethnos. We may define folk performances with Shamans' participation, performing of some sacred rituals and rites and singing songs as sources that led to formation of modern Turkish author's drama.

The Ottoman period of Turkish drama's evolution, which lasted for more than five centuries, was rich with Sufi elements. Folk performances became more popular at that period. In the 19th century Turkish literature has already prepared a basis which provided rapid development of different genres and plots in literature. For instance, we may admit the emergence of written literature. It developed as the literature of "tekke" (also known as literature of Dervishes), the literature of Ashiks (also referred to "literature of saz"; saz is a member of the "bağlama" family of musical instruments) and the literature of Turkish Divan, called to strengthen the position of Islam in the state. Dervish orders, which played a role of the first literature centers, appeared at that period. The most famous orders were the Order of Ahmed Yesevi, where Dervishes performed their ritual of "zikir"; the Order of Mevlevi, where Dervishes performed their traditional dance of spinning around themselves; the Order of Bektâşi, where its members demonstrated "ayin" that was similar to musical drama). Despite that fact that ritual peculiarities of these orders do not fully correspond to dramatic performances, they remind them with their dramatic elements, such as music, moves, performance and delivering phrases from the Holy Qur'an.

At the times of the Ottoman Empire such events of daily life as weddings of

sultans, their sons' birthday celebrations and ceremonies of "sünnet" (a part of Sunnah) were also accompanied by ritual dramatic performances (Karaburgu 15). The information about these rituals may be found in fiction and official documents of the 15th century. Scientists consider the ceremony, held after the conquest of Constantinople in 1457 in honor of sultan Fatih Mehmet's sons (this ritual reflects the tradition of circumcision), to be one of the first performances of traditional folk theatre (Nutku *Dünya* cilt 1 193). Three types of folk theatre represented traditional drama in the Ottoman Empire. One of them was "Karagöz," which is usually referred to as the most popular traditional Turkish theatre. Its roots may be traced back to 1490. "Orta Oyunu" and "Kukla Oyunu" were two other kinds of Turkish theatre (Nutku *Dünya* cilt 2 12). Such Turkish literary scientists as M. And, R. Sevengil and S. Siyavuşgil, as well as Hungarian scholar I. Kunosh, German Orientalist G. Jacob, French researcher A. Talasso and Russian Turkologists V. O. Hordlevsky, I. V. Borolina and O. O. Oganova, dedicated their scientific works to the emergence and development of these theatres and their strong impact on the evolution of Turkish author's drama.

At the beginning of the 18th century, when sultan Ahmet the 3rd (1703–1730) ruled the country, the Ottoman Empire exposed a huge interest towards Europe, European culture and literature. The empire experienced a strong impact of French culture and literature. That time the Ottoman state was going through drastic changes in its history, culture and science. The next wave of social and political renewal was inspired by the rule of Selim the 3rd (1761–1808), who was a talented reformer and sultan. Due to his reforms, Turkish classical literature and traditional theatre were enriched with Western elements that led to emergence of new literary genres and totally changed the structure of classical national drama.

An active Westernisation of Turkish drama gave a strong impetus to the germination of Turkish author's drama. Western trends influenced Turkish literature the most at the beginning of the 19th century, when the era of Tanzimat started (the period of reforms in the Ottoman Empire). Before Turkish literature experienced just the influences of oriental literatures, primarily Arabian and Persian. First time in its history, which lasted for eight centuries, Turkish classical literature began to accept Western elements due to Turkish people's attempts to learn French and the appearance of (mostly French) novels by Western authors' translations into Turkish. As far as Turkish writers experienced a strong impact of European literature, they disposed their own literature to such new genres as novel and author's drama, trying to make them cohere with Turkish literature's canons.

In the second half of the 19th century, when Abdülmecit reigned, theatrical

troupes from different European countries began to visit the biggest cities of the Ottoman Empire more usually (Şengül 89). The first theatre, where author's plays translated from French and English were performed, was opened in 1840 (Tanpınar 155). In opinion of Turkish scholar A. H. Tanpınar, the year of 1842 may be defined as a beginning of drama in European traditions (155). That time Turkish drama experienced the age of romanticism caused by the huge effect of Western literature. It is necessary to admit that Turkish literature got acquainted with romanticism much later than Western literatures. Thus, romanticism was rapidly developing in drama of those countries within next twenty-five years to coexist with realism further (Nutku *Dünya cilt 1* 356). First author's plays were represented by the translations of works by European dramatists, who were famous that time. Although the costumes, actors' acting and the scene were quite far from European standards (Tanpınar 56). The representatives of some social strata revealed negative attitude towards the sultan's attendance of the "Beyoğlu" theatre (Refik 16). Thus, in order to avoid rumors, in 1858 Abdülmecit ordered to build a theatre for rulers near the Dolmabahçe Palace. This theatre was opened in a year. The sultan's interest towards theatre was giving an inspiration to young dramatists (Sevengil 4). The play "The Marriage of a Poet" (1859) by İbrahim Şinasi (1826–1871) became the first example of Western-style drama in Turkish drama.

Armenians became the main representatives of European drama in the Ottoman Empire. The efforts of G. Agop Vartovian (1840–1902), who intended to create theatres and support dramaturgy, played a great role in this process (And *Osmanlı* 169). People called "The Theatre of Güllü Agop," established in 1868, "theatre of writers." G. Agop was doing his best in order to involve Turkish writers of that time in creating a new dramaturgy. He was absolutely convinced that it was necessary to refuse from translations of Western plays in favor of Turkish ones, where local authors would reveal the most crucial issues of Turkish society. Thus, the activity of Güllü Agop initiated a new important period in the development of Turkish author's drama. It gave Turkish dramatists an impulse to form their own, nationally marked dramaturgy.

When Abdülmecit's (6 (20) July 1861) brother Abdülaziz (1830–1876) took his place, dramaturgy experienced some changes. Primarily thinking about keeping his country indivisible, Abdülaziz was not supposed to have a great artistic taste, so he severely punished everyone who tried to destroy that indivisibility (Akyüz 23). At the same time, "The Ottoman Theatre" gained its biggest popularity due to sultan's concession. Such dramatists of that time as Rezaizade Mahmut Efendi Ekrem (1847–1914), Ebuzziya Tevfik (1849–1913), Şemseddin Sami (1850–1904), Ahmet

Vefik Paşa (1823–1891), Teodor Kasap (1835–1905), Ali Haydar Bey (1836–1914), Manastırlı Mehmet Rifat (1851–1907), Hasan Bedrettin Paşa (1850–1911), Hüseyin Nazım Paşa (1854–1927), Osman Hamdi (1842–1910) and Ahmet Mithat Efendi (1844–1912) became popular on this theatre's stage.

Namık Kemal (1840–1888) was one of the most outstanding personages of that time. He wrote such famous plays as “Homeland or Silistra,” “Akif Bey,” “Poor Child,” “Gülnihâl” and “Black Evil.” Supporting and tutoring them, he served as mentor, critic and consultant to many young dramatists (*Tanzimat edebiyatı* 642).

The middle of the 19th century was a period when drama experienced a sort of contamination: local theatres demonstrated various kinds of performances, such as classical “Orta Oyunu” and “Karagöz,” ballet and opera with arias and traditional plays (Aldağ 25). The plays written by Goldoni and Molière and adapted to Turkish stage gained the biggest popularity. Turkish readers and spectators liked comedies “à la Molière,” whereas political and social changes in the country led to the change of aesthetic preferences. The enrichment of Turkish repertoire with Molière's works and the reception of his traditions played a great role in the development of Turkish author's drama and comedy in particular, giving both of them a strong impetus.

Turkish author's drama kept developing despite political oppressions. The relations between generations, family life and people's relationship were the main topics of plays (Aldağ 28). After 1859 such genres as comedy, romantic drama and melodrama were on the top of their popularity. Since 1866 until 1877 more than two hundred of plays were written and translated (Aldağ 29). The topics of comedies, created in Western style, were different from those of traditional folk performances. While traditional dramatic works reflected the lifestyle of middle and low class, dramatists, who worked over author's comedies, tended to demonstrate the way the representatives of high class lived, avoiding description of such daily concerns as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. The transformation of people's virtues was a major issue of that time. On the one hand, dramatists used to ridicule people who aimed to follow Western lifestyle thoughtlessly, but, on the other hand, the effect of old traditions, superstitions and Pre-Islamic basics was still very strong. A drastic change of priorities led to the escalation of a generation gap, becoming one of the main topics of author's drama that used to be ignored in traditional folk drama. Young dramatists were closer to the truth, they were keen to switch from general topics to the specific ones (Sokullu 181–182). Traditional Turkish theatre of Meddahs and “Karagöz” kept developing in the 19th century also. Their performances usually took place during religious holidays in Dolmabahçe Palace and other public places (Nutku *Dünya Cilt 1* 367).

Since the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century author's plays, written by representatives of different cultures, obtained the main place in the Ottoman dramaturgy. The plays by Turkish and Armenian authors, as well as those by European authors, translated into Turkish and Armenian, were among them (And *Osmanlı* 171). Thus, Turkish author's drama faced obstacles at the very beginning of its development. Despite these obstacles, its representatives were trying to apply everything, considered to be a heritage of the world's drama. Theatres of that time mostly performed translated plays. At the same time, the representatives of Armenian diaspora played a crucial role in the evolution of Turkish author's drama. Nevertheless, total Westernisation of Turkish literature and culture was the main trend in their progress.

Turkish author's drama of Constitutional era (1908–1923), which we defined as a sub-period of its evolution, traces back to historical events, which had the hugest impact on its further development. On July 23, 1908, the Ottoman Empire faced a coup, as the result of which Young Turks dethroned Abdülhamid II. After the revolution, the intensity of censure and oppressions decreased in a dramatic way (Unlü and Özcan 17). Since the plays of Namık Kemal, Şemseddin Sami and Ebbüziya Tevfik, which were forbidden before, started to be performed, Turkish audience began figuring out the idea of their state's independence and the evolution of their national identity (Çeşitli 34). Despite that fact that numerous dramatic associations and theatres (“The Ottoman Association of Comedy,” “The Association of State Theatre,” “National Ottoman Drama Theatre” etc.) were established at that period, most of them were eliminated soon (Çeşitli 235). Since 1908 until 1922 the total number of plays, the majority of which was expressed by drama, comedy and musical drama (Çeşitli 241), was around two hundred (Aldağ 29). The popularization of European drama led to total extinction of traditional Turkish theatre from the capital's stages (Siyavuşgil 53–54). The main issues of dramaturgy were actively enlightened in such periodicals of that times as “Zaman,” “Dersaadet,” “Vakit,” “Servet-i Fünûn,” “Kalem,” “Sahne,” “Tiyatro ve Temaşa” and “Temaşa” (Çeşitli 135). “Dârülbedâyi,” established in 1914 as a school, was lately renamed as “The Local Theatre of Istanbul.” The main purpose of that school was to teach students act and perform plays for a wide audience. The first premiere in “Dârülbedâyi” took place in 1916. Yusuf Ziya's “The Rotten Basis” play was the first one to be performed (Çeşitli 35).

Since the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1923–1938) started ruling this country. During the first fifteen years of its existence, its public officials were keen to contribute to modernization and nationalization of Turkish society, culture, economics, industries etc. After the formation of

Ankara State Conservatory in 1924, state and private theatres began to perform their activities more actively, and a number of high quality plays increased. The 1920–1930's of the 20th century reflect an intensive development of dramaturgy, the main topic of which was connected with the events of national struggle for independence (Oganova 72). Such works as Faruk Nafiz's poetic dramas "The Assault" (1932) and "The Hero" (1933), Yaşar Nabi Nayır's play "It Is Snowing" (1932) and Kemal Çağlar's play "The Shepherd" (1932) are among them. Such current concerns as the Westernization of Turkish society, traditional values, the role of family, economic and cultural problems, caused by the general situation in young republic, were also reflected in that period's plays. The authors of dramatic works emphasized the conflicts with traditional outcome (death of characters, non-happy end) rather than the characters of their plays' heroes. The majority of that period's plays has a single line plot and does not pretend to a great philosophical depth. On the contrary, such plays make spectators support the dramatist's authoritarian point of view. Turkish dramatists were actively discussing the problem of national culture's enrichment and updating, as well as social concerns.

Focusing on national roots reflected Turkish dramatists' attempts to find out new forms in terms of realistic drama (Oganova 77). Thus, dramatic works by such authors as Ahmet Nuri, Musahipzade Celal, Hüseyin Suat, Halit Fahri, Reşat Nuri, Yusuf Ziya, Vedat Nedim, Vedat Orfi and Mahmut Yesari demonstrate a new period in development of Turkish drama of the first half of the 20th century (Kurdakul 253).

The 1950's of the 20th century are marked by drastic changes in Turkish drama. It was a time when heroes of literary works reflected national characters and modern Turkey became a place of action. The topic of Turkish village became a key one. Dramatic works of that time were mostly devoted to such concerns as the self-will of village elders, position of rural woman, spiritual degradation, the conflict of values and vendetta. This period was marked by the emergence of national dramaturgy that could not be strongly affected by copying and imitating of European originals. The plays of such dramatists as Oktay Rıfat, Melih Cevdet Anday, Haldun Taner, Nazım Kurşunlu, Orhan Asena, Çetin Altan and Nezihe Meriç reveal the tendency of switching from individual problems to social ones. All of these authors were keen to analyse Turkish people's attempts to change in accordance with European models without radical shifts in their basics, examine such phenomena as outlook contradictions, a gap between conventional canons and innovations and self-identification crisis.

The period between the 1960's and the 1980's of the 20th century is considered to be fundamentally innovative in the development of dramaturgy. The artistic elite

that got an opportunity to express its thoughts and ideas more freely, started to develop new plots and choose new topics more openly (Belkıs 281). Such literary and artistic magazines as “The Upturn” (1960), “Turkish Language” (1960), “Papyrus” (1966), “Literature” (1968) etc. appeared between the 1960’s and the 1970’s. Political drama, inspired by Erwin Piscator’s works, becomes more and more popular. Turkish drama adopted such features of German dramaturgy as communist and revolutionary mood, realistic portrayal of politicians and sharp criticism of political system. Turkish dramatists that supported the slogan of Erwin Piscator, who declared that “Theatre was not a reflection of the epoch but a tool for its reformation,” strongly opposed to old theatrical traditions giving their preference to those literary works, which propagated socialist ideas. It was the first case in Turkish drama’s more than one-hundred-years history when it quit being an arena for entertainment and turned into a kind of art, claiming for philosophical ponderings (Buttanrı 64).

It is necessary to remark that researchers define a period between 1960 and 1980 as “a stage between two revolutions.” The events from real life became the central topic of that time’s literary works. The reception of B. Brecht’s views on epic theatre played a great role in the development of Turkish dramaturgy of 1960–1980. Turkish writers got interested in this German dramatist’s works for several reasons. Firstly, a huge number of his works was translated into different languages. Secondly, they coincided with the mood of that times’ Turkish society, which intended to make its choice freely and depict events in a realistic way. Loyal political conditions in the country also contributed to popularization of Brecht’s theatre. Turkish dramatists noticed how similar traditional Turkish folk theatre was to Brecht’s epic drama. Taking this resemblance and national peculiarities of Turkish drama into consideration, Turkish dramatists created conditions for writing plays that would be clear to Turkish audience from the point of view of their content and would remind Brecht’s style with their theatrical language. Haldun Taner (1915–1986) was the most outstanding representative of epic theatre. Following the traditions of folk drama and enriching them with oriental didacticism, he managed to create original plays (İpşiroğlu 80).

Keeping its development, Turkish drama was gradually overcoming borders and spreading to such countries as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France and Germany (Nutku *Dünya Cilt 2* 369). When Herbert Melzig translated Aziz Nesin’s play “Could You Come?” into German in 1962, it became the first significant step in this direction. Today we can state that plays, written in the period since 1960 until 1980, combined both the elements of Turkish folk theatre and the innovations of modern dramaturgy.

Political conflicts and the events of September 12, 1980 in particular, that became a tipping point in Turkey's life, had a great influence on the germination of postmodern drama. It has strongly affected the development of culture, art and literature in Turkey. Between the 1980's and the 1990's of the 20th century both Turkish literature and dramaturgy experienced a sort of "thematic" crisis, caused by political and economic problems. Censorship, repressions, restrictions and limitations regarded to both political and cultural spheres. Aiming to restrict any manifestations of the freedom of thought, the government forbade works by many writers and even tried to exclude such words as "revolution," "nation," "organization / association" etc. from every-day use. The 12th of September is usually referred to "the bloodiest period in the history of republic" since it was characterized by the attempts of "total rearrangement of Turkish society" by means of tortures, repressions, oppressions and high-profile cases. Trying to avoid political issues, dramatists started to work over those themes that society used to consider obscene and too private. Such topics as sexuality, sexual relations, private life etc. were among them (Balık 2380). Such genre as tragedy started to escape from the stage since it gave its place to vaudevilles and comedies. The appearance of such historical dramas as "Mad Ibrahim" and "Selim III" (Turan Oflazoğlu), "Hürrem Sultan" (Orhan Asena), "I am Mimar Sinan" (Turgut Özakman), "If I Were Yunus" (Nihat Asyalı), "Goncagül's Pen Name" and "Parents" (Oktay Arayıcı), "Yunus Emre" (Recep Bilginer) and "Our Love is the Biggest Fire in Aksaray" (Güngör Dilmen) was rather exceptions than the rule. Such authors as Adem Atar, Behiç Ak, Haluk Işık, Civan Canova, Coşkun Irmak, Coşkun Büktel, Erman Canatan, Yıldırım Şentürk, Memet Baydur, Mikail Burak Uçar, Murathan Mungan, Orhan Güner, Turgay Nar, Hasan Erkek, Ülkü Ayvaz etc. created a new generation of dramatists. Constantly being limited and restricted, Turkish writers were gradually losing their wish to write. Despite that fact that private theatres managed to keep their position, they also had to perform one-actor plays to be able to cover their financial losses. Theatres were losing their spectators who tended to give preference to TV programs (Şener 223). Theatres began to perform plays of such foreign authors as W. Shakespeare ("King Lear," "Hamlet"), C. Goldoni ("Servant of Two Masters"), N. Gogol ("The Government Inspector"), E. Ionesco ("The King is Dying"), W. Peter ("The Investigation"), A. Strindberg ("The Creditors"), E. Shine ("Traces") etc.

The period of the 1980s and the 1990s was not favorable for active development of Turkish dramaturgy. Despite rather complicated political situation, those plays that vividly reflected the main elements of national identity became very popular. Such concerns as historical memory and the intention of Turkish people to be

back to their basics are considered to be among these elements. Turkish dramatists actively described the topics given below:

1. *Family relationship, problems of women and youth* (“My Wife and Daughter” and “The Jealous” by Recep Bilginer, “Worms in the Root” and “The Game of Dreams” by Hidayet Sayın, “The Coltsfoot” by Necati Cumalı, “Blue Birds in the Birdcage of Saz” by Semih Sergen, “The Abyss” by Erman Canatan, “Goncagül’s Pen Name” by Oktay Arayıcı, “The Old Children of the World,” “The Remotes” and “The Sprouts in Love” by Ülker Köksal, “Martyrshka Doll” and “Ladies” by Tuncer Cücenöglü, “The Branches Must be Green” by Vedat Türkali, “The Slaves of the Night” by Dinçer Sümer, “The Custom” by Turgut Özakman, “The Fight for a Corner” by Hidayet Sayın, “Behçet Bey’s Slouch” by Kenan Işık, “When Water Comes” by Remzi Özçelik, “Women’s Cell” by Lale Oralöglü, “The Scorpio” by Eşber Yağmurdereli, “Behind the Taurus Mountains” by Orhan Asena, “Two People Who Did It,” “The Medal” and “Halay” by Refik Erduran, “The Republican Girl,” “Orchids in the Place of Fire,” “A Masked Rider” and “Okra with Forcemeat Cooked in Pressure Cooker” by Memet Baydur).

2. *The combination of mythic and historical motives* (“Make or Break” and “The First Years (Hürrem Sultan)” by Orhan Asena, “Two Sons of the Emperor” by Nezihe Araz, “Yıldırım Beyazıt” by Hidayet Sayın, “The Illustrated History of the Ottoman Empire” and “I am Mimar Sinan” by Turgut Özakman, “Sokollu” and “After the Culmination” by Yılmaz Karakoyunlu and “Barbaros Hayrettin” by Fazıl Hayati Çorbacıoğlu) that consists of *historical* (“Yunus Emre” by Recep Bilginer, “I Have Found the Best,” “Afife Jale” and “Cahide” by Nezihe Araz, “I Have Also Entered It” by Tarık Buğra, “I Have Played the Role of Yunus” by Nihat Asyalı, “Mevlana” by Recep Bilginer, “The Appointment” by İsmet Hürmüzlü, “Oh Motherland! Motherland!” by Necati Cumalı, “Our Sky” by Sönmez Atasoy and “Bizarre Orhan Veli” by Murathan Mungan) and *mythic* (“Crazy Dumrul,” “White Gods” and “I Was Killed in Troy” by Güngör Dilmen, “Tepegöz” by Turgay Nar, “Mahmut and Yezida,” “The Empathy” and “The Curse of the Deers” by Murathan Mungan, “I Miss Troy” by Ülkü Ayvaz, “The Beauty of Miletus” by Coşkun Irmak and “The Toys of Gods” by Hidayet Sayın) plays. Thus, O. Asena devoted his play “The First Years (Hürrem Sultan)” to the relationship between Suleiman the Magnificent and Hürrem Sultan (also referred to as Roxelana), who played a significant role in the history of the Ottoman Empire. The preference of psy-

chological moments is determined by the image of Sultan. As the majority of writers who dedicated their works to Suleiman the Magnificent, O. Asena also did not manage to avoid idealization of his image, as far as he depicted him as a fair ruler who takes efforts to improve simple people's life. In his play Suleiman says: "*A fisherman, who has no money to feed himself and his family, also matters to me*" (Asena 24).

It is necessary to admit that both Western and Oriental writers tended to describe their rulers in an idealistic way, claiming them to be very different from their real prototypes. The image of Suleiman the Magnificent created by O. Asena is rather far from the one fixed in historical sources. However, such contradictions did not reduce the magnificence of Suleiman's figure as a ruler and person or make it less persuasive. The intension of young generation's representatives to interpret the images of historical figures in this way is determined by their wish to create a new mythology based on their national history.

3. *The evolution of human personality* ("Our Love Is the Biggest Fire in Aksaray" by Güngör Dilmen, "Wake Up Smiling" by Necati Cumalı, "Istanbul's Languorous Eyes" by Melisa Gürpınar, "The Immortals" by Melih Cevdet Anday and "My Bicycle Was Blue" by Dinçer Sümer). Thus, D. Sümer, who wrote his play "My Bicycle Was Blue" (1986) as a confession and retrospective self-reflection, depicts a wish of human beings to understand their essence and find their own place in the society. This play mainly consists of monologues where its characters reveal their inner emotions and hidden intensions that enable spectators to capture dramatic dynamics of their feelings, veiled behind the dialogues that seem to be superficial. This technique, that requires the deceleration of action in monologues and its acceleration in dialogues, provides the intensity of emotional field. Since the play "My Bicycle Was Blue" was created according to Meddahs' performing style and traditions, it has a limited number of characters. We have to admit that the remarks given in this play are longer and more significant in comparison with those of his prior works. It displays a gradual increase of remarks' role in Turkish dramatic discourse of the end of the 20th century.

4. *Liberation war, historical memory and attempts to gasp out the meaning of Atatürk's figure* ("The Speech" by Özdemir Nutku, "The Speech" by Özer Ozankaya, "For the Sake of Motherland" by Semih Sergen, "The Metamorphosis" by Refik Erduran, "To Tear One Soul Off Another One" by Orhan

Asena, “Five Minutes to Nine” by Nezihe Araz, “From War to Peace, From Love to Quarrel” by Recep Bilginer and “Goodbye, Republic!” by Selim İleri).

5. *The events of the 12th of September* (“The Deadlock” by Tuncer Cücençoğlu, “Let the Glasses Break” by Adem Atar, “The Memories of a Prosecutor” by Faruk Erem, “Woman That Does Not Exist” by Kenan Işık, “The Joy of Pain” by Bilgesu Erenus and “Once Upon a Time There Were a Man and a Woman” by Ferdi Merter). “The Joy of Pain” by B. Erenus made a sort of breakthrough in drama in terms of both content and composition. Its plot is based on the events of the 12th of September and their impact on four young people’s fate. This play became one of the first dramatic works with a multi-vector plot. There are several actions, related to the destiny of each character. This play is not just up-to-date in terms of its topic, but also nationally based, as its plot reflects a crucial moment of Turkish history.

One of the most peculiar features of dramas written after the 1990’s is the tendency to limit the place of action. In this way writers intended to reveal the souls of lonely urban inhabitants, imprisoned in a big city. Such dramatists as Turgay Nar (“The Seamstress’s Scissors,” “Love’s Legs” and “Okra with Force-meat Cooked in Pressure Cooker”), Memet Baydur (“Love”), Civan Canova (“On the Doomsday’s Eve,” “The Light on the Opposite Side of the Red” and “The Leaves of Jasmine”), Özen Yula (“Tired of Red” and “Black Oriental Eyes”) and Behiç Ak (“The Parting” and “The Building”) also raised this topic in their plays (Çetindoğan 113). Thus, in the play “On the Doomsday’s Eve” (1994) C. Canova, having introduced its characters, informs the readers and spectators telling that the action will be taking place in a flat located in one of Istanbul’s living blocks. The dramatist immediately lets them know that here the image of house or flat, usually referred to as “family hearth,” will undergo some transformations. The flat in megalopolis becomes a place where the main heroes live and die. It serves as a living space to several generations, represented by mother, father, their son and his pregnant wife. They are all waiting for the doomsday since they watched the news reporting about a huge comet, falling down to totally ruin the Earth soon. The reader or viewer may notice the characters’ passivity and unwillingness to make their life better in all their phrases:

Husband: Horses, wolves and jackals... All of them are informing us about the catastrophe for twenty-four hours a day.

Wife (appealing to herself): It is so hot over here.

Husband: And it keeps intensifying. Even yesterday it was not so strong.

Last night.

Husband: It is because it is coming... It is approaching as a dragon that came very close to his victim. We are so weak. We keep sitting here motionlessly. We are... a prey. All of us, all the world...

Father: Everything, everything that may breathe will be in this ugly creature's burning jaws soon. Everything including this room and all our memories...

Wife: Oh these mice, they kept rustling all night long. If only I could catch all of them.

Husband: Skip it, they will all die and extinct with these wine glasses... (he switches on the radio).

Speaker: Scientists are working hard in order to make the comet change its fall radius.

Father: While they are working hard, this comet is coming closer and closer to us, so it will reach us soon.

Speaker: Today Vatican made a pronouncement. "Regardless of religion a human... (interferences) All the representatives are gathering in Vatican... (interferences) The presidents of all countries of the world... (interferences) are quite anxious... During the day it is going to crash into the Moon and within next four hours it is supposed to bump into the Earth," said the Bishop of Rome (Prushkovska 301).

Such delimiters as door and window that symbolize the possibility to pass to a new space limit for a confined space of their flat. However, the author emphasizes his characters' reluctance to overcome their fears and make a step towards a better future. Somebody knocks at their door all the time: it may be their housekeeper Satılmış or their mother's relative. While both the housekeeper and their mother's relative change their place freely and do not think about the doomsday, mother, father and their son just receive the guests "from outside" and do nothing to leave that enclosed space.

Their son's pregnant wife is the only person who managed to keep her common sense and her belief in a better future. C. Canova consciously resorts to the opposition between the doomsday and new life in order to encourage his readers and spectators to think over and analyze their own life. He believes that fears are just people's superstitions to be overcome (Prushkovska 304).

A period between the 1990's and the 2000's is significant due to productive activity of such writers as Memet Baydur, Murathan Mungan, Tuncer Cücenoglu,

Sabahattin Kudret Aksal, Nezihe Araz, Orhan Asena, Erdoğan Aytekin, Recep Bilginer, Sabahattin Engin, Refik Erduran, Bilgesu Erenus, Mehmet Murat İldan, Yılmaz Karakoyunlu, A. Turan Oflazoğlu, Turgut Özakman and Hidayet Sayın (Buttanrı 72). Memet Baydur played the most significant role in Turkish drama of those years. In every play (there are over twenty of them) he raises such problems as the state of Turkish society and the nation's moral code ("The Republican Girl," "Orchids in the Place of Fire," "A Masked Rider," "Okra with Forcemeat Cooked in Pressure Cooker").

Necati Cumalı depicted life of people living in a totalitarian state ("Wake Up Smiling" (1990), "Monstera deliciosa" (1992)). Despite that fact that concerns that N. Cumalı were rather actual, they were not original or fundamentally new. Such concerns as women's state in the society ("The Housewives" (1995) by E. Canatan, "A Place in the Middle of the World" (1994) by Ö. Yula), family conflicts ("Only the Dead One" (1990) by N. Cumalı, "I Miss Troy" (1993) by Ü. Ayvaz, "On the Doomsday's Eve" (1994) by C. Canova), inter-gender relations ("Love's Legs" (1992), "The Birth" (1992), "A Kiss in Its Common Meaning" (1993), "The Chinese Butterfly" (1994) by Memet Baydur and "Matryoshka Doll" (1994) by T. Cücenoglu), human beings' attempts to find their place in the society and self-definition of youth ("The Anxiety of the Moon" (1996) by Ö. Yula, "The Light on the Opposite Side of the Red" (1996) by C. Canova, "The Threshold" (1997) by H. Erkek), relations between society and individual ("The Lorry" (1990), "Okra with Forcemeat Cooked in Pressure Cooker" (1991), "A Green Parrot Called Limited" (1992), "The Fragments of Glass" (1996) and "The Thieves of Apples" (1996) by M. Baydur) and historical memory ("Hello, America" (1992) by H. Işık, "Vladimir Komarov" (1990), "Tenzing" (1993) and "The Osier" (2000) by M. Baydur, "Kerbela" (1996) by A. Berktaş, "Marcus Antonius, Cleopatra" (1993) by O. Güner) were also traditional. Thus, the dramatists of the last decade of the 20th century mostly continued working over the topics of previous periods and did not raise new concerns in their works. Nevertheless, the majority of Turkish plays of that period was focused on national issues. In addition, the quality of that time's works became much higher.

Since the 2000's postmodernism becomes a mainstream in Turkish literature. Turkish postmodern dramatists tend to deconstruct social, national and religious myths ("A City for One Person" (2002), "The Killer of Image" (2005), "Two Multiplied by Two" (2006) and "What Does Newton Understand About Computer?" (2012) by Behiç Ak, "Something Like a Play" (2001) by Haluk Işık and "Mevlana" (2001) by Recep Bilginer). Literary critics, culturologists and translators begin to analyze dramatic works. Such facts as a huge number of published dramatic plays

nowadays, a great variety of state and private theatres in Turkey, an updating of their repertoire annually, an appearance of dramaturgy faculties in Turkish universities and an increase of critical editions devoted to the problems of theatre show that there are some positive tendencies in modern Turkish drama's development. In addition, it is necessary to admit that such peculiarities of postmodern literature as an adoption of various cultures' aesthetic achievements, an application of text arrangement principle that regards literary based material, its metaliterary character and intertextuality etc. are inherent to modern Turkish drama.

During the period between the end of the 1990's and the beginning of the 2000's such authors as Tuncer Cücenöglü, Memet Baydur, Ferhan Şensoy, Uğur Uludağ, Orhan Güner, Ali Berktaş, Tarık Günersel, Zeynep Kaçar and others became popular both in Turkey and abroad. Volkan Taha Şeker, Savaş Aykılıç, Cemal Arslan and such young dramatists as Caner Bilginer, Raşit Çelikezer and Şule Gürbüz also contributed to the development of Turkish drama. Thus, T. Cücenöglü became popular due to thematic universalism and topicality of his works in terms of any country's literature. Since F. Şensoy actively applied the traditions of folk theatre to his plays, such of them as "The Song a Tram Went Through" and "See You, Godot" gained the biggest popularity among Turkish spectators.

There were several commonly revealed topics during that period. Dramatists of that time usually worked over such themes as human beings' attempts to find their place in society ("Something Like a Play" (2001) by H. Işık, "Not Those People" (2001) by R. Çelikezer, "Without Compass" (2007), "In the Deep Country" (2006) and "Lick But Don't Swallow" (2007) by Ö. Yula, "White Lie" (2009) by A. Bayramoğlu, "Sell Me the Forbidden" (2013), "Posters in the Shade of Stars" (2013) and "The Shovel" (2013) by V. T. Şeker), the role of women in modern world ("The Wedding" (2011) by A. Bayramoğlu, "Such a Fairytale About Love" (2001) and "Real People, Plastic Deaths" (2008) by Z. Kaçar) and the role that individual plays in historical process ("A Half Glass of Water" (2003) by T. Günersel, "King Harun" (2003), "Troy Is Invincible" (2002) and "Feather, Sword, Heart" (2002) by S. Aykılıç, "The Wedding at Dobrinj" (2004) by N. Kazankaya and "Shams, Do Not Forget!" (2006) by Ö. Yula. Thus, we may conclude that Turkish dramatists worked over traditional themes for quite a long time. Authors just changed their opinion about these issues and improved quality of their artistic materials' representation. Since postmodern art requires both remote and usually ironic attitude towards various phenomena that humanity used to believe in, and freely combining them in different ways, this stream was highly appreciated by many Turkish artists who resorted to it in order to interpret drama's national traditions in a new way.

Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of facts dealing with Turkish dramaturgy and revealing its main features give an opportunity to recreate the key points of its development since the germination of traditional folk theatre till the emergence of author's drama and the newest postmodern theatre. It also enables researchers to trace its thematic and stylistic evolution. As the majority of periodization alternatives, previously introduced in academic sources, ours is based on the main events of Turkish history. However, we took the role of external literary impacts into consideration and expended those schemes adding facts upon the appearance of author's drama that became a significant factor in Turkish dramaturgy's evolution. Our research revealed that Turkish dramatic tradition traces back for many years as there are many references to ancient Turks' dramatic performances of pre-Ottoman period (until the 13th century). Our research demonstrated that the tradition of dramatic performances enriched with the elements of Sufis' rituals originated at the times of the Ottoman Empire (since the beginning of the 18th century until the first half of the 19th century). It also detected further popularization of such kinds of folk theatre as "Karagöz," "Orta Oyunu," "Kukla Oyunu" and "Meddah." The problems raised in that period's Turkish drama, as well as its artistic peculiarities, were determined by certain non-literary (strengthening of Islam's position in the state, empire building and formation of its ideology, attempts to maintain a balance between national specifics and Western impacts) and literary (going beyond its merely entertaining functions, masked characters' role definition, complication of folk drama's composition) factors. That period served as a stage for switching from folk drama to author's one. Our research displayed that the basics of Turkish author's drama had been formed between the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century under the influence of Ottoman rulers' reforms and gradual Westernisation of Turkish culture. 1842 is considered to be a year when the genres of Turkish dramaturgy started to vary (comedy, tragedy, musical drama, farce) following the example of Western European dramaturgy. The influence of French dramaturgy (particularly inspired by Molière's works) became more vivid. At the same time folk drama managed to keep its position, as Meddahs' mono-performances were still popular. Available scientific works show that in the first half of the 20th century Turkish dramatists were keen to create an original literature, basing on Western European examples. Their efforts enabled the synthesis of various traditions including Turkish, Armenian and Western European. At the same time, Turkish folk theatre "Karagöz" also kept functioning. Enriching their works with elements of "Orta Oyunu," Turkish dramatists of that period tended to resort to

genre contamination (ballet, opera) and stylistic symbiosis.

The materials dealing with Turkish drama demonstrate that it experienced its golden age within the 1960's and the 1970's. Having combined the achievements of folk drama and B. Brecht's "epic theatre," Turkish drama managed to create its repertoire (an individual's attempts to find his or her place in society; the role woman plays in the modern world; an artistic comprehension of national mythology and history), and gained fame abroad. At the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, when young writers' generation got involved in Turkish literature, Turkish drama acquired a range of new themes (particularly, nationally marked topic of the 12th of 1980 became inherent to political drama) and genre innovations, became really national and took its place in the world's dramaturgy. This evolution became possible due to such factors as numerous transformations that folk drama faced under the influence of Westernisation, the application of borrowed dramatic techniques in terms of Turkish literature and Turkish authors' intension to reconsider and figure out their "essence" in another social and cultural context. At the same time, it is necessary to admit that Turkish dramaturgy experienced a sort of "accelerated" but forced development that did not enable it to form its own stylistic peculiarities replaced with their eclectic alternatives.

Thus, having emerged in the second half of the 19th century, Turkish author's drama managed to take its place among national dramas of the world within one hundred and fifty years, due to strong traditions of folk drama enriched with Western European experience.

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Reconsideration of Mimesis in Drama through the Perspective of Mirror Neurons

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Abstract Mirror neurons are active both when an action is performed and when one is observing another's action. They can simulate the perceived action as mirrors. Mimesis in drama, based on mirror neurons and connected with the basic instincts, provides much pleasure. Mirror neurons form the basis for understanding and learning in drama and make empathy possible, with some other neurons separating the action of one's own from the action of others. Inspiration comes when someone's action is mainly directed by mirror neurons; inner feelings and outer expressions are closely connected; drama purifies the feelings of the audience in the short-term, but strengthens them in the long-term.¹

Key words mirror neurons; drama; mimesis

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Miraculous neurons are discovered by Di Pellegrino and his Italian colleagues, which are active while a person is both acting and observing, therefore are named "mirror neurons." They can reflect the acts of others simultaneously just like mirrors, providing the physical basis for learning and understanding others. In an essay on the Edge website American scientist Vilayanur Ramachandran wrote: "I predict that mirror neurons will do for psychology what DNA did for biology: they will provide a unifying framework and help explain a host of mental abilities that have hitherto remained mysterious and inaccessible to experiments" (<http://>

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www.edge.org/3rd_culture/ramachandran/ramachandran_p1.html). This discovery has been highly valued by many other scholars. A completely new perspective of understanding human psychology has been provided by mirror neurons, which can also be appropriately used to study the mimesis in drama.

I. Discovery of Mirror Neurons

In the early nineties of the last century, the Italian scientist Giuseppe Di Pellegrino and his colleagues made an interesting discovery: neurons of area F5 of the premotor cortex of the monkey discharge while it is performing goal-directed hand movements, such as grasping, holding, and tearing, and many of these neurons are also active when the monkey observes specific, meaningful hand movements performed by the experimenters (176). They were very excited, and decided to give them the name “mirror neurons” in 1996, after another several years of research.

A group of scientists led by Evelyne Kohler have made experiments to see if the mirror neurons of the monkeys discharge when they hear someone acts. It is proved that the monkeys’ mirror neurons are active when they hear the voice of tearing paper, without seeing the act (846). So another important aspect of mirror neurons is revealed. Then Christian Keysers’ team made another interesting discovery: “The monkey could therefore on average differentiate the two tested actions with a performance of ~90% correct based on vision or sound alone, and 97% correct based on the combined vision and sound of the action, if he/she only used the firing of a single audiovisual mirror neuron to take this decision” (634). So it is more reliable to use both vision and sound to make judgment.

Rizzolatti’s group continued the experiment with human being, and found similar neurons. Many of the mirror neurons are in the Broca’s area, which is similar to area F5 of the premotor cortex of the monkey, but they are more complicated, and can also be found in other areas (137-138). This discovery is very important for the understanding of the human mind.

Imitation of action is also very important for drama. Aristotle said: “A tragedy then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself...” (*De Poetica* 1449^b). Can we use the imitation theory in neural science to study the imitation in drama? It seems to be an interesting theme.

II. Origin and Pleasure of Drama

People in ancient Greece believed that drama originates from imitation. Aristotle once said: “Epic poetry and Tragedy, as also Comedy, Dithyrambic poetry, and

most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation” (*Politica* 1447^a). His teacher Plato said: “You could do it quickly and in lots of places, especially if you were willing to carry a mirror with you, for that’s the quickest way of all. With it you can quickly make the sun, the things in the heavens, the earth, yourself, the other animals, manufactured items, plants, and everything else mentioned just now” (*Republic* 1201). Plato thinks that literature can reflect reality just like a mirror. This theory is similar to mirror neuron theory to a certain degree; therefore, it is possible to compare them.

Why do we like imitation in drama? Aristotle once said: “Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation” (*De Poetica* 1448^b). According to Aristotle, human beings are naturally imitative, and they can find a lot of pleasure in imitating.

Is it out of human nature to imitate? De Renzi’s team have discovered a disease called Imitation Behavior (IB). The people, who suffer from IB, will imitate other’s behavior automatically, although they are not asked to do so; they will continue with the imitation, even when they are asked to stop (396). Although the sufferers seem to be very clumsy, they can still imitate. There is another disease called apraxia. Patients with apraxia can not act according to linguistic direction, but they can imitate other’s acts. Michael Arbib thinks such movement imitation is the “residual ability” of human beings (202). Patients with these diseases can still imitate, although they have lost a lot of other abilities, therefore imitation is one of the basic instincts of the human beings. And this instinct is based on mirror neurons, which function all the time without being conscious of.

Aristotle also suggests that to follow one’s nature is a pleasure. This idea is reasonable. It is a pleasure to eat and drink, because they are natural desires. To imitate is out of human nature too, so it is also pleasant.

Aristotle’s explanation of the origin and pleasure of drama is quite appropriate. Perhaps he never expected that modern neural science can prove the correctness of his judgment.

III. Understanding and Learning in Drama

An important function of mirror neurons is to make the understanding of other’s act possible. Rizzolatti’s team have made interesting discoveries: “The movement representation in the cortical areas and the movement consequences are associated... When an external stimulus evokes a neural activity similar to that which, when

internally generated, represents a certain action, the meaning of the observed action is recognized because of the similarity between the two representations, the one internally generated during action and that evoked by the stimulus” (137). Just because of mirror neurons, the understanding of other’s act becomes possible. Although this process is very important, it is without self-consciousness and effort. Lepage and Théoret think that we’re executing the act in the brain while we’re observing, therefore we can naturally understand the act, so the whole process can be described as “perceiving is doing” (519). Though it is done subconsciously, it is famous for its complexity, including “what another person is doing, what another person ought to do, and what you yourself intend to do” (Wilson 215). For example, if a boxer sees the opponent punches, his mirror neurons can judge the angle and strength instantaneously, and decide how to answer it. If it is to be calculated by computers, it needs a lot of information, and takes a long time. But the mirror neurons can finish the complicated task simultaneously without any conscious effort.

Another function of mirror neurons is to provide the basis of learning. Judy Cameron of Oregon National Primate Research Center, after a long time of observation, discovered: It took 5 months to train the first batch of monkeys to run on a treadmill. But the naïve monkeys would run successfully the first time they were placed on a treadmill, if they were allowed to observe the trained monkeys running on the treadmill (18). While monkeys are observing or listening, the mirror neurons are having a kind of covert imitation, which can be turned into overt imitation, if conscious imitation is necessary.

For the human beings, the training of the mirror neurons can also improve the outer movement. Giovanni Buccino and his team have tried to rehabilitate patients with motor impairment of the upper limb after stroke. They first let the patients watch videos with a lot of the action of the upper limbs, instructing them to imitate in the brain, so that neural system’s ability to control and coordinate may be strengthened; then they ask the patients to move the limbs gradually; the experiments make the patients recover rather quickly (61). It is difficult to recover for the patients with upper limb stroke, but their mirror neurons are still active, they can be trained to activate the limbs rather efficiently.

Although the mirror neurons of the spectator of a boxing game discharge almost the same way as the athlete who is imitating his teacher to box, the former has just inner imitation, while the latter has both inner and outer imitation. What makes the difference? According to Fausto Baldissera’s team’s experiment, the recorded H-reflex rapidly increases in size during hand opening, it is depressed

during hand closing and quickly recovers during object lifting; this modulation pattern is, however, opposite to that occurring when the recorded muscles are actually executing the observed action. So they think there is a spinal “inverted mirror,” to prevent the overt replica of the seen action (190). Without this mechanism, the observers will not be able to control themselves.

While we are watching the actors moving on the stage, we can easily understand the play, and even judge who acts well, who doesn't. To judge the meaning of an act for the computer is difficult enough; to judge whether the act is good or not, is almost an impossible task for it. Thank god, we have mirror neurons; we can enjoy drama at our pleasure.

Without the function of mirror neurons, perhaps we cannot understand the play. J.H.G. Williams and his colleagues believe that “some dysfunction in the MN system might be implicated in the generation of the constellation of clinical features which constitute the autistic syndrome” (291). Because of the dysfunction of mirror neurons, it is often difficult for the people with autism to understand literary works. One autistic person once said: “[I]t happened to me and I find it hard to imagine things which did not happen to me” (Haddon 5). So the appreciation of a play will be impossible without mirror neurons.

Mirror neurons can also help us to learn something new. Philip Sidney said: “For these, indeed, do merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved: — which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to bark at them” (10). Plays can “delight and teach,” they are interesting, therefore it is easier for the audience to learn in the theater. But we cannot expect to become ballet dancers just by watching, but watching really leaves something in our brain. So drama should be listed as a part important of education for us human beings.

IV. Inspiration and Mirror Neurons

Plato once said: “As I said earlier, that's not a subject you've mastered — speaking well about Homer; it's a divine power that moves you, as a ‘Magnetic’ stone moves iron rings... This stone not only pulls those rings, if they're iron, it also puts power in the rings, so that they in turn can do just what the stone does — pull other rings — so that there's sometimes a very long chain of iron pieces and rings hanging from one another” (*Ion* 941). Plato continues with the topic: “And you know that this spectator is the last of the rings, don't you — the ones that I said take their power

from each other by virtue of the Heracleian stone [the magnet]? The middle ring is you, the rhapsode or actor, and the first one is the poet himself" (*Ion* 943). The "divine power" described here refers to inspiration. It is not something mysterious, which comes just because we have meditated and observed long enough, and relevant mirror neurons have been trained, without being noticed on the conscious level. When these neurons are strong enough, they suddenly influence us, with much surprise.

Inspiration is very important for the poet and the actor, sometimes they are even "possessed by Bacchic frenzy" (Plato, *Ion* 942). This state of "Bacchic frenzy" is subconsciously controlled by mirror neurons. But they don't just depend on inspiration, techniques are also needed, thus they have to observe carefully and practice repeatedly, with much conscious effort. When they are imitating on purpose, their mirror neurons are also active. According to Marco Iacoboni's team, the mirror neurons are more active when they are acting than when they are just observing, and that they're even more active when they're imitating (observing + acting) (2526-2527). So mirror neurons are essential to the process of creating and acting.

Unlike the writers and the actors, the audience usually don't have to spend any effort to imitate, they enjoy the entertainment leisurely, mainly depending on the mirror neurons. But human beings like challenges, they often want to watch something that is a little difficult to understand. Plato said, "smallest infant children" like "puppets," "older children" will choose "comedies," "young men, ladies of cultivated taste" prefer to "tragedies," while "old men" want to listen to the recitation of *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, or an extract of Hesiod (*Laws* 1349). Throughout the life, the human understanding seems to be always "improving."

V. Feelings and Their Expressions

When one is angry, he will have angry expression, when one is happy, he will have happy expression. On the other hand, can the expression lead to relevant feeling? Edgar Allan Poe once said: "When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression" (12-13). Poe thinks that the inner feelings and outer expressions are closely related. Can it be proved by modern science?

Bruno Wicker and his colleagues have performed an important fMRI study.

They ask some participants to inhale odorants, and they produce a strong feeling of disgust. Then they ask some people to watch the video with the emotional facial expression of disgust. By observing such faces, the same sites in the anterior insula and to a lesser extent in the anterior cingulate cortex are activated. Therefore, they conclude: “Thus, as observing hand actions activates the observer’s motor representation of that action, observing an emotion activates the neural representation of that emotion” (655). So by observing outer expressions, people can get similar inner feelings.

Furthermore, scientists discover that feelings can be influenced by controlling the expression. Strack, Martin, and Stepper try to facilitate or inhibit the contraction of the zygomaticus (smiling) muscle unobtrusively by asking participants to hold a pen in their mouth while they evaluate cartoons. Participants judge cartoons to be funnier when smiling is facilitated rather than inhibited (768). We can say that the inner feelings and outer expressions are closely connected, and that the former can lead to the latter, and vice versa. So modern scientists have proved Poe’s idea is correct, though he was a writer of more than 100 years ago.

When one has got a certain kind of feeling, it is quite natural to have the relevant expression. So some people believe that the first thing for an actor to do is to experience the feelings and ideas of the characters. Stanislavski once said, “That is why we think first and foremost of the inner aspect of a role, that is of its psychological life which we create by using the process of experiencing. It is the most important feature of creative work and must be the actor’s first concern. You must experience a role, that is experience feelings analogous to it each and every time you do it” (19). If the feelings have been appropriately experienced, it is quite easy to perform well. With the feeling in the mind, it is often natural to have relevant expressions.

But for some other actors, the inner world is not important. Craig said: “...the ideal actor, with his brain commanding his nature, has been Henry Irving. There are many books which tell you about him, and the best of all books is his face... To begin with, you will find a mask . . .” (12-13). He thinks that an actor should use his brain to control his feeling, his face should be like a mask, the only aim of this mask is to represent different meaning the actor want to express, and it should be free from feelings. He even wrote an essay called “The actor and the Uber-Marionette”, which suggests the actor should be like a puppet for the director to manipulate. To train the outward expression is very important, not only because the audience understand the play by observing the expression, but also because the outer imitation makes the inner experience of feelings easier. To our surprise, the

two schools of performance can be reconciled scientifically.

VI. Empathy and Psychological Distance

Adam Smith once said: “When we see a stroke aimed and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm; and when it does fall, we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer” (12). This phenomenon is often called empathy, which always appear in the theater.

The discovery of mirror neurons can give empathy a good explanation. Vittorio Gallese said: “Most importantly for our quest for a neural correlate of intersubjective identity, sameness of content is shared with different organisms. This shared semantic content is the product of modeling the observed behavior as an action with the help of a matching equivalence between what is observed or heard and what is executed” (175). The different spaces can be mixed: “These spaces are blended within a unified common intersubjective space, which paradoxically does not segregate any subject. This space is we-centric” (175). In this space, “[t]he self-other identity therefore preexists and further parallels the self-other dichotomy” (175). The mirror neurons form the basis of empathy.

Another relevant concept is chameleon effect. Chartrand and Bargh said: “The chameleon effect refers to nonconscious mimicry of the postures, mannerisms, facial expressions, and other behaviors of one’s interaction partners, such that one’s behavior passively and unintentionally changes to match that of others in one’s current social environment” (893). Among all the relations, the most important one is, of course, marriage, and the chameleon effect is the most obvious between them. Robert Zajonc and his colleagues have done such research. They said: “It was found that the greater the increase in resemblance of a couple over 25 years, the greater the couple’s increase in self-reported happiness” (345). The physical basis for chameleon effect is mirror neurons.

Empathy is an important aspect between human beings, but people generally don’t get confused between each other. De Vignemont and Singer have discovered that feeling empathy for another is a complex, multi-level process where the empathizer is in an isomorphic state, elicited by the observation or imagination of another person’s affective state, but where one is however aware that the other person is the source of one’s own affective state (435). Therefore, there is a psychological distance between the self and the other. Philip L. Jackson and his team have found neural evidence for empathy and psychological distance. They

said: “Both the Self’s and the Other’s perspectives were associated with activation in the neural network involved in pain processing, including the parietal operculum, anterior cingulate cortex (ACC; BA32) and anterior insula. However, the Self-perspective yielded higher pain ratings and involved the pain matrix more extensively in the secondary somatosensory cortex, the ACC (BA 24 a’/24b’), and the insula proper. Adopting the perspective of the Other was associated with specific increase in the posterior cingulate/precuneus and the right temporo-parietal junction” (752). Actually empathy and psychological distance can exist at the same time.

In order to play well, the actor should try to become the character through empathy. Aristotle said: “Given the same natural qualifications, he who feels the emotions to be described will be the most convincing; distress and anger, for instance, are portrayed most truthfully by one who is feeling them at the moment. Hence it is that poetry demands a man with a special gift for it, or else one with a touch of madness in him; the former can easily assume the required mood, and the latter may be actually beside himself with emotion” (*De Poetica* 1455⁴). Empathy is also essential to the audience. In the theater, the chameleon effect is very obvious. Plato’s phenomenon of “Magnetic” stone is actually a kind of chameleon effect. And to enjoy a play in the theater, multimedia is used, so effect is better than reading a play, which can be inferred from Christian Keysers’ experiment.

And yet the audience hardly become the characters completely, which can be easily explained by the psychological distance. Furthermore, a play, which is imitated, is not something real, therefore it is more proper to cause distance. Plato said: “...imitation is a kind of game and not something to be taken seriously...” (*Republic* 1206). It is very interesting to note that even the monkeys can differentiate a game from something real. Rizzolatti’s group have made such discovery: monkeys’ mirror neurons immediately charge while observing human beings grasping something; if they’re imitating the act without grasping anything, the mirror neurons don’t charge (135-136). Sometimes the imitation can be very real, and yet scientists discover the imitated and the real are different. Hill and Craig said: “...faked pain expressions show a greater number of pain-related and non-pain-related actions, have a longer peak intensity and overall duration, and the facial actions observed tend to be less temporally contiguous than are those in genuine pain expressions. The differences between masked pain and neutral expressions were subtle, with a greater frequency of mouth opening and residual eyebrow movement in masked pain expressions. Thus, there is an empirical basis for discriminating genuine and deceptive facial displays” (135). It is more probable for imitated plays to cause psychological distance.

Dramatic effect is produced between empathy and psychological distance. By taking advantage of both, a dramatist can make his works more attractive.

VII. Purgation and Intensification of Feelings

According to Plato, if people often go to the theater, their relevant feelings will be strengthened. He said: “I suppose that only a few are able to figure out that enjoyment of other people’s suffering is necessarily transferred to our own and that the pitying part, if it is nourished and strengthened on the sufferings of others, won’t be easily held in check when we ourselves suffer” (Republic 1210). He used another example to support his idea. He said: “That’s how it is with the Corybantes, who have sharp ears only for the specific song that belongs to whatever god possesses them; they have plenty of words and movements to go with *that* song; but they are quite lost if the music is different” (*Ion* 943-944). People can be more or less sensitive to something, just because they have more or less experience in it.

Plato’s idea can be proved by modern science. Beatriz Calvo-Merino and his team have done such research. They said: “We found greater bilateral activations in premotor cortex and intraparietal sulcus, right superior parietal lobe and left posterior superior temporal sulcus when expert dancers viewed movements that they had been trained to perform compared to movements they had not” (1243). All the human movements and feelings are connected with different areas of the brain, if they are exercised again and again, the brain will be physically changed. The theater can thus intensify some feelings.

Contrary to Plato, Aristotle thought tragedies can purify the feelings, “with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions” (*De Poetica* 1445^a). He also talked about religious enthusiasts, he said: “Some persons fall into a religious frenzy, whom we see as a result of the sacred melodies — when they have used the melodies that excite the soul to mystic frenzy — restored as though they had found healing and purgation” (*Politica* 1342^a). After listening to the religious music, the enthusiasts will often calm down for the time being, but in the long run it can strengthen the feelings. Plato and Aristotle are talking the different aspects of the same phenomenon.

Imitation is not only an important issue in drama, it is also essential question in literature and arts. René Wellek said: “...the dominance of the concept of ‘imitation’ in all criticism theory since Aristotle testified to the enduring concern of the critic with the problem of reality” (223). As an important question, imitation has been discovered again and again for more than 2000 years, and yet it is still an interesting question through the perspective of mirror neurons.

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The Tension in the Poetry of Malaysian-Chinese Poet Zhou Ruotao

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Abstract Beside China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the development of the Malaysian Chinese Literature is the most vigorous among the other. The Malaysian Chinese literature becomes remarkable due to the outstanding performance of the travel writers living in Taiwan, but in the era of globalization, there are also many up-and-coming non-travel writers, which one of them is Zhou Ruotao. Zhou's poetry are dramatic, some of which are typical ones. When the reality becomes a virtual stage and dramas are staged every day, Zhou's poetry turns out to be an emotional, intellectual, history-carrying, reality-interpreting and image-shaping virtual space (stage). Zhou's poetry also reveals social phenomena like the Malaysian political grimace, the costs of corruption, negligence of the historical ruins and undone justice that seem to be common in developing countries. The poet's writing allows us to see the tension in the dramatic poetry, not making common occurrence equivalence to insensitive. This article aims to discuss how the Malaysian young poet, Zhou's first collection of poetry *The Secret Songs* constructs a world full of dramatic properties and tension.

Key words Zhou Ruotao; *The Secret Songs*; Malaysian political grimace; dramatic property; tension in poetry

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Introduction

Beside China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Chinese education in Malaysia is the most

perfect¹, and Malaysian Chinese literature which began in the year 1919 has the most vigorous development and is considered as the representation of overseas Chinese literature. It can be seen through the performance of Malaysian Chinese travel writers living in Taiwan. In the second half of the 1970s, the Malaysian Chinese travel writers living in Taiwan Li Yongping, Shang Wanyun and Zhang Guixing gained their fame and status in the local literature field after winning literary awards from two Taiwan broadsheet newspapers. During the year 1977 to 1987, Shang Wanyun and Li Yongping later joined by Pan Yutong and Zhang Guixing, four of them had won a total of 13 Taiwan literary awards in just ten years, 12 of which are fiction awards from broadsheet newspapers. Their achievements serve as pioneers for travel writers to develop in the Taiwan literature field. The third generation of travel writers in Taiwan who did miracles in literary awards are Lin Xinqian, Huang Jinshu, Zhong Yiwen, Chen Dawei and Xin Jinshun. In year 1987 to 2009, four writers received a total of 11 literary awards from two broadsheet newspapers and dozens of other public literature awards in ten years. Four of them are influential and well-known in creative writing and academia. After the year 2000, Li Yongping and Zhang Guixing again showed their exuberant creative writing ability and won several top-ten book awards in a row which then further enhanced travel writers' prestige in the Taiwan literature field¹.

However, in the era of globalization where there is advanced internet and circulation of books, the conversation between China, Hong Kong and Taiwan literature, world literature, and Malaysian Chinese literature is increasingly frequent. Many Malaysian Chinese writers who are not living in Taiwan such as Li Zhishu, Lv Yutao, Chen Zhihong, and Zhou Ruotao have also performed remarkably, as they have won prizes in some literary awards at home and abroad. Among those, Zhou Ruotao's poetry is quite spectacular, in addition to Taiwan China Times literary awards, he also won two domestic renowned literary awards, Hua Zhong Literary Awards and Hai Ou Literary Awards. As the third or fourth generation of the Malaysian Chinese born in the year 1977, Zhou Ruotao started to concern about the present and future of Malaysia through his poetry writing in his secondary school period. His achievement is outstanding and successful as his works are published in poetry periodicals both at home and abroad. The famous poet Fu Chengde wrote in the foreword of *The Secret Songs*:

1 As of March 2017, there are 1294 Chinese primary schools, 60 independent Chinese secondary schools, 78 restructured Chinese secondary schools, as well as departments of Chinese studies in 3 government universities and 3 private universities. National secondary schools normally have Chinese language classes, 3 periods of class weekly.

Zhou's temperament is like an herbivorous animal, but there are hidden sharp teeth in the mouth, bizarre undercurrent in the brain. The colour of his poetry is not displayed at the appearance the words, sometimes through slow appreciation, like a bird watching a snail crawling, and it eventually submerged into the densely shaded world. (4)

However, there was still no scholarly study done on such an outstanding Malaysian Chinese poet. Most of the scholarly research are focused on travel writers living in Taiwan; of non-travel writers, the academic community trended their attention towards Li Zhishu and Lv Yutao. Therefore, conducting a study on Zhou Ruotao's poetry is a significant groundbreaking work. This study will discuss Zhou Ruotao's first collection of poetry *The Secret Songs*, about how he constructs a world of dramatic properties and full of tension through his poetry.

1. The Acts in *The Secret Songs*

In fact, the poets' inquiries of reality are the possibilities being in the realities — the possibilities of the present, the possibilities on the scene, the possibilities of aesthetics, and the possibilities of arts. It is because human realistic is also a stage in a sense — a stage where discourses converge. The world is in discourse, and the practice of discourses is increasingly important in three main human practices (the other are material practice and spiritual practice). In this virtual stage of world, Zhou Ruotao's modern poetry includes dramatic masterpieces. A poetry's dramatic property makes it compact, deep and rich in tension. Originally, the term tension is not a concept of poetics, but is more for physics. Tracing the principals of it, "tension" is from Tate (1938) in his book *Tension in Poetry*. Chen Guoqiu cited Tate's (2005) philosophy:

He first named a type of poetry that is dependent on sentimentality which arouses readers' hidden emotion, and he thought these poetry cannot be analysed because the denotation or extension of the language within them is often disrespected; Tate considers this as the common problem of the nineteenth century poets, that they believed that precise language was dedicated to scientists, and the poets was contented to be retreating in the emotional world. The other type of poetry has very clear logical order, the metaphysical poetry. If these type of poetry is not properly written and the original language connotation or intension is forgotten, it may go against the reader's experience

and cause absurd effects. Hence, Tate believes that the ideal poetry is that the outer meaning goes furthest against the inner meaning, without hindering but complement each other. He calls this meaning of poetry as tension, which is the suffixes of extension and ‘intension.’ (70)

When the reality becomes a virtual stage and dramas are staged every day, a poet’s poetry turns out to be an emotional, intellectual, history-carrying, reality-interpreting and image-shaping virtual space (stage). Malaysia is a developing country, but the system is inadequate and the accountability mechanism is imperfect. *The Great Decline of Malaysia* (2016) which discusses the corruption in the country in accordance with a government company’s fraud, has found a rousing echo among the readers. In Malaysia, there often are corrupt officials who face accusations and charges by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), but no one can say for sure how many of the ‘corruption big fish’ are still on the loose. The situation where corruption has caused a huge disparity in wealth and poverty and that people who are poor continue to suffer has drawn the poets to envisage. In Zhou’s (2011) poem *In The Country Where The Bad Luck Comes*, he recounts:

At a night when bad luck came along, and nothing could be done
 In a cottage, women and children were dreaming in their light sleep
 Aroma of bread that belonged to no one
 Death that belonged to no one
 The two scents inseparably mixed, then covered people who were awake
 We were still chasing ourselves in the square where pigeon droppings solidified
 Passing through innumerable vanishing stone tablets and bronze statues
 Unable to find the bouquet that was misplaced in the previous lives
 Now the wife shrank in the cottage, another misplace
 The face covered in a curtain of wrinkles and thin bones
 Wrinkles and thin bones that belonged to no one
 Unrecognizable, therefore intolerable (50)

The ‘conflict’ of language in the poem is clearly seen through “aroma of bread” and “death,” and “dreaming” and “awake.” It implies civilians in poverty who are on the chopping block to politicians day and night. Whereas “vanishing stone tablets and bronze statues” implies that the historical heroes can no longer protect the starving and suffering people in the modern times. Thus, “wrinkles” and “thin bones” that represent the vicissitudes seem to be an eyesore in this country, and therefore

“intolerable.” The miserable people have to spread their hands out, in prayers and begging we stay wordless or in the country when all the doom eventually unite magically with us. Prayer and begging toward god and mankind (leader or the powerful) respectively, both involve human dignity and lowliness, and also reveals the people’s powerlessness when the people have nowhere to turn for help. The entire poem inclines more toward tension in emotion than tension in language.

Malaysia has long been a model of political stability in Southeast Asia, but it has changed after the 308 election in 2008. In the general election on March 8, 2008, The National Front Party which held the absolute majority has encountered an unprecedented defeat. Though The National Front has kept the ruling status, but it has lost two-thirds of the majority seats in Parliament and five state administrative rights, and was also defeated in the all by-elections after the general election. The regime of the ruling party seemed to be crumbling.¹ The poet is acutely aware of the paradoxical atmosphere of the domestic politics after the ‘transformation’, and he stood up bravely to speak up for the oppressed people. *Two Overcasts and Rains*, *If a Young Man Died* and *Beima Is Suffering for Visa* and etc. are poetry that care for the underprivileged people and are heart-thrilling through their extraordinary tension.

If a Young Man Died is a sensation of Teoh Beng Hock. Teoh was an assistant to a Selangor Malaysia Democratic Action Party (the national opposition/Selangor ruling party) state senator. It was a national sensation when he died of persecution on July 16, 2009 at the headquarter of MACC. His wedding could not be done while his fiancée was already pregnant. No MACC official has been penalized for the death of Teoh to this day and it has raised questions from many people. The poet wrote in a calm tone when telling the sequence of the incident:

He died in the city
 A bright and clean building with filth

 But his dead body laid black and white
 On creased and dumb newspapers
 And we are still alive
 His death was retold by every citizen
 He was never a martyr in danger
 (And the storm has already covered everyone)

1 See Xie Shujie (2011), *A Research on The Malaysian Political Situation after The 308 General Election*.

He worked quietly
 Never got too noticeable
 Not to mention in this way (45-47)

Due to the unstable regime of the ruling party, all kinds of invisible interference in rights are everywhere. Zhou wrote the poem with irony; “storm has already covered everyone” implies that a young man’s death is a sacrifice in turmoil of the times and the widespread comments are actually everyone’s self-protecting manifestation. Going into a poem through the poet’s experience and background is indeed an effective way of reading, however, the significance reflected in the excellent work often transcends ahead of its time. Tension exists in contrasting words (“filth” versus “bright and clean,” “never got too noticeable” versus “retold by every citizen,” “alive” versus “dead”), between abstract and figurative, and even between a concentrated imagery and the other imagery of the poetry. These words and imagery embedded the poet’s sincere emotion, thus can withstand rumination. It is visible that the mechanism of tensional language is both binary and beyond the binary mode, not simply the unity of opposites (the principal contradiction of dependency, struggle and transformation), but the interaction of the many factors in the structural relationships. The difference between ‘flesh-and-blood poetry’ and ‘words pile-up game’ depends on the play in emotion. It is evident that Zhou is familiar in this way, and he makes the poem exude unspeakable desolation and pathos.

2. Dramatic Poetry in *The Secret Songs*

Almost every poem in the third volume *The Ruins of Ancient Civilization* and the fourth volume *The Secret Songs* of the book *The Secret Songs* are distinct dramatic poems. There are two literal meanings for the term dramatic poem. One refers to a poem written in the style of a drama, and another meaning is writing a drama and enter a poem with the dramatic content. This article adopts the former meaning, which is based on Chen’s (1987) *Theory of Dramatic Poetry*. A dramatic poem is a poem which stands alone and composes of its dramatic properties independently in a piece. In fact, Chinese classic opera and poetry are closely related. There are many examples of conversation, integration and infiltration between the two in terms of origin, stylistic theory or text pattern, subject of the creation, etc., for instance, *Southeast the Peacock Flies* and *Snow in Midsummer*. Classical operas are basically poetical and some even call them dramatic poetry. Since the development of new poetry, the emergence of dramatic poetry has its own literary origin and is the demand of the times.

Beside leading readers into seeing the play, Zhou's poetry also lead them into feeling the fantasy and tasting the philosophy of life, such as *The Ruins of the Ancient Civilization*:

About the decadent thought, you said, and its brilliant conclusion

.....

You entered the market against the wind, many transactions and messages were suspended

The hot stone tiles, the exhibited prisoners and slave girls were still not unshackled

I said, decay is more durable than death, more reliable

Then your eyes shone in the colour like mine

I was doubting, but you explained our religious relations

But the skin colours were obviously different, so did facial features, and you said it's a kind of degeneration

It made the crowd laughed together, and drew together closer

But water wasn't on the street, you said, though there were people who sell goldfish

Still against the wind, you led us to the beginning of the legend

All the sources that flowed through our brows and throats

Before entering the shrine, you remembered to take off your shoes

The face of was blurred, so you recognized the ancestor's rich forehead and lush facial hair

But I pointed at a stone pillar, and my fingers wilted and bent because of the force

But I still described the men and women who were copulating madly behind the stone pillar

The ancient well at the centre of the shrine, full of bodies of abandoned babies, might have the water you want

You look down for a good while, and the wind sobbed at the bottom of the fish tank

And then you said there wasn't a thing at the bottom of the well (74-76)

Mental elements like decay and brilliant, light and dark, gods and ordinary, carnival and degradation etc. have constituted the two entirely opposite upward and downward poles presented by the internal force schema of his poetry, and has formed a multi-level space structure, which the spiritual support of the 'ruins of

ancient civilization' has tended to decay in the end. The poet seems to be the decay-singing person who is standing at the centre of the time storm. Decay is the source of his creation, which he makes decay into magical, into a profound thinking of life. The poet has replaced the symbolism ends, one end is full of symbolism of the desire of classical ceremony and imagery: legend, ancestors, water and festivals; the other end is an indifferent world: ancient well, bodies of abandoned babies and dried up. The gap and the emergence of space between the two ends have obtained the circulated tension. You said there wasn't a thing at the bottom of the well implies that despite the glorious history of the time, in the panning of time, the man will end up with nothing. In Zhou's poetry especially this one with typical imagery, tension is virtually generated, and if it is recited with the music before storm comes or performed in a play, it will definitely let more people see the bleakness of you cannot keep anything and a Malaysia Chinese Poet's grace and bold imagination on the stage.

The Ruins of Ancient Civilization expresses the poet's writing intention: writing is a kind of representation for memory, history, ethnicity, and is even a discourse approach used to get involved in the intervention in historical interpretation as in Qiu (1997):

Seemingly, to recall history seems to be merely saving historical data, but these conflicts and vivid relationship of power struggle in historical memory reveals the latent political operation in historical writing: history is not only waiting for rescue, existing past that lest forgotten; history is the construction of present, capital for holding the future. (202)

In fact, the ruins of ancient civilization depicted by the poet is a supplement and recount to the insufficient 'ancient civilization' of the history in Malaysia.¹ When the official historical interpretation belongs to the authorities, the writing of folk history not only recalls for historical memory, but also constructs the discourse of the nation and ethnicity. As Bourdieu says, "Among the construction strategies, the most typical is retrospective reconstruction of the past, in order to meet the present needs" (442). When it comes to recalling historical memory, Crang's (2005) book *Cultural Geography* in metaphorizing 'landscape' is pretty interesting — "landscape as a palimpsest":

1 Malaysia's recent history curriculum textbooks are begun with the four hundred years of the Sultanate of Melaka. The history of the period of India for over a thousand years seems to be swept under the carpet. (See Lew's *The History of Malaysia*, 2017)

The term palimpsest derives from medieval writing blocks. It refers to when an original inscription would be erased and another written over it, again and again. The earlier inscription were never fully erased so overtime the result was a composite — a palimpsest representing the sum of all the erasures and over-writings. Thus we might see an analogy with a culture inscribing itself on an area to suggest the landscape as the sum of erasures, accretions, anomalies and redundancies over time. (22)

The relationship between landscape and landscape-attaching texts which is adding to each other in writing is so subtle. Landscape destruction, erasure and reconstruction or rewriting is a kind of metaphor, when the landscape is incorporated into elements of time and remembered experience, and is not erasable thoroughly, and the so-called site and status of the place are absolutely not merely witnessed. Through familiarizing historical records, forefathers' dictation and etc., and relating site and status through imagination, the ruins of ancient civilization has different imaginary spaces in reader's mind.

Zhou has made a different attempt in his *Conjecture Gurus*, he tries to voice for the characters who are going to be or has already been eliminated by the times, and tries to leave historical memory in the tide of modernization, in the meantime gives records and interpretation to the forgotten marginalized characters. In the era of change, yogi, scripture translator, sword master and etc. who are the mediators that once connected the mystery power of the universe are facing great ecological transformation, have attracted the poet's attention.

As science and technology developed, the originally advantaged groups are exiled to the edge from the centred predominance, as the status they used to establish faced a transient deconstruction. The poet's writing retains their images, such as the sword master, "it is said that his sword was obtained from the corner pawn shop / later in an abbey on a mountain changed the sword to a horsetail whisk / wake up the next day the sword is still in scabbard / he wished to spend the rest of his life with the exquisite furnace / but collapsed in a loud crash with the thunder outside the mountain / the heaven and earth stripping / not wanting to shoot fire and water / all things are like a straw dog being abandoned in the wilderness / it is difficult to find the way back when he went down the mountain" (103), in the end, "his power in sword, got lighter and lighter / light as predestined to lost / light as still can't be played / created from hard work in the oven / ashes" (104). In a few words, the once extraordinary man of God unexpectedly turned into ashes in the

change of the times, and the residual sounds linger in people.

This series of Zhou's dramatic poetry is deeply affectionate in summoning the history and recalling the old friend, but it is also intellectual, calm in narration, and so it is strong in tension. There will be difficulty if these works are to be performed on stage, but it is likely to be a popular nostalgia series.

3. Effects of Dialogue in *The Secret Songs*

Zhou knows that the power of a poem depends on how it is expressed, and that what kind of thinking this expression is from. Many of his poems are good at using dialogue and creating dramatic effects. Some of these dialogues are like chat, some are poetic in the use of words, and each has different effects.

The dialogue in *The Circus Went By Kamunting* lead the readers into pondering the fate of the country:

Finally, we came to the wall, and urinated while standing in a row
 A mad man beside claimed to be from 2020
 Came back to collect the purebred hibiscus samples
 After the end of the day he wanted to pin it on his lover's chest
 We were so superstitious about years, we couldn't help asking:
 Why not return to 1957, no, 1963?
 Now, he said, it was the brightest and most red flower season
 Perhaps, but we had to go to a musical
 He said: this year, Europe launched a strong Hadron collider
 Shenzhou VII went up the sky, the space was printed with Chinese shoes
 But we were not lagging behind
 The little black holes that the scientists had been hunting for are stranded here
 He said: look out, high energy and high pressure made the space-time warped here
 When the car swings, it will go back to 1969 or 1987 at any time
 We put our thumbs up: rest assured, the Indian brother has a great driving skill
 A quiver in the wall asked: where is my country in 2020?
 He shook himself: this, we don't need to know for the moment (32-33)

This poem takes the form of a dialogue by question and answer, and there are message between the lines. The years in the dialogue are actually symbolic, such as "2020" which has appeared twice is actually the "Vision 2020" proposed by former prime minister Tun Dr. Mahathir, "1957" which is the year Malaysia

obtained independence, “1963” which is the founding year of Malaysia (Singapore, East Malaysia Sarawak and Sabah officially joined, but Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965), “1969” is the year the May 13 race riots incident happened, “1987” is the year when rumours about the recurrence of race riots and the people are disquieted back to the “1957” or “1963,” pointed out the degradation of the development of Malaysia, and it can also be interpreted as the grieving for the early years of the nation when all ethnic groups worked together and served together regardless of skin colour. Through the race riots incident in 1969 and race riots rumours which disquieted the people, it can be seen that the ethnical relationships in Malaysia are taken by hands of some schemers.

The series of years, in fact, is a prelude to “The little black holes that the scientists had been hunting for are stranded here.” The Black Hole Theory is the research focus of the scientist Stephen Hawking, he and a group of astronomers discovered some region with strong gravity but no visible celestial object through long-term observation, and called them as black holes. Therefore, “here” refers to “Kamunting,” a political offender’s detention centre. The Internal Security Act has caused a lot of political workers and dissidents who fought for ethnic rights or the people’s equity to be drawn out by gravitational strong small black hole, and some may be ‘drawn out’ for decades. Thus, when every country is looking for excellence in science and technology, Malaysia’s small black hole has become a strong contrast, a bitter joke, and that the question “where is my country in 2020” has no answer.

The poetry *The Dialogue Between The Eagle and The Fish*, *The Dialogue Between The Wind and The Stone*, *The Story* and etc. have dialogues through poetic language, and reflect some thought-provoking philosophies. This is a good attempt by Zhou. In forming tension in poetry, the poet’s skill is so profound that he takes both the denotative meaning and connotative meaning of the poetry into account, as Li (1979) said:

Tension is in the focus of all the quality of poetry, and it shows its great presence and function by ‘shuttling’ in the complex network of relationships. Although we have no reason to put these interwoven relationships into a kind of simple and essential ‘dominant’, because the poetry’s success depends on the combined effect of the variety of relationships, but even if it ‘simply’ sets out from the language of the poetry, we can also find that tension extends in all directions like an octopus’s tentacles. The core of the structure of the relationship is: it must be composed of two or more resistance forces; the

meaning relationship formed by multi-reflectional space; a harmonious order formed by inharmonious elements; a whole of the combination of multifarious dissimilar elements. In the contrasting tension, it seeks for harmony in diversity; in the case of 'error', it seeks for 'truth'; poetry is no longer a straight line, but a multi-dimensional building... (85)

From Li's analysis, the many factors which constitute the tension can be seen: contrast, conflict, contradiction, mutual exclusion, resistance, heterogeneous, complementary and etc., they mutually restrict and create each other, are contrary, but are complementary and are accompanying each other. By closely reading the dialogue in Zhou's poetry, Li's claim is confirmed, that it is like the multi-dimensional building, each surface is splendid.

4. Conclusion

Zhou knows how to establish his own words and deal with his emotion, so the artistic conception of his poetry prospect is rich in tragic tension. The poet is observant of the national affairs and humane subjects, and he is in a country where bad luck accompanies and absurdity are common. Driven by a tragic sense, he integrates different elements to voice for himself and the people, and presents "all the reality and illusion, ugly and holy love and hate / all the myths and history and gossip and prophecy, none is left out" in *The Death Are Yet to Come* (81).

Zhou's poetry reaches social phenomena like the Malaysia political grimace, the costs of corruption, negligence of the historical ruins and undone justice that seem to be common in developing countries. The poet's writing allows us to see the tension in dramatic poetry, makes 'common occurrence' not equivalent to insensitive. The poet is good at establishing perceptual and intellectuality, as pointed out by Ji (1970 4), "'new' poetry is 'new', because of one significant feature, that is, the product of rationality and intellectuality. It is namely the 'emotional escape'." The tension shown in Zhou's poetry shows us the hope that the Malaysia poetic circle is reaching out to the world.

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Narrative Strategy and Cultural-Political Meaning of David Der-wei Wang's Lyrical Theory *

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Abstract The author analyzes narrative strategy of lyrical discourse, referring to David Der-wei Wang's *The Lyrical in Epic Time*. Wang's lyrical discourse is critical to discussions of enlightenment and revolutionary traditions of twentieth-century Chinese literature, and amplifies the logic of "getting beyond differences" to existing discourses on the lyrical. Overall, this paper reads the signification of the lyrical tradition as related to the "modernity" and "modern subjectification" of China, reconstructed by the modern subject and shaped by ideological stances.

The Lyrical in Epic Time outlines Wang's own logic on lyricism, based on texts by three different authors. His central point is that all the texts of three authors bring revolutionary lyricism into lyrical discourse. For example, the revolutionary romanticism of the leftist narrative is described as revolutionary lyricism, while Red Poetics, instrumental in firing the national imagination, is rendered as Mao's lyricism of epic time.

This paper explores the cultural politics of Wang's lyrical discourse, with its aim of checking mainland-centered academic achievement. Wang invokes Bakhtin's dialogic sphere to support his discourse, culminating in the concept of a "Sinophone literature." Described as an "imagined community," his proposed "Sinophone literature" combines Sinophone (*Hua* 华) and Xenophone (*Yi* 夷) works, embracing mainland China. To explain the grounds for this Sinophone concept and nourish his discourse, he additionally proposes "Feng" (风), or "mutual antagonism," comparable to Bakhtin's dialogic heteroglossia.

1 With reference to "Re-reading David Der-wei Wang's 'A History with Feeling'" (*Journal of Modern Chinese Literature*, 54, 2010), and the work was supported by Konkuk University's research support program in 2017.

Key words David Der-wei Wang; The Lyrical in Epic Time; lyrical discourse; narrative strategy; Sinophone/Xenophone literature

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David Der-wei Wang's Lyrical Theory and *The Lyrical in Epic Time*

In the autumn of 2006, David Der-wei Wang, a professor of Chinese Literature at Harvard University, delivered an eight-session lecture series at Peking University on lyrical tradition and Chinese modernity. In the opening lecture, entitled "A History with Feeling," he presented a comprehensive overview of his wider argument. The subsequent lectures were titled "Lyricism and Enlightenment," "Lyricism and Revolution," "Lyricism and Nationalist Composition," "Lyricism and Temporality," and "Lyricism and the Lyrical Subject." As his first work on lyricism following extensive study, the outcome of these lectures at Peking University, published in 2010 as *Shuqingchuantong yu zhongguo xiandaixing* 抒情传统与中国现代性：在北大的八堂课 (*Lyrical Tradition and Chinese Modernity*, 2010)¹, is a compilation of monumental significance. His approach is clearly laid out as he applies lyrical theory to each of the selected authors and intellectuals from mainland China, analyzing them along clearly-defined lines. He emphasizes a new paradigm in Chinese literature, shifting the focus from "revolutionary narrative" to "the lyrical tradition," also arguing for a reconstruction of the history of literature. That is, Wang asserts that, as a context, the lyrical tradition is a necessary framework to overcome the disconnection of Chinese literature in the twentieth century. Thus, he begins with a critique of the enlightenment and of revolutionary narratives of it.

In 2011, *Xiandai shuqingchuantong silun* 现代抒情传统四论 (*The Lyrical Tradition in Modern Times: Four Essays*, 2011) was published in Taiwan. The discussion takes the same form as that of the mainland edition, but the volume differs in that the specific cases he considers are from Taiwan. He discusses three intellectuals, all of whom struggled with their political stances after settling in Taiwan, and their artistic texts. In sum, the Taiwanese edition focuses on the

1 *Lyrical Tradition and Chinese Modernity* (SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2010) spans the entire twentieth century, discussing intellectuals from both mainland China and Taiwan. Wang discusses "Red Lyricism" (*hongse shuqing* 红色抒情) with Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白 and Chen Yingzhen 陈映真. In addition, his book contains analyses of authors Bai Xianyong 白先勇 and Zhong Acheng 钟阿城, as well as Misty Poets like Hai Zi 海子, Wen Jie 闻捷, and Gu Cheng 顾城.

dilemmas of Taiwan and its political ideology.¹ In 2015, Wang published *The Lyrical in Epic Time*, written in English and more voluminous and broader in scope than the two previous books in Chinese. Although his approach to the lyrical is somewhat similar in each edition, there is an obvious contrast between the American edition and the others. In it, he presents the notion that authors sought not to express their political positions and ideology through their lyrical writings, but rather to allow their lyrical ideas to reveal the diversity of their artistic activities, including calligraphy, drama, and prose, among others.²

Although the three books examine quite different case studies from different political and cultural backgrounds, they are identical in terms of format and the underlying premise of lyrical theory. Based on a meta-critical approach to the existing discourse on the lyrical, Wang's lyrical theory amplifies the logic of "getting beyond differences." Where existing theory on the lyrical tradition has mainly centered on synchronic comparisons between classical Chinese and Western literatures, Wang instead builds his theory on research in diachronic aspects of Chinese lyrical tradition. He thus shifts attention from the literature of the May Fourth era and the continuity of the lyrical tradition to the subjectification of modern China and the signification of lyrical tradition; that is to say, he argues that Chinese modernity has developed in tandem with the Chinese lyrical tradition. From Wang's perspective, the signification of the lyrical tradition, as it relates to the "modernity" and "modern subjectification" of China, does not refer to a lyrical tradition that has been passed down through history; rather, it is one that has been reconstructed by the modern subject and shaped by ideological points of view. Wang's point of view, which seems to encompass "history-perception" and "document-interpretation," can draw out a variety of questions about the complexity of the semantic networks involved in understanding the lyrical.

Overall, Wang's discourse on lyricism, supported by an impressive breadth of secondary sources as well as interpretations of lyrical writings of the time, is critical to the discussion of enlightenment and revolutionary traditions of twentieth-century Chinese literature. With keen awareness of issues surrounding twentieth-

1 *The Lyrical Tradition in Modern Times: Four Essays* deals with three writers (Jiang Wenye 江文也, Hu Lancheng 胡兰成, Tai Jingnong 台静农). Wang interprets his lyricism as they could seek their political stances and settle in Taiwan through their songwriting, prose, and calligraphy, National Taiwan U P, 2010.

2 *The Lyrical in Epic Time* has been expanding the discussion of lyricism and playing up the cultural field such as calligraphy, drama, and poetry in place of the objects discussed in the political standpoint. It is necessary to be captured significantly in terms of his narrative strategy, which I'll discuss in other papers, Columbia U P, 2015.

century Chinese literary history, he draws meticulously on historical references to develop his own idea and formulation of lyricism. His narrative strategy makes it difficult for the reader to pinpoint the intention of his writing.¹ In his book, he offers divergent writings, theories, and discussions on lyricism as circumstantial supporting evidence, referenced in an extended list of authors. While the works of literature he studies are limited to those from modern China, treatises on lyricism cross the borders of China to include works published by an extensive circle of scholars of Chinese letters from Taiwan, Hong Kong, the United States, and the Czech Republic. In order to highlight his arguments on the controversies within the discourse, this paper takes up the American edition, which, of the three books, contains the clearest and most comprehensive description of his own approach to lyrical theory, offering a far-reaching analysis of the discourse that extends beyond the literary world. As such, the American edition will be further used here to supplement the contents of the mainland Chinese and Taiwan editions.

Tracking discussions on the lyrical across a comprehensive matrix, Wang submits his thesis: How did the lyrical engage/intervene with subjectification in the twentieth century, and into what modalities of movements did the lyrical develop within literature? How might we revisit the connection between individualistic lyricism and revolutionary romanticism, generally treated as disconnected in discourse on the May Fourth movement and revolutionary literature? Why, during the 1950s, did discussion of lyricism suddenly become so lively, both within and outside of China? To answer these questions, the author seeks to establish an understanding of the discourse by reconfiguring interpretations of lyricism from the 1950s. He also reconstructs the “history of the lyrical” by offering a deconstructive description of revolutionary narrative of the period. The specifics of his method are complex, but the ultimate purpose is to reconstitute history, an intention referenced in the chapter entitled “History of the Lyrical.”

With the web of meanings woven into the above matrix, Wang’s latest book sets a milestone on themes like “politics and aesthetics” and “history and poetics.” His earlier studies on the Chinese modern can be summarized by such thematic keywords and questions as “shaded modernity,” “the imaginability of the May Fourth Movement without the Late Qing Dynasty,” “how to imagine China,” and “fiction in China.” Additionally, in studying the *aporia* between “history”

1 Wang leads a wide-ranging discussion while repeatedly emphasizing that his discourse on lyricism is not limited to the genre itself. He broadly defines “the lyrical” as an emotional and enlightening discourse, a way of knowledge, a signal of sensation, and a form of sign for an existential condition (*Lyrical Tradition and Chinese Modernity* 5).

and “historical representation,” his approach involves constant exploration of the tension between literature and history. In his 2010 Chinese text, *Lyrical Tradition and Chinese Modernity*, Wang extends these themes and questions by considering history and lyricism throughout the twentieth century as an approach to literary historical studies. He argues for the need to adopt a political point of view towards the lyrical by performatively subverting still another *aporia* implicit in the mechanisms of accepting Western Enlightenment discourse and breaking from Chinese lyrical tradition. Thus, the lyrical can be understood both as Wang's historical and political methodology and as his narrative strategy.

The essential point of *Lyrical Tradition and Chinese Modernity* is to propose a political perspective on the literary history of the twentieth century. An example that demonstrates the author's intention can be found in some of the most contentious pages in the book, those introducing Wang's idea of “Red Lyricism” (*hongse shuqing* 红色抒情) through a re-interpretation of Qu Qiubai's 瞿秋白 (1899-1935) 多余的话 (Superfluous Words, 1935). Wang sees in the work a lyrical aesthetic of hunger that is realized through the themes of “absence” and “wrath” — as in “Xi Song” 惜诵 (Grieving I make my plaint) from *Songs of the South* — and the “great history” of revolution. Here, Wang explains the lyrical as Qu's way of accessing history by both devoting himself to revolution and interrogating the revolution, a new reading of the text which heretofore has been largely understood from the viewpoint of revolutionary narrative. He also discusses lyricism in Hu Lancheng's 胡兰成 (1906-1981) *Shan he sui yue* 山河岁月 (Times of the Earth) and explains how, although not clearly evident in the narrative, it can be seen in the use of rhythm based on the metrics of Chinese classic poems. The work reveals the author's journey through political life and illuminates how rites and music describe a traditional cultural yearning for utopia. Considering that Hu's pro-Japanese attitude formed a political taboo that precluded scholarly discussion, Wang's deployment of this case is a strategic decision. In the deconstruction of the mainland-centered interpretative framework of the twentieth-century literary narrative, such cases can make the historical contextualization of the lyrical subject more incisive.

Another remarkable point is that the book was published in the form of notes from the Peking University lecture series. In the context of Chinese repercussions, it can be said that Wang's cultural and political calculation is presupposed in his publication. In the United States, where mainstream academia examines Chinese media, culture, and thought from within the realm of cultural studies, Wang's fundamentalist approach to literature and literary theory places him in a distinct minority, swimming against the current. (As can be seen in the American edition, he

tries to deal with lyricism as a traditional concept of *wen* 文, or literary text). While orienting the direction of his own academic practice to the interiority of mainland China rather than the United States, he attempts to broaden his discursive power by extending the collective category of Chinese literature to include Taiwan, his place of origin, thereby creating a competitive discourse. As a practical strategy for this vision, Wang is actively seeking a single discourse of “Sinophone literature,” one that encompasses overseas Chinese literature from places like Taiwan and Hong Kong within the body of mainland literature. The publication of this book can be seen as a product of considerations arising from this process. In China, where there are relatively few direct criticisms of his lyrical theory but a strong political reaction from those holding nationalistic attitudes about culture, there has been an interesting response to this move. The core of the criticism is that Wang’s theory, being representative of the orientation of an overseas scholar, relies on dualistic East-West ideas in its approach to Chinese texts and documents. The realities and actualities of mainland China are superseded by a methodology that places Western ideas at the ideological center and treats Chinese counterpoints as cases for comparative analysis. According to these critics, the focus on modernity, above all, is problematic because it involves judgment of the lived reality of Chinese people in the People’s Republic of China. The rhetorical logic of his criticism becomes reduced to a nationalistic framework of inside/outside, despite his claim that his argument begins from reflective introspection on this problem, creating a difficult-to-seal existential gap. Wang and his Chinese critics confront each other from the same rhetorical basis directing them to transcend and overcome the Western rationalistic, dualistic perspective, and it could be said that Wang’s lyrical theory is situated in the middle of this.

Narrative Strategy of *The Lyrical in Epic Time*

In his introduction, “Inventing the ‘Lyrical Tradition’,” Wang lays out the framework of his book by presenting three pivotal figures from the 1950s: Chen Shih-hsiang 陈世骧 (1912-1971), an American scholar of Chinese poetry; Jaroslav Prusek¹, a Czech scholar of modern Chinese literature; and Shen Congwen 沈从文 (1902-1988), a writer from mainland China. Having selected the authors based on their

1 Prusek (1906-1980) is widely known as a first-generation researcher of the Chinese modern literature, along with C. T. Hsia. *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese literature* (1963) is his representative collection of treatises based on historical materialism, often compared with Hsia’s *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (1961), both accepted as bibles for American researchers of modern literature.

differing geographical locations and differing genres of literary accomplishment, Wang pays special attention to their discussions of lyrical discourse in the 1950s: Prusek's narrative of the history of modern Chinese literature, Chen Shih-hsiang's delineation of the epistemology of the lyrical tradition, and Shen Congwen's unpublished essay "Chouxiang de shuqing" 抽象的抒情 (Abstract lyricism).¹ The three authors represent different political contexts. Prusek was a Czech leftist literary historian who engaged with Chinese studies in the United States; Chen was a Taiwanese scholar of Chinese literature who settled in the United States; Shen, a writer from the mainland who appears in the texts of Chinese literati, was a writer who distanced himself politically and culturally from the public roar. The differing political implications of the three writers' utterances from the 1950s are reoriented within the cultural-political semantic network of the lyrical, converging into 'one layer' in the political space of Wang's discourse. Through the viewpoints of the three authors, the 'temporal narrative' of the 1950s Cold War is spatially differentiated; simultaneously, from the starting point of the 1950s, the prior literary history of the mainland is retroactively described through "retro-diction."

Above all, Wang establishes his lyrical theory based on concepts found in the writings of Prusek and Chen Shih-hsiang. The two figures comprise the first generation of Chinese literary scholars working from Western ideas, and both took the issue of the lyrical as their central topic. Whereas Prusek was a Marxist historian of modern literature, Chen was a liberalist scholar of classical poetry. As a result, Wang draws both similarities and differences as a means of furthering his discussion of the lyrical with complementary elements. The point of negotiation between Chen and Prusek seems obvious. Although Wang does not address Prusek's influence on the study of Chinese modern literature, the fact that he is the only critic to be critically examined in Wang's book speaks to the cultural and political significance of his lyrical theory. From Prusek's design of "the lyrical and the epic," Wang generates his structural foundation of "history-poetry (*shishi* 史诗) and poetry-history (*shishi* 诗史)." Wang develops Prusek's generic signifiers to formulate a relationship between history and poetry. This concept is not a relationship between epic and lyric; rather, it shifts towards a conceptual network woven between "the musicality of history" and "the historicity of music," epistemologically taking in Chen's discussion of the rhythmical relationship between poetry and intent, as in "poetry expresses what is intended in the mind" (*shiyanzhi* 诗言志). When his

¹ This prose piece is supposed to have been written around the summer of 1961. It was introduced to the public for the first time in April, 1989, in *Long Endless River* (长河流不尽) and was included in *The Complete Works of Shen Congwen* (2002).

aesthetical method is applied to present Shen Congwen's "musicality of the form," Wang is able to facilitate its analytical approach.

As he builds his lyrical theory on Prusek's scholarship, Wang's evaluation of Prusek becomes complex and multi-layered. Among other elements, Wang tries to distinguish Prusek's view of literary history from that of the Chinese revolutionary. For example, Wang points out the fallacy of Prusek's viewpoint, representative of the Marxist view of history, in which the lyrical is seen as evidence of disconnection from the Chinese poetic tradition and of the influence of Western romanticism. Meanwhile, Wang affirms that Prusek, thanks to his attention to the lyrical, was able to go beyond the limits set by leftist literary critics from mainland China. He also appreciates that Prusek, despite his strong inclination towards a materialistic interpretation of traditional poetry, understood Du Fu 杜甫 and Bai Juyi 白居易 in terms of their practice of the lyrical in the age of the epic. Thus, it is undeniable that Wang is influenced heavily by Prusek's discourse of the lyrical. In this sense, Wang's criticism of Prusek's theory cannot but focus on the Western scholar's limits of Orientalism, since he has to maintain some distance from the Marxist viewpoint while criticizing the Chinese revolutionary literary discourse. Furthermore, Wang has no other alternative but to interpret Prusek's discussion of the connection/disconnection of the lyrical tradition as a limitation of a Western scholar dealing with China on a foundation of Western scholarship. This is a necessary stance in order for Wang to associate Prusek's theory of "the lyrical and the epic" with Chen Shih-hsiang's poetics. What is remarkable is the way Wang interpellates them. The "nodus" found in Wang's formulation of lyrical discourse, that is, the modernity of the lyrical, should be understood as a continuation of lyrical tradition. When "A History with Feeling" is understood as a variation of revolutionary discourse, Wang has no cause to point out differences in the political characteristics of Prusek and Chen; instead, the interpellation arises through the illumination of their complementary relationship.

Then how could the position of Shen Congwen be considered next to those of Prusek and Chen Shih-hsiang? As opposed to Wang's theoretical approach to the two scholars, Shen is mediated with reference to his essay "Abstract Lyricism." The two scholars' frameworks — namely "the continuity of the lyrical tradition" and "the historicity of poetry" — take concrete shape with the interpretation of "Abstract Lyricism." Wang has an emotional and academic affinity with Shen and his oeuvre, but this is not the only reason he has placed this little-known piece of literary miscellany side by side with the theories of the other two scholars. In the formulation of Wang's lyrical theory, the importance of "Abstract Lyricism," in its

own right, cannot be overestimated. Wang explains “Abstract Lyricism” in line with “the aesthetics of loss.” The aesthetics of loss in the lyrical is to convey a feeling that has been passed down from “the poetics of sorrow” in the *Chuci* 楚辞 (Songs of the South); moreover, this cultural legacy is a tangible asset that runs through the tradition of “sensuous colors of physical things” (*wuse* 物色) and “following from emotion” (*yuanqing* 缘情) from the periods of the Han, the Wei, and the Six Dynasties. Wang wants to demonstrate the style of the aesthetics of loss and its formative elements on the basis of historical-materialism, which is contextualized through relevant glimpses found in “Abstract Lyricism.” If the lyricism of loss is a traumatic response to the experience of historical violence, Shen’s “Abstract Lyricism,” created in the dialectic process of the revolutionary narrative of the 1950s, should be an example of “venting wrath and expressing feelings” (*fafen shuqing* 发愤抒情). That is, this emotion is not an autistic feeling isolated from reality, but rather a text of feeling, a historical record that ironically reveals a “reality without feeling.”

Additionally, Wang proposes that the feeling of loss in Shen’s essay relies not on ideographic semantics, but is signified by the linguistic form of “the character” itself, which shows the orientation of the lyrical form towards which he aims. Another level of lyrical discourse — one that goes beyond the scheme of deterministic interpretation based on the revolutionary narrative — becomes possible when lyricism is defined as a style in which “sound images” (*yxian* 音像), generated from the combination of rhetorical meaning and sound, reveal “images” (*xingxiang* 形象) corresponding to the intrinsic contradictions of the self and the world. The author intends to appreciate the phonetic aspect of language as “a lyrical style,” which leads to the rhetoric that mediates “Abstract Lyricism” as an example of aesthetic form. If the symmetry between “the musicality of the poetry” and “the ideography of the character” serves as an instrument for criticizing the existing discourse, the frontier extends beyond the mainland through Prusek and Chen Shih-hsiang, further providing a path of discourse able to negotiate with the narrative of the mainland, overcoming any unilinear political ideology or geographic boundaries.

How does Wang organically explain his main topic of *yuan* 怨 (expression of dissent or pathos), or ‘the aesthetics of loss’ or discontent, in relation to the flow of *xing* 兴 (evocation, or creation of feeling)? In this regard, attention must be given to the signifier “feeling” (*youqing* 有情), as distinguished by Wang from “the lyrical” (*shuqing* 抒情). “A History with Feeling” is described as a continuing process of variation — between “evocation/discontent,” “feelings/things,” and

“poetry/history” — as a succession of the legacy in which “poetry expresses what the mind means.” Wang also emphasizes that the mere restoration of “discontent” would generate political meaning; in modern Chinese literature, from the point where “discontent” slips out of the cracks between the subject and the world, it is represented as “transcendence of poetic power” or “the abstract of the dream words.” As a result, “discontent” does not signify the disharmony of the lyrical subject; rather, the concept can be described as “a positive search for identity” or “another way of unity,” aimed at bridging the gap of discord with the world. Since the lyricism of evocation/discontent here is determined by their mutual relationship, it would be difficult to explain lyricism based on the different ways in which the subject and world relate to each other, in terms of these two poetic elements. When the relationship between evocation/discontent continually flips, according to the opposing yet complementary movements of *yin* 阴 and *yang* 阳, evocation should be understood as a vehicle which “inevitably” accompanies discontent as a way of “continuing” evocation.

Against the background of “the identity of feeling,” we can more clearly understand Wang’s premise of “the existential mode of discontent” in relation to the mechanism of the alternation of *yin* and *yang*, constantly being extinguished and replaced by the other. According to Wang, discontent takes shape when the lyrical subject appropriates reality as a way of avoiding his or her own extinction; here, the reason why Wang notes the alternation mechanism is not because he proposes a normative thesis for the restoration of discontent; rather, he is able to emphasize the existential necessity of discontent. Operating on the same principle as the cyclical alternation of *yin* and *yang*, the existential mode of discontent would not disrupt its unity with evocation; instead, it would fortify “the identity of feeling.” The rhetorical function of “discontent” is a narrative strategy to structuralize the historical continuity of feeling; meanwhile, the field of discourse attains self-identification by internalizing discontent as a criticism of evocation.

The rhetorical core for the identity of feeling involves a means of deploying revolutionary lyricism. The author suggests that “from literary revolution to revolutionary literature, if you think about it, imagination, creation, and lyrical theory are not only decisive factors in mainstream discourse, but also the main basis of resistance against it” (*Lyrical Tradition and Chinese Modernity* 33). Here, the discourse of lyricism is named as a mechanism for both fortifying and deconstructing mainstream discourse, a logical transposition or sleight-of-hand which can be read as quite an interesting approach. Lyrical discourse is a mode of discourse that is constructed from and through mainstream discourse; it can

be constantly and flexibly explained as a counter-discourse to the revolutionary narrative, expanding its categories and spectra without any restrictions. The ongoing discussion of lyrical discourse includes the texts of Liang Qichao 梁启超, Wang Guowei 王国维, Lu Xun 鲁迅 Zhou Zuoren 周作人, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, Wen Yiduo 闻一多, Mao Zedong 毛泽东 and Hu Feng 胡风. While reading them as supplementing and resisting the revolutionary narrative, these examples from lyrical discourse can be located as “other,” in opposition to mainstream discourse; at the same time, they become mediators which place the mainstream discourse as “other.” In particular, Wang’s most essential point involves the problem of the revolutionary lyricism described in the revolutionary narrative being brought into lyrical discourse. For example, as Wang has it, the revolutionary romanticism of the leftist narrative is described as revolutionary lyricism; the Red Poetics of Mao’s day, instrumental in firing the national imagination, is rendered as Mao’s lyricism of epic time. The hybrid articulations located within revolutionary lyricism are mediated as a rhetorical function that draws romanticism into lyrical theory.

The most dramatic interpretation appears where the Hu Feng incident is concerned. Wang understands the 1950s as a “lyrical period” that bridged the gap between public and private, as well as between host and guest, by way of mobilizing massive poetic imagination; moreover, Wang maximizes the grounds for interpreting lyrical discourse by engaging with the Hu Feng incident. Mao’s “Huanxisha” (浣溪沙) may be deemed as a poetic and historical statement from the 1950s, proclaiming the advent of a historical period for “uplifting of the joyous dancing” (*shangju huanwu* 上举欢舞): Only a poet can proclaim the unification of the world in a poetic and historical style. Meanwhile, Hu Feng’s poem “Shijian kaishi le” 时间开始了 (Time has begun, 1949) can be read as a form of discontent that, necessarily, is associated with historical lyricism. If the Hu Feng incident is interpreted as a rhetorical power struggle, representing history with poetry, the lyricism of Mao’s time can be subsumed into the discourse of feeling through the mediation of Hu Feng’s lyricism; moreover, the historical power of “history-poetry” in the 1950s can be equally in line with the linguistic power of “poetry-history.” Likewise, the effect of interpretation becomes optimized when reading Shen Congwen’s “Abstract Lyricism” as an echo of discontent to the epic lyricism of Mao’s time, that is, the reverse side of evocation. A re-contextualization of the lyrical that embraces an ideological “counter-narrative” as a “transformed narrative” centered on “tone” (lu 律) would be the rhetorical apex of the “dialogue” envisioned by Wang.

Considering the rhetoric Wang has embedded in the narrative strategy that

constitutes “a history with feeling,” his yearning for historical interpretation appears as risky as it is effective. His lyrical discourse should be carefully reviewed; though critical engagement with the mainland-centered revolutionary narrative is unavoidable, his central thesis is problematic. Moreover, a new understanding of the lyrical tradition in twentieth-century literary discourse is needed. The broader the definition of lyricism, the weaker its boundaries become. The more effective the interpretation of the lyrical in his lyrical theory is, the more similar his discourse becomes to the structure of the revolutionary narrative that he criticizes. When the method for deconstructing revolutionary narrative is to re-describe its assimilation and repetition, such attempts at historical representation must consist of a process of continuous challenge. If the lyrical speaks on behalf of the discourse, and if discontent and evocation alternate with each other as in a structure of “unity,” it would be impossible to deliberate on and to examine history and time. The historicity of “poetry-history” is able to serve as a driving force in the field of modern literature, not simply as a parameter, insofar as it is presented as a group of incomplete and disparate lyrical elements. Although the author does not articulate an alternative field of discourse, the logical context of his lyricism is liable to perpetuate a reductive framework, and his deconstructive rhetoric also arouses such doubts. This criticism seems all the more well-founded in light of the fact that Wang retrospectively constructs the “time” of the modern and the “event” of the lyrical. After the 1960s, Shen’s “Abstract Lyricism” made its way outside the mainland and became associated with Chen Shih-hsiang’s lyrical theory, and also, through Prusek’s mediation, with C. T. Hsia; David Wang is located at the end of the discourse. Without a critical review of his own logic on lyricism, necessary for constructing his academic genealogy, it would be difficult for his deconstructive criticism to avoid an accusation of arbitrary representation of history.

Cultural-Political Meaning of Wang’s Lyrical Theory

The construction of Wang’s own academic orientation relative to lyrical theory reflects certain impatience in the face of recent structural changes in American modern Chinese literary studies. In the United States, where the academic foundation of Chinese studies was laid by scholars from Taiwan and Hong Kong, a reshuffle of academic subjects has been taking place in that field as mainland scholars have become involved. In effect, these changes place an “unspoken” pressure on Chinese studies scholars from Hong Kong and Taiwan, creating a situation that can force them to seek fierce routes of discourse development. Moreover, academia itself is demanding that the field of Chinese studies be

transformed into an interdisciplinary field along the lines of cultural or area studies. Notably, such interdisciplinarity is one way of nullifying the particularity of literature as a field, thus threatening the livelihood of literature scholars. In such a situation, the field of literary studies is required to mold itself into a component of area studies, reconstructing and modifying it so as to explain the specificity of an area through local examples of cultural universalism. In light of this structural shift, interpretation of China in America is at a more complex juncture than ever before.

In any case, it would be too rash to conclude that the Cold War structure has vanished from Chinese studies in America. To look at just one example of a branch of literary study that has undergone change, the interpretation of literary history has produced such works as Xiaobing Tang's *Chinese Modern: The Heroic and the Quotidian* (2000) and Ban Wang's *Illumination from the Past: Trauma, Memory, and History in Modern China* (2004). Critics have suggested that, by dialectically involving such mediating elements as "memory," "the quotidian," and "sensitivity" into twentieth-century Chinese literary history, these books have critically transcended the revolutionary view of history. The various texts mentioned here are submitted to reevaluation of present evidence that had been excluded or denied in the revolutionary narrative. In that they regard the quotidian and memory during the revolution as drivers of history, their method of reconstructing history is considerably similar to Wang's. As a result, the texts in which they apply a reconstruction of history are quite close to Wang's lyrical discourse. However, when it comes to views on the revolutionary historical stance, there is a decisive difference between the perspectives of Wang and the rest. While the others "reinforce" the revolutionary historical viewpoint, the point of departure for Wang's lyrical theory is its "denial." Furthermore, his efforts to involve the new category of "Sinophone Literature" (*Haiwai Huayuxi Wenxue* 海外华语系文学) in the discourse reflects his intention to diversify the channels of Chinese historical interpretation, going beyond a single interpretation that started with the May Fourth movement.¹ The difference between these stances involves differing understandings of any clearly distinct nation-state and ethnic identity. Wang is constantly vigilant

1 ¹ Wang continually attempts to reconstruct "the literature of today's China" into the category of "Sinophone literature." *Selected Fictions of Contemporary Writers*, published from 1996 to 2002 in Taiwan, contains no mainland writers, but a significant number of Taiwanese authors: Zhu Tianxin 朱天心, Zhu Tianwen 朱天文, Li Ang 李昂, Lu Ping 路平, Luo Yijun 骆以军, Su Weizhen 苏伟贞, Huang Jinshu 黄锦树, and Zhang Guixing 张贵兴. In *After Heteroglossia*, a collection of criticism by Wang, the first part discusses Taiwanese works of literature and the second part covers Chinese writings from the mainland, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the US, the UK, France and Germany (Wang, 2001).

against the fallacious representation of the “mainland China” represented by the May Fourth movement as “modern China.” To support this, he insists on two different supplementary premises: one is that the origin of modernity can be traced back to the last Qing dynasty, not the May Fourth era, and the other one is that it is possible to discuss the criteria of modernity in terms of both Western rationalism and emotional enlightenment.

The cultural and political roles of scholars from the mainland in American Chinese studies have already become quite clear. As Wang suggests, the question of “who represents (*zaixian* 再现) China” is interpreted as “who is representative (*daibiao* 代表) of China.” In fact, it is scholars from the Chinese continent who are mostly called upon to represent Chinese culture, a role that has been solidified by interdisciplinary studies. Wang emphasizes that, when China is represented by someone, what must be elucidated is what he or she represents, the basis of representation, and at the same time, the cultural and political meaning and function this conveys. The core agenda here is a matter of misunderstanding that, in addressing China within post-cultural discourse, the representation he cites is premised upon the distinct psychological mechanisms and ideology of mainland intellectuals, ultimately dredging up the structures of Orientalism and nationalism. Further, the failure to critically recognize this problem creates the danger of generalizing a single Sinitic ethnic community group, or structuring Chinese literary and cultural studies as a minority discourse of the West.

Wang takes postmodernist discussion of China as a failed attempt at negotiating with “post” discourses of the West. The active discourse of postmodernism in China, which was brought to the attention of the First World through the efforts of Fredric Jameson, was concretely shaped by Jameson’s student Zhang Xudong 张旭东 unfortunately, as Zhang’s exhaustive discussion of the particularities of China was mobilized to see how Jameson’s arguments could fit into a “productive” discourse; the analysis became merely a “means” to solidify Jameson’s theoretical formulations about the First and Third Worlds. This may have helped in securing a timely foothold to engage Western discourse in “Chinese matters,” but the culturally-generated political differences that he depicted for the Western audience failed to produce a mutually-negotiable border zone. Also, as is seen in recent studies by mainland scholars, the power of representation allowed by Western discourse could be a double-edged sword, as constructing a dynamic dialogue with Western discourse occurs at the risk of relegating Chinese studies to a minority subject.

Understanding Chinese intellectuals through a cultural/psychological

mechanism, Wang diagnoses this as the full inheritance of the spiritual “heritage” of the May Fourth era, part and parcel. That is, intellectuals have what C. T. Hsia called an “obsession with China” (*gan shi you guo* 感时忧国), rooted in a self-centered psychological mechanism of the aspiration to be as strong as the West and treated on an equal footing. Whether the speech act comes out of the China of a century ago or the United States of today, the crux of the issue to them is not the West or Imperialism, but ever the Chinese mainland and its immanent development. The pre-existing self-centered desire results in a failure to subjectify their own otherness, creating a psychological mechanism that cannot operate as critical or reactionary momentum against Western or Chinese discourse. Wang considers the a priori assumption of this cultural/psychological mechanism to be a more fundamental problem than Western ideology, in that it immobilizes the discourse.

If this is so, how does one go about finding “a way out” — not structuralized as a tool for cultural discourse or a Western moral safety device — while keeping the inner desire for Sino-centrism in check? Rey Chow, as well, shares Wang’s perception that it is vital to actively intervene in the ongoing mainland-centered discourse. According to their perceptions, the sphere of discourse to which they refer approaches Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism. Rey Chow and Wang insist that the dialogic ontology of Bakhtin can provide a way of thinking about a position of “boundary existence.” Bakhtin’s focus on ontological differences and pluralism that elicit the involvement of external others prior to structuralization could present a negotiable path of engagement with a discourse for Chinese intellectuals from outside mainland China. Despite the utopian leanings of Bakhtin’s ideas on a “culture of boundaries” and the notion of open totality, Chow suggests they would be useful in the current Chinese discourse. She has argued that it will become increasingly important for Chinese intellectuals “to move outside ‘Chinese’ territory, geographic and cultural” (95). Such willful movement that dismantles China as the center (中国, the central nation or “Middle Kingdom”) is an effective path to a discourse enabling the longed-for “court of law in the people’s hearts”¹ — in other words, the communal regulatory power arrived at through negotiation and consensus” (95).

In contrast with Chow, Wang’s reference to Bakhtin addresses the process of extending awareness from within the realm of literary discourse. In his lyrical discourse, the context he repeatedly evokes as the historicity of lyricism can be read

1 This expression was used rhetorically by Wei Jingsheng, a leader of the 1979 Beijing Spring, in his article “To Democracy or to a New Dictatorship” in *Contention* (争鸣) (vol. 137, March, 1989) to evoke an alternative form of power. Chow quotes the term in relation to the question of power of discourse and engagement.

more clearly when it is expanding the “ontology of literature” into “philosophical awareness.” Bakhtin’s view affirming a text as a polyphonic dialogue of multiple systems corresponds to Wang’s evocation of the dynamics of “heteroglossia” (*zhong sheng xuan hua* 众声喧哗). To Wang, Bakhtin works here for “heteroglossia” as an open space for dialogue and the “Sinophone” concept works in totality for an imaginative body of discourse integrating literary, historical, and philosophical signs.

However, with “Sinophone literature” potentially being seen as a means of banding together with some in the non-mainland Chinese community in the context of cultural politics, Wang suggests a new strategy, *baokuo zaiwai* (包括在外),¹ “including [China] in” — that is, including mainland China to its exclusion. In other words, he proposes to deconstruct the mainland-centered narrative framework and include mainland China within a post-hierarchical structure. He emphasizes the way that “Sinophone literature” played a key role in including, rather than opposing, mainland literature. This notion appears clearly in his practice, more so than in his discourse.

For instance, a book by Wang summarizing the theory of “Sinophone literature” entitled *Hua Yi Feng Qi* (华夷风起, 2015) was published as part of a subsequent collection of works entitled *Hua Yi Feng* (华夷风, *Sinophone/Xenophone: Contemporary Sinophone Literature Reader*, 2016). In these two books, he reveals his intention and concrete steps to deconstruct the literary power of the mainland. The Sinitic language communities are difficult to define, and the written characters of each cannot be contained only within the categories of “China,” “Chinese” or “Chinese language.” Consequently, he has opted to represent the web of these meanings through the terms “Sinophone” (*Hua* 华) and “Xenophone” (*Yi* 夷), playing on the traditional Hua/Yi distinction between China and “uncivilized” outsiders. Since, as a concept, the term “China” currently serves to represent a nation-state of the twentieth century, it cannot rise above its image as a modern state structure of the twentieth century if the category of “Sinophone Literature” is regarded simply as a banding together against the political power of

1 Wang asserts that if terms like “overseas Chinese literature” or “world Chinese literature” continue to refer to a limited range of literature produced in regions outside the mainland, reflecting national boundaries and the central narrative, Sinophone literature would be a signifier of resistance that can replace these terms. Other scholars of Chinese literature from the English-speaking world join with him, and like other units based on phonetic language such as Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone, and also Lusophone, “Sinophone” is used with the aim of signifying the decolonized narrative.

China. The conceptual relationship between “Sinophone/Xenophone” is historical and cultural in nature, and owing to blurred cultural boundaries and variegated processes of history, the two cannot be distinguished as dichotomous notions or entities. In particular, when it is assumed that the concept of Sinophone literature is derived from the concept of Western colonial literature, “Sinophone/Xenophone literature” can be seen as implying a postcolonial orientation.

In Wang's book *Hua Yi Feng Qi*, his concept of Sinophone literature is explained as a structural link between “literature of Hua” (华 的 文 学) and — as a variation of “Hua” — “literature of Yi” (夷 的 文 学). The traditional concept of “Hua/Yi” is being reconceived and rewritten into the Sinophone literature community. Unlike the Western concept of “-phone,” which presupposes a colonial master-and-servant relationship in terms of language and history, most of the creative subjects of Sinophone literature have their roots in “immigration” (移民者的殖民行径 settler colonialism), making it conceptually different from the language of the West. That is, the radical difference between these migrants and subjects rooted in colonialism is that their spoken language is their own, and they willingly use it to create written works. Therefore, as suggested in the titles of the two above-mentioned books, in order to grasp the literature of “Yi” as an equal and complementary variant of “Hua,” the communication style of “Feng” (风), or “mutual antagonism,” comes into play towards revealing the juncture where the two are related. Namely, in order to make the field labeled “Hua/Yi” a negotiator of Sinophone literature, “Feng” must be emphasized as a connecting force between the literature produced inside and outside of the mainland, rather than pointing out some linguistic or historic master-and-servant relationship. The way of “Feng” is a cultural and political strategy of Wang's that facilitates an imagined community. In actual effect, *Hua Yi Feng* amounts to a parallel arrangement of the writers from mainland China and Sino-writers from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and the United States. In addition, the work of composing the discourse of Sinophone literature is mainly led by scholars of Taiwan and Hong Kong. Among them, Kao Yu-kung 高友工 from Taiwan and Leonard Chan (Chan Kwok-Kou) 陈国球 from Hong Kong support Wang's theory to sustain his idea of “Sinophone literature.”

Furthermore, from the mid-to-late nineties, the departments of Sinitic languages and literature in some universities in Taiwan have become an important base for institutionalizing the discourse of “Sinophone literature.” As a result of the centrality of “Sinophone literature” in these subjects, it plays a key role in supplementing Wang's discourse, offering greater flexibility and practicality in terms of practicing discourse. This kind of intervention is an important basis for

demonstrating how the cultural and political meaning of Wang's lyrical discourse works. In light of the contrasting overall viewpoints of the mainland and non-mainland, with the former seeking to include or absorb Sinophone literature as part of mainland literature and the latter seeking to unite in resisting such absorption and maintaining an identity separate from the mainland, his lyrical discourse holds a distinctive position in seeking a category that transcends notions of national identity. This cultural and political movement is proceeding apace in parallel with the active participation of mainland intellectuals in "Chinese discourse" in the United States, and its spreading practice is quite effectively serving to check the mainland-centric nature of the discourse. But the path of his work in practice creates doubts as to whether he can continue to play a critical role in the history of the centrality of the mainland upon which Wang's lyrical discourse insists. In the end, it would seem essential to reevaluate the extent to which Wang maintains dialogic tension in composing the discourse of "Sinophone literature."

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Mrs. Dalloway: Consciousness, “Social Homeostasis,” and Marxism

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Abstract The nurture/nature dualism inherent in Marxist theory would be modified and updated in this paper by linking it to the Antonio Damasio’s notion of social homeostasis to clarify Septimus’ suicide and Clarissa’s will to live, despite their similar characteristics, in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The issues of consciousness, self, and “social homeostasis” proposed by Antonio Damasio would be joined to Marxist class distinction critique to update this Marxist theory in order to analyze *Mrs. Dalloway*. In this way of adjusting and updating, Damasio’s notion of basic homeostasis, core and extended consciousness would be introduced because social homeostasis is provided by extended consciousness to expand the function of basic homeostasis (well-being and survival) into the realm of society. In the end, the revitalized and updated Marxist’s cultural critique (invigorated by assimilating the neuroscientific notion of social homeostasis into it) would be utilized to depict how in *Mrs. Dalloway* social homeostasis, in the unhealthy culture with exclusiveness of power to a particular class, contributes to the survival and well-being of dominant class, to which Clarissa belongs, and deprives Septimus of his freedom and of gaining optimal life situation.

Key words *Mrs. Dalloway*; Antonio Damasio; Consciousness; Social Homeostasis; Marxism

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Mrs. Dalloway is a novel about "ordinary mind[s] on an ordinary day" (Woolf, *Selected Essays* 9). In 1922, before writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf in her diaries declared: "I am beginning to learn the mechanism of my own brain" (qtd. in Lehrer 172), and "psychology should be done very realistically" (qtd. in Lehrer 187). Lehrer interprets the latter statement as: "She wanted this book [*Mrs. Dalloway*] to capture the mind in its actual state, to express the tumultuous process at the center of our existence. For too long, Woolf believed, fiction had indulged in a simplified view of consciousness. She was determined to make things complicated" (187). Studying the critics' view of consciousness in Woolf's era and at present would lead us to two sets of questions: first, what were the dominant ideas about consciousness in her era? What was a simplified view of consciousness that she tried to denounce? Is the full understanding of consciousness possible? Does it, even, exist at her time? Second, is her idea about consciousness in line with the dominant ideas of her time? Based on more modern debates, what is consciousness? and what does it mean to be a conscious being? What is the function of consciousness? Is it connected to the physiology of human being? Is it related to the body? Does it interact with the external world? Generally, is Woolf's idea in harmony with the ideas proposed in her time about consciousness or it is much like the more modern debates such as Damasio's?

"No" was the answer of the behaviorists to the last question mentioned in the first set of questions. Woolf's contemporary, John B. Watson in his book *Behaviorism* contended: "Behaviorism claims that 'consciousness' is neither a definable nor a usable concept; that it is merely another word for the 'soul' of more ancient times" (3). Their motto could be formulated into observing and defining; therefore, commit it then to the flames everything that could not be observed directly: "He[the behaviorist] dropped from his scientific vocabulary all subjective terms such as sensation, perception, image, desire, purpose, and even thinking and emotion as they were subjectively defined" (Watson 6) to make psychology an objective, scientific field. In other words, behaviorists refuted the

notion of consciousness because they believed that consciousness is too subjective and metaphysical to be observed and verified. This is the simplified view of consciousness Woolf denounces. So, does consciousness not truly exist? What is Woolf's view of consciousness, then?

A transdisciplinary approach, with the participation of science, is the panacea: "biocultural criticism and theory strengthen the aims and practices of literary studies by combining scientific psychology and evolutionary studies with literary criticism, history, and other areas of the humanities and sciences" (Easterlin 5). This article is based on a new transdisciplinary and neuroscientific approach to literature with the aim of bridging the gap between science, specifically neuroscience, and literature. Such a neuroscientific approach to literature is the outcome of enormous studies in the emerging field of cognitive science in recent decades which inevitably found its way to the humanist fields. According to Sowon S. Park:

Literary studies are not unaffected by the "cognitive turn": significant emerging areas spurred on by the recent growth in consciousness studies are neuro-literary criticism and "evo" (evolutionary) literary criticism, whose messianic tones were captured in the 2002 special issue of *Poetics Today*. Entitled "Literature and the Cognitive Revolution," it pronounced that "evo" and "neuro" approaches will "revolutionize the study of literature by overthrowing the rule of poststructuralism." (108)

This neuroscientific approach never degrades literature in favor of science; nevertheless, it shows the genius of the writer and the flexibility of literature as an inclusive art which mirrors and contains all aspects of life. This approach also could mark the potentiality of literature as a prophetic art because in many cases it anticipated neuroscientific findings. According to Birge, neurofiction is being read in scientific realm for three reasons: "Improving education on cognitive disorders (including education of doctors, patients, and the public), improving narrative or analytic skills, and heightening empathy in caregivers" (95).

The modern debate of consciousness was started by Descartes. His ideas modernized the mind-body dualism. His dualism was influenced by Plato's idea which was based on "an immortal soul consisting of parts concerned with the emotions, will, the appetites and reasoning, interacting with our bodies" (Bennett 200). Plato called mind "the reasoning part of the soul, involving thinking" (198). Descartes pruned Plato's ideas: "He held that perception as well as emotion, nutrition, growth and reproduction are neither parts of the soul as Plato would have

it, nor functions which constitute the soul as Aristotle suggested, but essentially physiological functions of the body” (200). After that pruning, Descartes introduced the notion of consciousness:

What Descartes did then was to assimilate thought and reasoning, defined by Plato as properties of the mind, into the concept of consciousness and then expand this to include sensations and will-power as immediately experienced. Consciousness was now immortal, identified with the person, and this consciousness received sensations or acted on the world through a body that was an elaborate physiological mechanism. (Bennett 200)

Therefore, Descartes redefined the notion of mind to include “everything which we are aware of as happening within us, in so far as we have awareness of it” (qtd. in Bennett 200) and called it consciousness. Consequently, mind was considered as a distinct independent substance characterized by thought which was different from the other spatially extended substance, the matter. While dualism denotes that there are two kinds of substances in the world, monism “holds that there is one. . . . Within monism, there is a further distinction between views that construe the single existing stuff as material and views that construe it as immaterial; the former are *materialist* views, the latter *idealist*” (Kriegel 38).

A classic materialist view of consciousness was proposed by Julien Offray de la Mettrie (1709-51): “He proposed that conscious and voluntary processes result simply from more complex mechanisms than involuntary and instinctive processes” (Frith and Rees 10). This functionalist view contends that physical complexity of an organism is responsible for its consciousness. Is this emergentist theory true? Is consciousness a side effect of physiology definable in physical terms?

In direct opposition to functionalists and eliminative materialists (such as behaviorists), Thomas Nagel in his famous essay “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” argues that consciousness exists but it is not likely, at least in this era, to know what consciousness is like — it is “unanalyzable, indeed ineffable” (Nelkin 124). Nagel argues: “The fact that an organism has conscious experience *at all* means, basically, that there is something it is like to *be* that organism” (436). This statement highlights “the subjective character of experience” (Nagel 437). While behaviorists believed that subjectivity is a hindrance to objectivity of science, Nagel considers the phenomenal consciousness (the subjective character of experience) as the major constituent part of consciousness. Furthering Nagel argument has led to mysterianism: “Consciousness is a genuine mystery, not merely a *prima facie*

mystery that we may one day demystify” (Kriegel 36). Anyway, why does he believe that consciousness is ineffable?

According to David Chalmers “the hard problem of consciousness is the problem of *experience*” (226) — or phenomenal consciousness, or “mental states that are inherently conscious” (Tye 23). It is a hard problem because it resists to be explained by the methods of “computational or neural mechanisms” (Chalmers 225). As a reaction against functionalists’ arguments, Chalmers contends: “What makes the hard problem hard and almost unique is that it goes *beyond* problems about the performance of functions”; in other words, “even when we have explained the performance of all the cognitive and behavioral functions in the vicinity of experience — perceptual discrimination, categorization, internal access, verbal report — there may still remain a further unanswered question: *Why is the performance of these functions accompanied by experience?*” (228).

These philosophers and their contradictory ideas illuminate how consciousness is difficult to be grasped and defined. This is the reason that a host of different philosophical and scientific theories are suggested to explain it, but still consciousness has remained elusive because of, in part, its hard problem. Maybe a transdisciplinary research (where neuroscience and philosophy ally themselves with literature, in which there is a rich load of characters’ subjective experiences) can help both neuroscience and philosophy to define what consciousness is. The result of that endeavor, in return, can be utilized in literary criticism to arrive at a full analysis of a character in a story.

So far, different views towards consciousness were studied; these views were popular and dominant at Woolf’s time but Woolf was ahead of her time and her view towards consciousness is very much like more modern critics’ views such as Damasio’s. Woolf’s new form results in “a series of experimental novels that challenged the way we both see and depict reality” (Priest 290). Woolf claims: “I have a very clear notion of which parts of my brain think” (qtd. in Waugh 28). By discussing that the mind is the product of the brain or, in words of Damasio, “mental states and brain states are essentially equivalent” (*Self Comes to Mind* 246), Woolf, with a different argument, abolishes the distinction between the mind and matter. Therefore, she encourages writers to loosen and break the chain of convention because she “felt that the novel had reached a moment of crisis, its generic conventions out of date and irrelevant for the expression of the character and conditions of a new age” (Parsons 15). This is how literary criticism feels like today.

Woolf’s complicated ideas about consciousness in her novels anticipated

the theories of recent neuroscientists, such as Antonio Damasio. Is mind and consciousness ineffable for Damasio? Does he believe in body and mind dualism? In the realm of philosophy, Damasio is aligned with Spinoza than Descartes. Spinoza's aspect dualism abolishes the problem of the interaction between physical and nonphysical entities: For Spinoza "mind and body would spring in parallel from the same substance, fully and mutually mimicking each other in their different manifestations. In a strict sense, the mind did not cause the body and the body did not cause the mind" (Damasio, *Spinoza* 209). Therefore, the mind is the work of an ensemble organism interacting with the environment. To put it another way, "body, brain, and mind are manifestations of a single organism" (195). Next sections of this paper investigate how Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, in addition to anticipating and contributing to the modern discussion of consciousness, is better clarified by neuroscientific theories concerning consciousness.

Ann-Marie Priest in her article "Virginia Woolf's Brain: Mysticism, Literature and Neuroscience" opines how Woolf's access to her right-brain perception, which is the seat of unity and interconnectedness of all life, caused her mystical and experimental writings (and her treatment of time, memory, consciousness, and self); therefore, "A sense of impatience with the limitations of the egoic self is evident in all Woolf's later novels [including *Mrs Dalloway*]" (302). She applies her thesis to Mrs Ramsay's behavior in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

Mrs. Dalloway and the Body

Damasio contends that the importance of the body in emotions, feelings, and consciousness is unquestionable. In contrast to common thinking, "the mind exists for the body, is engaged in telling the story of the body's multifarious events, and uses that story to optimize the life of the organism" (Damasio, *Spinoza* 206). The mind is dependent upon the body because "the body and the surrounding environment interact with each other, and the changes caused *in the body* by that interaction are mapped in the brain" (Damasio, *Self* 63) to be utilized "as *content* into the mind process" (62). This notion leads to the idea that any mental activity — such as feelings, self, consciousness — is based on the mapping of the body in the brain. In sum, "mind is probably not conceivable without some sort of *embodiment*" (Damasio, *Descartes' Error* 234).

Woolf has a similar notion of this interaction between the body and the mind when, in her essay "On Being Ill," she discusses; it is what Woolf believes about the relation between literature and consciousness:

Literature does its best to maintain that its concern is with the mind; that the body is a sheet of plain glass through which the soul looks straight and clear. ...On the contrary, the very opposite is true. All day, all night the body intervenes; blunts or sharpens, colours or discolours, turns to wax in the warmth of June, hardens to tallow in the murk of February. The creature within can only gaze through the pane — smudged or rosy; it cannot separate off from the body like the sheath of a knife or the pod of a pea for a single instant. (*Selected Essays* 101)

This fact that the body initiates the feelings and, consequently, the thoughts is illustrated in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The significance of this depiction lies in its extensive practicality in literature especially in modernist texts in which the role of the mind is heedlessly enshrined at the cost of forgetting the importance of the outer world, the role of the body, consciousness, and neurons for the formation of the mind and memory. McIntire in her book, *Modernism, Memory and Desire: T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf*, argues: “For Eliot and Woolf memory is always already invested and intertwined with writing sexuality, the body, and desire” (2).

Mrs. Dalloway begins when Clarissa hears “a little squeak of the hinges” (Woolf 35) as Rumpelmayer’s men preparing the house for the forthcoming party. This sound stimulates Clarissa’s physical sensation to remind her of Bourton when she was 18. In this passage, Park argues, “Woolf presents physical sensations as vehicle for knowledge, undercutting the presumed opposition between reason and emotion” (113). This notion of the body as a medium for gaining knowledge is further investigated when Clarissa feels a revelation:

It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores! Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. (Woolf 56)

This passage depicts arriving at knowing, or revelation, in terms of physical sensations: It shows how body, by providing emotions and feelings, initiates the creation of knowledge and how knowing without feeling is impossible. About this extract, Park argues: “What may seem like contradictory cognitive processes —

thinking and feeling — in the conceptual scenography of the ‘two cultures’ are reshaped into a continuum of ‘feeling of knowing’ in Woolf” (113).

Damasio’s main thesis in his book *Descartes’ Error* is that “certain aspects of the process of emotion and feeling are indispensable for rationality” (xiii). Why should emotion and feeling play a part in reasoning? In other words, why “*reduction in emotion may constitute an equally important source of irrational behavior*” (53)? Damasio asserts that several brain systems are responsible for shaping reason which are located in both high and low regions of the brain: “The lower levels in the neural edifice of reason are the same ones that regulate the processing of emotions and feelings, along with the body functions necessary for an organism’s survival”; consequently, “these lower levels maintain direct and mutual relationships with virtually every bodily organ, thus placing the body directly within the chain of operations that generate the highest reaches of reasoning, decision making, and, by extension, social behavior and creativity” (xiii).

As discussed, emotions and feelings are necessary for reasoning and decision making. Septimus who “could not feel” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 96) is, thus, unable to think reasonably. Therefore, he finds the world “without meaning” (98); the way Septimus considers the world meaningless can be better explained through Damasio’s “somatic-marker” hypothesis. Damasio, very much like Woolf, emphasizes the direct influence of body on reasoning. Woolf, through the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, shows this influence and Damasio explicitly theorizes the idea. By somatic-marker Damasio means: “When the bad outcome connected with a given response option comes into mind, however fleetingly, you experience an unpleasant gut feeling. Because the feeling is about the body,” Damasio uses “the technical term *somatic* state (‘soma’ is Greek for body); and because it ‘marks’ an image,” he calls “it a *marker*” (*Descartes’ Error* 173).

To clarify the issue, the notion of value needs to be explored. Not surprisingly, Damasio considers a biological root for value-giving mechanism. He believes that “biological value moves up or down a scale relative to the life-effectiveness of the physical state. In a way, biological value is a surrogate of physiological efficiency” (*Self* 34). How does the value principle operate? This urge to optimal physical state “operates via reward and punishment devices as well as by drives and motivations, which are part and parcel of the emotion family” (75). In other words, the value-giving mechanism has both biological and environmental roots. In the biological root, value “comes from the original set of dispositions that orients our life regulation” (49). The cultural cause of value acts upon the biological root through the process of reward and punishment. In this level, value comes “from the

valuations that all images we have gradually acquired in our experience have been accorded, based on the original set of value dispositions during our past history” (49). The mechanism of value is the backbone of our behavior; for instance, brains “would signal the coming of goods with the release of a molecule, such as dopamine or oxytocin; or the coming of threats with cortisol-releasing hormone or prolactin. The release would in turn optimize the behavior required to obtain or avoid the delivery of the stimulus” (38). To conclude, the value principal manifests itself in our everyday life in the form of feelings of pleasure and pain: “*Optimal ranges express themselves in the conscious mind as pleasurable feelings; dangerous ranges, as not-so-pleasant or even painful feelings*” (39).

Therefore, emotions and feelings expand the repertoire of basic value by attaching it to different stimuli through the reward and punishment (in general, learning) mechanisms: “As a result of powerful learning mechanisms such as conditioning, emotions of all shades eventually help connect homeostatic regulation and survival ‘values’ to numerous events and objects in our autobiographical experience” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 66). Very much like what Damasio proposes, Septimus who cannot feel anymore is not capable of attaching values to different phenomena; therefore, he finds life meaningless: “Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose?” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 43). He is unable to produce feelings of pleasure and pain, which act as markers in giving value to a phenomenon or an image, in optimal or dangerous situations for survival. Consequently, this defect (as it was argued, the mechanism of value-giving corresponds to survival by ensuring optimal physical state) puts his survival in danger and finally leads to his suicide. In sum, the processes of value-giving, rational thinking, and decision-making — a good decision should enhance survival and its quality in a proper amount of time (Damasio, *Descartes’ Error* 169) — are defected in Septimus because of his inability to feel, which decreases his chances of survival and leads to his suicide.

To put it another way, “the somatic marker hypothesis offers a mechanism for how brains would execute a value-based selection of images and how that selection would translate in edited continuities of images. In other words, the principle for the selection of images was connected to life-management needs” (Damasio, *Self* 123). In contrast to the simplified view of consciousness which was dominant in Woolf’s time, Damasio believes that body, neurons, feelings and emotions have curtail roles in shaping one’s consciousness. Woolf, very much like Damasio and in contrast to the dominant idea of her time, depicts how body plays its important role in the fate of the characters. In a world which is changing constantly, this mechanism

of attaching values to different phenomena through emotions and feelings is compulsory. As a result of his inability to feel, the images shaped in Septimus' mind are not value-based to contribute to life management needs; therefore, he is unable to adjust his needs to his changing world. Thus, Septimus loses his attachment to the world:

Septimus, who believes his reason to be intact, but cannot feel, is a relic, staring back, on the edge of a lost world, whose spectacular rituals, written in the sky (the crowds stare up at the sky-writing plane) cease to mean. . . . The conventional beauty of the world shimmers distantly behind glass, while a new and sublime power strings the nerves of his body over rocks in a desert, ravelling them through the universe, promising a new and terrible beauty, a message only for him. (Waugh 35)

At the end of the novel when Clarissa — whose gift is “knowing people almost by instinct” (Woolf 39) — hears about Septimus' suicide, she feels “that she knows him, not through various facts but through her bodily responses to those facts” (Park 114). The bodily response is Clarissa's major characteristic. For example, she reacts to Septimus' death as follows: “Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window” (Woolf 168). How is it possible for Clarissa to feel that she knows Septimus without any previous encounters? A neuroscientific argument will shed light on this issue.

There is a biological explanation for empathy: “The brain can simulate certain emotional body states internally, as happens in the process of turning the emotion sympathy into a feeling of empathy” (Damasio, *Spinoza* 115). Mirror neurons play a crucial role in empathy. They allow “us to understand the actions of others by placing ourselves in a comparable body state” (Damasio, *Self* 72). Thus, Clarissa — who has “odd affinities . . . with people” that she has “never spoken to” (Woolf 145) — when is being told about that horrible accident in which Septimus died feels for a moment a sudden pain that reflects the pain Septimus suffered. Woolf aims for:

Exchanging the traditional representation of a character's social development for the expression of his or her individual psychological being, the external description of scene for the internal revelation of consciousness, and chronological narrative and dramatic plot for the flux of momentary thoughts and impressions that constitute mental life. (Parsons 53).

Through this feeling of empathy Clarissa discovers that she feels “somehow very like him” (170) not for a moment but for her lifetime; it may be curious that why does not she commit suicide like Septimus (or what has stopped her from committing suicide)? The upcoming sections endeavor to answer this question through the notions of self, consciousness, and social homeostasis and their relation to Marxism.

Mrs. Dalloway and Consciousness

Conscious is interrelated with self and knowing because “a sense of self was needed to make the signals that constitute the feeling of emotion known to the organism having the emotion” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 8). Thus, consciousness “is the unified mental pattern that brings together the object [which triggers an emotion] and the self” (12). Simply, but not thoroughly, “consciousness is *a state of mind in which there is knowledge of one’s own existence and of the existence of surroundings*” (Damasio, *Self* 110).

Damasio presupposes several facts in investigating consciousness. The first fact denotes that the process of consciousness is traceable to different regions and systems of the brain (*The Feeling* 18). The main conclusion to be drawn from this fact is that consciousness is related to biology, not belonging to spiritual or cogitum realm, which was the simplified and superficial view towards consciousness in Woolf’s time; though Woolf did not follow their notions and her ideas are very much like Damasio’s. This physical origin of consciousness is reflected in a passage in *Mrs. Dalloway* where nerves are compared to fiddle-strings waited to be fiddled to constitute consciousness: “She had some queer power of fiddling on one’s nerves, turning one’s nerves to fiddle-strings, yes” (Woolf 77).

The second fact is that wakefulness and low-level attention are not the same as consciousness. Wakefulness is different from consciousness because “in the wakeful state the brain and mind are ‘on,’ and images of the organism’s interior as well as the organism’s environment are being formed” while “consciousness may be absent” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 112). Low-level attention too can operate — it “can be driven to stimuli that conform to the basic needs of the organism” (112) — when consciousness is absent. For instance, while Septimus is awake and has low attention, his consciousness is impaired. In different occasions, he is not conscious of himself and his surroundings: Dr. Bradshaw claims that Septimus calls himself Christ (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 106). Therefore, consciousness could not be

diminished into its constituent parts such as wakefulness and low level attention.

The third fact is that “consciousness and emotion are *not* separable” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 18). Emotion, in return, is related to the body; thus, “experiences of bodily feelings are a deep and vital part of consciousness from a first-person, introspective perspective” (Damasio, *Self* 117). If consciousness is related to the body, then consciousness is a feeling: “Because the image of knowing originates in neural structures fundamentally associated with the representation of body states, the image of knowing is a feeling” (Parvizi and Damasio 139). In the beginning of *Mrs. Dalloway*, as discussed earlier, it is the sound of hinges that triggers Clarissa’s physical sensations to provoke her consciousness.

The next fact argues that consciousness is a private, first-person phenomenon: “The conscious state of mind is experienced in the exclusive, first-person perspective of each of our organisms, never observable by anyone else. The experience is owned by each of our organisms and by no other” (Damasio, *Self* 110). Woolf acknowledges this fact in her essay “On Being Ill”: “We do not know our own souls, let alone the souls of others” (*Selected Essays* 104). Woolf turns this notion into a technique in her writings to make known the thoughts of one character through the observation of another one; conversely, this method, more than anything else, illuminates the mentality of the observer rather than the one who is being observed. For example, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Milly Brush wonders about Richard’s reaction to the arrival of Peter Walsh and guesses that Richard “would go back directly after lunch and find Clarissa; that he would tell her, in so many words, that he loved her. Yes, he would say that” (Woolf 112). In contrast to what Milly thinks, when Richard comes back home, he does not tell Clarissa that he loves her. This difficulty of reaching to somebody’s consciousness finds its voice in Sally’s thought:

She knew nothing about them, only jumped to conclusions, as one does, for what can one know even of the people one lives with every day? She asked. Are we not all prisoners? She had read a wonderful play about a man who scratched on the wall of his cell, and she had felt that was true of life — one scratched on the wall. Despairing of human relationships (people were so difficult). (Woolf 175)

The last “fact is that consciousness is not a monolith” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 23); it means that Damasio categorizes different kinds of consciousness.

Mrs. Dalloway and Core Consciousness

In order to understand core consciousness, first we should take a look at “protoself”: “A coherent collection of neural patterns which map, moment by moment, the state of the physical structure of the organism in its many dimensions” (Parvizi and Damasio 138). Damasio believes that when protoself is affected by images of an object, the process of core consciousness begins: Core consciousness is “the imaged relationship of the interaction between an object and the changed organism state it causes” (Parvizi and Damasio 135); this imaged relationship leads to knowledge: “Consciousness is knowledge, knowledge consciousness” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 32). Core self, which acts upon the protoself, is “the protagonist of core consciousness”; it is “the sort of self on which our current knowing is centered” (Parvizi and Damasio 138). Thus, core self is “the transient protagonist of consciousness, generated for any object that provokes the core-consciousness mechanism. Because of the permanent availability of provoking objects, it is continuously generated and thus appears continuous in time” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 220).

Woolf has a modern idea of self; very much like Damasio, Woolf delineates self as an active ingredient of *Mrs. Dalloway*. In the following passage, Clarissa’s protoself is changed by the images of the glass, dressing-table, bottles, and finally the image of herself in the glass. This change of protoself is accompanied by knowledge, “the knowledge that your protoself has been changed by an object that has just become salient in the mind” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 214). Finally, this process of knowing leads to a sense of self as the protagonist in that act of experiencing the glass, dressing table, bottles, and her image in the glass:

Clarissa (crossing to the dressing-table) plunged into the very heart of the moment, transfixed it, there — the moment of this June morning on which was the pressure of all the other mornings, seeing the glass, the dressing-table, and all the bottles afresh, collecting the whole of her at one point (as she looked into the glass), seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself. (Woolf 59)

Therefore, Clarissa knows it is she that is seeing all those things; in other words, the process of knowing all those things needs a character to see, to “drew the parts together” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 60); it needs “one centre, one diamond” (60); it needs a self; it needs Clarissa. Lehrer believes that it is the self that helps Clarissa to continue her life: “Unlike Septimus, Clarissa compensates for her fragmentary

being. . .Mrs. Dalloway *does* draw herself together. She makes herself real” (177). Nonetheless, this paper shares a different point of view from Lehrer in what saves Clarissa and what leads to Septimus’ suicide (it would be argued in the upcoming sections).

Core consciousness has other characteristics. For example, it “provides the organism with a sense of self about one moment — now — and about one place — here. The scope of core consciousness is the here and now” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 19); in addition, the process of learning, memory, language, reasoning, and creativity is not within the range of core consciousness (153-54). This one-moment-aboutness of core consciousness can be found in Woolf’s style: Images of people and things haunt the characters’ minds in a specific moment when no concern for the future and no torture of the past exist. There is only the perception of here and now which leads to the characters’ flash of happiness. For example, in a passage it is noted that “what she [Clarissa] loved was this, here, now, in front of her; the fat lady in the cab” (Woolf 39); or, Clarissa on her way to buy flowers sees, core consciousnessly, different things and feels the joy of the moment:

In people’s eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (Woolf 36)

This kind of perception and the pleasure of it are prevalent in *Mrs. Dalloway*. This special knowledge provided by core consciousness, free of the anxiety of the future and the torture of bringing the past into the here and now, corresponds to the notion of seize the day. However, the prominent characters in this novel feel dissatisfied with life. What are their problems? The answer to this question would clarify the same ontological problems occurring in the literary texts especially in the modernist novels — for the befuddled characters — which are mostly concerned with the psyche, memory, and consciousness of the characters.

***Mrs. Dalloway* and Extended Consciousness**

While “core consciousness is a simple biological phenomenon, and its mental aspect is comparably simple; it operates in stable fashion across the lifetime of the organism; and it is not dependent on conventional memory, working memory, reasoning, or language”; “extended consciousness is a complex biological

phenomenon and is mentally layered across levels of information; it evolves during the lifetime of the organism; it depends on memory; and it is enhanced by language” (Damasio and Meyer 6). In addition, while core consciousness “provides the organism with a sense of self about one moment, now, and about one place, here” (6); extended consciousness “places that person at a point in individual historical time, richly aware of the lived past and of the anticipated future, and keenly cognizant of the world beside it” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 19). Furthermore, core consciousness “is put in place by the genome with a little help from the early environment”; “extended consciousness is also laid out by the genome, but culture can significantly influence its development in each individual” (251).

An example clears the difference between core consciousness and extended consciousness. When you have a feeling of pain for a short moment, it is core consciousness which provides this knowledge. However, extended consciousness attaches this feeling of pain to your past experiences and your anticipated future:

Rather than just accessing the fact that you have pain, you can also survey the facts concerning where the pain is (the elbow), what caused it (tennis), when you last had it before (three years ago, or was it four?), who has also had it recently (Aunt Maggie), the doctor she went to (Dr. May, or was it Dr. Nichols?), the fact that you will not be able to play with Jack tomorrow. (Damasio, *The Feeling* 247)

Autobiographical self is the protagonist of extended consciousness: “The autobiographical self is based on autobiographical memory which is constituted by implicit memories of multiple instances of individual experience of the past and of the anticipated future” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 217). How does the mechanism of extended consciousness work? Autobiographical memories “can be reactivated as a neural pattern and made explicit as images whenever needed. Each reactivated memory operates as a “something-to-be-known” and generates its own pulse of core consciousness. The result is the autobiographical self of which we are conscious” (217).

All these discussions lead to the conclusion that the humans’ problems are, partly, ontological due to extended consciousness: “The drama of the human condition comes solely from consciousness. Of course, consciousness and its revelations allow us to create a better life for self and others, but the price we pay for that better life is high” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 398). What are the high prices that we pay for extended consciousness? “It is not just the price of risk and danger

and pain. It is the price of *knowing* risk, danger, and pain. Worse even: it is the price of knowing what pleasure is and *knowing* when it is missing or unattainable” (398). It may be argued, why should we assume that “consciousness and memory . . . result in the human drama and confer upon that drama a tragic status, then and now” (Damasio, *Spinoza* 271) while extended consciousness can also fetch moments of happiness from the past and turn happiness to bliss? We have six primary or universal emotions: “Fear, anger, sadness, happiness, disgust, and surprise” (Damasio, *Self* 85). Among these emotions, only happiness is pleasurable to feel — at least four of these emotions (fear, anger, sadness, and disgust) are painful to feel. Therefore, the range of painful feelings is more than pleasurable feelings in constituting our consciousness (of course, these varied emotions and their feelings have evolutionary reasons to contribute to survival).

This tragic characteristic of extended consciousness is fairly transferred and intensified by Woolf’s specific style of writing that she claims she has discovered: “I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; . . . The idea is that the caves shall connect, and each comes to daylight at the present moment” (qtd. in Nalbantian 83). It is by remembering the past (for example, rejecting Peter’s proposal, remembering Sally’s kiss), anticipating the future (Ms. Kliman’s dominance over Elizabeth, age, death, and the ruination of her party), and connecting them to the present as “being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more” (Woolf 40) that she feels her devastating feelings: “She always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day” (39). However, what does lead to Septimus’ suicide? In other words, if Clarissa, like Septimus, feels those ontological anxieties due to consciousness, why does not she commit suicide?

Marxism and “Social Homeostasis”

Extended consciousness leads to a notion that Damasio calls “social homeostasis.” Basic homeostasis, or “the life regulation system” (Damasio, “Human Values” 48), “refers to the coordinated and largely automated physiological reactions required to maintain steady internal states in a living organism” (Damasio, *The Feeling* 46). These unconscious, automated processes of life regulation include metabolic regulation, basic reflexes, immune responses, pain and pleasure behaviors, drives and motivations, and emotions-proper (Damasio, *Spinoza* 32). We are born with these devices “to solve *automatically*, no proper reasoning required, the basic problems of life” (30).

Damasio also contends that extended consciousness “armed with complex selves and supported by strong capabilities of memory, reasoning, and language,

created the instruments of culture and opened the way for new means of homeostasis at the level of societies and culture”; therefore, “homeostasis was extended into the sociocultural space” (“Brain and Consciousness” 54). Damasio looks at culture in a survival-oriented perspective. He believes that “social conventions and ethical rules may be seen in part as extensions of the basic homeostatic arrangements at the level of society and culture” because “the outcome of applying the rules is the same as the outcome of basic homeostatic devices such as metabolic regulation or appetites: a balance of life to ensure survival and well-being” (*Spinoza* 168-69). In other words, it is consciousness, especially extended consciousness, that “enabled humans to repeat the leitmotif of life regulation by means of a collection of cultural instruments — economic exchange, religious beliefs, social conventions and ethical rules, laws, arts, science, technology” (Damasio, *Self* 41-2). In sum, sociocultural homeostasis controls and optimizes the workings of basic homeostasis because both “aim at a goal compatible with . . . survival *and* a state of well-being” (Damasio and Damasio 4). This section assimilates the neuroscientific notion of social homeostasis (with its root in biology) into the notion of hegemony or discourse to update and amend Marxist cultural theory, to save it from nature/nurture dualism, in order to explain Clarissa’s will to live and Septimus’ act of killing himself.

Septimus

Septimus is the victim of an earlier dominant discourse which resulted in his participation in the war. After being shell-shocked, his symbolic insanity — rejection of dominant hegemony — rises because he is enlightened: “Who was the greatest of mankind, Septimus, lately taken from life to death, the Lord who had come to renew society” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 51). Although he knows that he would suffer, “suffering for ever, the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer” (Woolf 51), he is eager to announce his message of change to prime minister and the Cabinet: “Trees are alive; next, there is no crime; next, love, universal love” (Woolf 82). Authorities attribute this questioning of their power to Septimus’ madness that is going to be treated by Dr. Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw, two figures who are representatives of the rules and power of dominant class that eliminate any resistance to their dominance: “Laden with Holmes and Bradshaw, men who never weighed less than eleven stone six . . . men who made ten thousand a year . . . judges they were; who mixed the vision and the sideboard; saw nothing clear, yet ruled, yet inflicted” (142).

Dr. Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw

Dr. Holmes starts his treatment by belittling Septimus’ uprising to make it seem unimportant and to divert attention from the oppressive nature of rules to the issue

of health: Septimus “had nothing whatever seriously the matter with him but was a little out of sorts” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 48). Dr. Holmes encourages Rezia “to make her husband . . . take an interest in things outside himself” (48). This taking-an-interest-in-outside-things treatment implies a process of conformity, a plan for conversion. This conformist prescription is controlled constantly: “Dr. Holmes came quite regularly every day” (101). This is the reason that Septimus feels that his freedom is violated: “Holmes was on him” (101). Dr. Holmes’ taking-an-interest-in-outside-things verdict fails because wherever Septimus looks, he sees the devastating nature of dominant hegemony — “he had only to open his eyes; but a weight was on them; a fear” (83) — such as how his friend, Evans, died in the war; how he suffers from shell shock, to the extent that he cannot feel anymore; how his freedom is violated; and how he is going to be deprived of communicating with others while “communication is health; communication is happiness” (101). To escape from this oppression, he takes shelter in dreams to draw attention to how a society should be and starts writing them as an announcement: “Men must not cut down trees. There is a God. (He noted such revelations on the backs of envelopes.) Change the world. No one kills from hatred. Make it known” (50).

As Dr. Holmes’ method of conforming Septimus is not fruitful, Sir William Bradshaw enters the scene. Sir William’s method of converting is more systematic: “He swooped; he devoured. He shut people up” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 108). Sir William believes that the “unsocial impulses” are “bred more than anything by the lack of good blood”; therefore, they should hold “in control” (108). In sum, he counsels “submission,” uphold “authority,” and points “out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion” (108).

Septimus is diagnosed as “not having a sense of proportion” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 104). Thus, Sir William prescribes “rest, rest, rest; a long rest in bed. There was a delightful home down in the country where . . . [Septimus] would be perfectly looked after” (104). In order not to contaminate the minds of other people, Sir William’s verdict is that Septimus has to be quarantined until his conversion is accomplished. This policy of quarantine, as well as money making by quarantine, is what the narrator condemns: “Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion” (106).

Finally, it is the arrival of Dr. Holmes — whose physical power symbolizes his oppressive nature, “Holmes was a powerfully built man” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 142) — in Septimus’ house by “putting her[Rezia] aside,” “like a little hen” (142),

that makes Septimus jump out of the window against his will: “He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot” (143). Septimus does not want to kill himself because this is what the rulers demand, to get rid of him: “The whole world was clamouring: Kill yourself, kill yourself, for our sakes. But why should he kill himself for their sakes?” (101). After he finds that his freedom is going to be violated and his message is going to be silenced by being quarantined, he delivers his last message publicly by throwing himself out of the window — as Clarissa denotes, “death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate” (169) — to draw attention to the brutality of oppressive rulers and rules which led to his death.

Clarissa

Clarissa has the support of dominant rulers to eliminate harmful social-life situations that afflict Septimus. In other words, Clarissa compensates for her dissatisfaction with life through social homeostasis. Her dissatisfaction with life is due to two specific points in her life: The idyllic, pastoral past in Bourton and her present situation as a powerful class of society in London, the wife of Mr. Dalloway. Bourton is the symbol of a utopian society: Free from societal hegemony and ethical rules where Sally Kisses Clarissa and runs nakedly through the house. This happy pastoral life is about to end for Clarissa by Richard’s proposal and their subsequent move to London, capital of imperialism. Sally is the free spirit (representative of freedom from hegemony) who warns Peter to save Clarissa from marrying Richard “who would ‘stifle her soul’ . . . make a mere hostess of her, encourage her worldliness” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 88). Interestingly, Sally’s prediction comes true when Clarissa’s choice of bonding with hegemony and dominant class (Richard, the conservative politician, as its symbol) dissatisfies her; Clarissa’s bond with dominant class splits her identity and results in her alienation: She feels “invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway” (40).

Clarissa’s conformity leads to self-alienation, “death of her soul” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 76). In other words, Clarissa sacrifices her identity — “with a mind of her own, she must always be quoting Richard” (89) — in order to be a part of the ruling class. In return, she compensates for her alienation through social homeostasis which is governed by the dominant class to serve their benefits. To put it another way, the cultural homeostasis that resulted in different cultural systems such as religion, customs and traditions, laws, etc., is governed by the dominant class, in which Clarissa is a part with her marriage to Richard. Therefore, she is entitled to

use the benefits of social homeostasis designed for continuation of life and power of the dominant class. For example, although she is low-minded — “could not think, write, even play the piano. She muddled Armenians and Turks; loved success; hated discomfort; must be liked; talked oceans of nonsense: and to this day, ask her what the Equator was, and she did not know” (123) — she is respected; unlike Septimus, Clarissa is not considered mad to be quarantined.

Even Clarissa’s party, where the prime minister attends, represents the fact that she is a part of the rulers of the society; therefore, she has the laws and rulers on her side: This issue gives her hope and strength to advance through life without being oppressed the way Septimus is oppressed. In addition, the party represents, in miniature, the society in which Clarissa lives; a society with class divisions where the servants prepare and the upper-classes use. In a passage in the novel when Clarissa enters her house, the sight of Lucy her maid, the whistling of the cook, and the sound of typing machine make her feel “blessed and purified” (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 54), consequently she thanks Richard for providing this condition: “Must one repay in daily life to servants, yes, to dogs and canaries, above all to Richard her husband, who was the foundation of it — of the gay sounds, of the green lights, of the cook even whistling” (54).

The arrival of Peter — who was a part of the idyllic, light-hearted, discourseless life in Bourton — in Clarissa’s house brings back and intensifies the contrast between the past and the present: “A person associated with the past brings back the past with him. . . . Nonetheless, the sudden and unexpected sight of her former lover, Peter Walsh, provokes real visual associated memories of the countryside place which circumscribed that past” (Nalbantian 84). In a passage of the novel, through a symbolic fight with Peter, Clarissa tries not to yield to this threat of splitting her mind between the present and the past, which she has already solved by her conformity to rules and conventions of upper class to take advantage of their power:

What an extraordinary habit that was, Clarissa thought; always playing with a knife. Always making one feel, too, frivolous; empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox; as he used. But I too, she thought, and, taking up her needle, summoned, like a Queen . . . summoned to her help the things she did; the things she liked; her husband; Elizabeth; her self. (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 64-5)

In order to defeat Peter (or her yearning for the past represented by Peter who is like a chatterbox always singing in her ears of past happiness), Clarissa counts on Richard, the symbol of dominant rulers; Elizabeth, the symbol of her deep bond

with dominant class; and her converted, conformed self.

Finally, the transient moment of epiphany for Clarissa is triggered when she hears about Septimus' suicide. Consequently, she discovers the oppressive effect of her class on others. Then she, first, blames Dr. Bradshaw (he is "capable of some indescribable outrage — forcing your soul" [Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 169]) and, subsequently, herself for Septimus' death: "Somehow it was her disaster — her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress" (169).

After this self-criticism, Clarissa yearns for Bourton: "And once she had walked on the terrace at Bourton" (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* 169). However, as mentioned, this moment of enlightenment is transitory because the lures of belonging to the dominant class and benefiting from its advantages are too powerful to be ignored: Clarissa "would have to go back; the rooms were still crowded; people kept on coming" (169).

Conclusion

Optimal life condition is the principal aim of both Marxism and consciousness. Marxism investigates socioeconomic relations to find the roots of harmful life conditions in order to abolish them. This is where one of the flaws of Marxism lies. Marxists believe that our experiences are solely shaped by socioeconomic systems: This way of arguing leads to nurture/nature dualism. This reductionism inherent in Marxist theory is modified and updated in this article by linking it to the notion of social homeostasis theorized by Antonio Damasio. Social homeostasis, rules and conventions of society, is the result of the biological phenomenon of consciousness — these rules are the "extensions of the basic homeostatic arrangements at the level of society and culture" (Damasio, *Spinoza* 168). Therefore, sociocultural homeostasis optimizes the workings of basic homeostasis to ensure survival in a wider zone, society, and to improve the quality of life: These social conventions and rules provide the "additional layers of control [which] shape instinctual behavior so that it can be adapted flexibly to a complex and rapidly changing environment and ensure survival for the individual and for others" (Damasio, *Descartes' Error* 124).

Only if the culture is healthy are the benefits of social homeostasis provided for all people living in that society. Thus, this article endeavored to modify Marxist's cultural critique by substituting the notion of hegemony or discourse for neuroscientific notion of social homeostasis to describe how an unhealthy culture with exclusiveness of power to a particular class deprived Septimus of his

freedom and of gaining optimal life situation. In other words, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, while Clarissa is supported by social laws and rulers, Septimus is not only excluded from society but also deprived of his freedom, his basic desire, by those similar laws. This relativity of social laws is more emphasized when Clarissa has some of the symptoms of madness, but her sense of proportion, unlike Septimus, is not considered lost. To conclude, Clarissa takes advantage of social conventions and rules while they lead to Septimus' death; in other words, social homeostasis reduces Clarissa's and dominant rulers' pains for the price of contributing to Septimus' pain.

Thus, the collaboration between science and literature is needed because of the following advantages. First, this collaboration contributes to literature by updating or amending the stale, invalid, indeterminate theories and methodologies of literary criticism that led to a crisis by producing, even if producing, defunct knowledge, which does not match or correspond to existing knowledge in other scientific and, even, humanistic fields. Therefore, a transdisciplinary neuroscientific approach assimilates valid scientific theories into itself to analyze a work of art without contradicting the valid principles of other fields of knowledge. Second, this collaboration is beneficial to neuroscience as well: Neuroscience can use "literature as a laboratory for the workings of the mind" (Nalbantian 1) because literature provides the subjective experience of the objective facts of neuroscience. A collaboration between literary study and science is indispensable for having valid theories and methodologies in literary criticism. Thus, the neuroscientific approach will refresh the humanist fields and can contribute to close the divide between the literary and scientific cultures, so that it may open new vistas for future researches and ideas.

*all italics are original

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The Madness of Freddie Montgomery of John Banville's *The Book of Evidence* (1989)

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Abstract In *The Book of Evidence* (1989) John Banville makes apt use of his unreliable narrator, Freddie Montgomery to elicit a subtext on the inevitable “madness” of the colonizer trapped in an anachronistic identity of superiority in a changing post-colonial environment. This argument suggests two ways of interpreting the madness of the outdated superior colonizer as depicted by Banville. On the one hand, the anachronistic colonial discourse of the colonizer appears to become categorized as madness by the new dominating discourses of a changing society. Meanwhile, the inability to discard the identity of superiority in an environment in which the colonial structures of Manichean allegory and mimesis no longer prevail, leads to the colonizer’s alienation and ultimate mental degeneration into a disorder akin to Fanon’s descriptions of colonial psychosis in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961).

Key words Post-colonialism; Banville; madness; hybridity; Irish; narrative

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Some argue that John Banville’s work springs from a Beckettian school while others perceive a Joycean influence¹. There are those too who maintain his novels tell a single story, postmodern in essence². In light of such arguments this paper sets itself a humble task; a post-colonial reading of *The Book of Evidence* (1989) in its

1 Powell, Kersti Tarien. “‘Not a son but a survivor’: Beckett...Joyce...Banville.” *The Yearbook of English Studies*. Vol. 35. *Irish Writing since 1950* (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2005) 201.

2 Jackson, Tony E. “Science, Art, and the Shipwreck of Knowledge: The Novels of John Banville.” *Contemporary Literature*. 38.3 (Autumn, 1997): 510-533.

own right. The following discussion proposes that the “madness” of the narrator, Freddie Montgomery stems from his inability to shed his colonialist identity for a more contemporary hybrid one. In *Inventing Ireland*, Declan Kiberd argues that “the seamless garment once wrapped like a green flag around Cathleen ní Houlihan has given way to a quilt of many patches [...]. Irish or English, rural or urban, Gaelic or Anglo, each [with] its part in the pattern” (653). Freddie Montgomery of Banville’s prize-winning *The Book of Evidence* would seem the last stand in a long history of resistance within his own family to this Irish post-colonial hybridity which corrals his outdated discourse of ascendancy into the discourse of madness. Without an inferior colonized Other to define it, Montgomery’s identity presents as an act.

Application of the narrative theories of Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan unravels the intricacies of Montgomery’s character from the subtext of his story. Banville’s subversive presentation of Montgomery as an unreliable narrator has the effect of continually focusing attention away from Montgomery’s story and back onto Montgomery himself, allowing a story of colonial madness to unfold somewhere between our narrator and the book of evidence he thinks he is writing.¹

Meanwhile, although Montgomery’s lifelong role as colonialist could well stem more from mimicry than his mother’s Dutch ancestry, regardless of the root of this assumed identity of superiority, the root of Montgomery’s insanity can be argued to lie in his inability to shed this acquired identity for a more authentic contemporary one. This discussion offers two interpretations of the apparent psychosis that ensues due to Montgomery’s inability to discard the role of superior colonizer when colonial discourse no longer prevails. On the one hand, in clinging to an anachronistic identity, Montgomery, the colonizer experiences alienation and the subsequent onset of a madness akin to Franz Fanon’s descriptions of colonial psychosis in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Alternatively, the colonizer’s outdated colonial discourse of superiority can be interpreted as having become marginalized into the discourse of madness by newer societal discourses for which the Manichean allegory of superior colonizer/inferior colonized bears no relevance.

Mimic-man Montgomery on the Colonial Stage

“For it is the condition of the ruler that he shall spend his life in trying to impress

1 Jones, Patricia, and Jennifer Lee. “The Madness of Lemuel Gulliver.” *The Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature* 58.2 (June, 2016): 1-22. With Jennifer Lee I have applied the same theories (on colonialism, madness and first-person narration) to offer a similar colonial interpretation of the madness of Lemuel Gulliver of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (“The Madness of Lemuel Gulliver”).

the ‘natives’ [...]. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it” (Orwell “Shooting an Elephant” 19-20). The madness of Montgomery can be interpreted as having germinated from a colonial stage on which the colonizer was as much a victim trapped in his role as superior colonizer as the inferior colonized with whom he was in perpetual juxtaposition. While Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant”(1936) highlights the psychological trauma the role of colonizer inflicts on the colonialist narrator within the colonial environment, *The Book of Evidence* demonstrates the inflexibility of this colonialist identity in more hybrid environments which challenge the narrator’s colonialist identity and subsequently instigate his madness: “I [*Freddie*] must be careful not to give in to despair, to that aboulia which has been a threat always to everything I tried to do” (219). Abdul JanMohamed argues that the dominant model of power relations in all colonial societies is the Manichean opposition between the superiority of the European and the supposed inferiority of the native (87). This Manichean allegory is reinforced, according to Stephen Slemon, by ideology, reintroduced through the strategic deployment of a vast semiotic field of representations in literary works, travelogues, exploration, maps, documents, etc., (47). However, as illustrated in Lamming’s *In the Castle of my Skin* (1953) the Manichean allegory of superior colonizer and inferior colonized is complicated by the concept of “mimicry”: “Direct contact with the landlord might have helped towards some understanding of what the others, meaning the white, were like, but the overseer who nominally was a mediator had functioned like a bridge which might be used, but not for crossing from one end to the other” (20). According to Homi K. Bhabha, colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, “as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (*The Location of Culture* 122)¹. Benita Parry argues that “for purposes of administration and exploitation of resources, the native was constructed as a programmed, ‘nearly-served’ other of the European and not as its binary opposite ...” (37). However, the following extract, from Orwell’s *Burmese Days* (1934), illustrates not only how the colonizer, when necessary, promoted the native to the elevated position of a go-between or “mimic man” (in the image of the colonial

1 In *In the Castle of my Skin*, George Lamming portrays instances of mimicry which reflect the successful creation of “mimic men” by British governors in their colonies: Patrolling the land at all hours of the day were the village overseers. They were themselves villagers who were granted special favours [...] They were fierce, aggressive and strict. [...] Even the better educated who had one way or another gone to the island’s best schools and later held responsible posts in the Government service, even these were affected by [an] image of the enemy [...] and the enemy was My People. (18)

self), but also how the colonizer required the native to be inferior and Other:

“Butler!” yelled Ellis, and as the butler appeared, “go and wake that bloody chokra up!”

“Yes, master.”

“And butler!”

“Yes, master?”

“How much ice have we got left?”

“’bout twenty pounds, master. Will only last today, I think. I find it very difficult to keep ice cool now.”

“Don’t talk like that, damn you. “I find it very difficult!” Have you swallowed a dictionary? “Please, master, can’t keeping ice cool” —that’s how you ought to talk. We shall have to sack this fellow if he gets to talk English too well. I can’t stick servants who talk English. D’you hear, butler?” (23)

In a way the colonialist identity of Freddie Montgomery resembles a case of mimicry gone wrong. Despite how well he plays the colonialist part, there are subtle but fundamental flaws in Montgomery’s role. For example, while he might describe his mother as exhibiting “the broad brow and high cheekbones of her Dutch forebears” (51), he also refers to her as barely literate (44) and with the “broad face and heavy hair of a tinker’s wife” (41). Montgomery’s father was not a Protestant but a “Castle Catholic”¹. While Montgomery might at times refer to him as a country squireen, his mother describes her husband as “a mick”: “I should have known better, she said, than to marry a mick” (60). Neither does Montgomery’s sexuality conform to his colonialist identity. According to Ashis Nandy, colonialism “produced a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity” (*The Intimate Enemy* 4). However, the colonial Victorian upper class was expected to “affirm its masculinity through sexual distance, abstinence and self-control” (10). This does not coincide with the picture Montgomery presents of his sexuality:

1 Lamming, George. *In the Castle of my Skin*. U.K.: Longman Group Ltd., 1953. The term “Castle Catholic” suggests that Freddie’s family, apparently on his father’s side, descended from the Catholic Anglo-Norman or Old English community. The irony here is that these Old English Catholics allied themselves alongside the Gaelic Irish against King Billy at the battle of the Boyne and Aughrim (Fitzpatrick *Seventeenth Century Ireland* 1). Thus history would seem to undermine Freddie’s reference to his fellow Irish as Other.

Those burning noons, in that room and countless others like it — my God, I tremble to think of them now. I could not resist her careless nudity, the weight and density of that glimmering flesh [...] I liked to watch the island men, too, hunched over their pastis and their thimbles of turbid coffee, swivelling their lizard eyes as she went past. That's right, you bastards, yearn, yearn. (8-10)

Meanwhile, Montgomery, despite the identity of superiority he assumes, seems only too aware of his sameness to his Other: "I looked in their eyes and saw myself ennobled there, and so could forget for a moment what I was, a paltry, shivering thing, just like them, full of longing and loathing, solitary, afraid, racked by doubts, and dying" (11). Indeed, at times he seems to class himself as inferior to the Irish Other: "Ah, these poor, simple lives, so many, across which I have dragged my trail of slime" (93). Montgomery's distinguished heritage is almost that of the colonizer but not quite and with the "strong mixture of Catholic and Calvinist blood [*coursing*] in [*his*] veins" (98), subsequently raises suspicions regarding its possible mimetic origin. However, regardless of from where it stems, the prime function of Montgomery's assumed identity is to distinguish him from the Irish: "I thought it hardly appropriate for a woman of my mother's position in society — her position! — in society! — to be so chummy with a stable-girl" (74). Whether it originates from a true colonialist ancestry or an Irish ancestry modelled into mimicry, Montgomery's assumed identity is, nonetheless, an inheritance of sorts, his father also having seen fit to distinguish himself from the Irish Other: "My father never referred to the place as anything but Kingstown: he had no time for the native jabber" (27).

Rejection of Hybridity

Despite the complication of mimesis Montgomery's madness can be interpreted as stemming from his inability to re-adjust from the superior pole of the Manichean allegory to a position of hybridity more in tune with the times. Hybridity, according to Bhabha "displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (112). In other words, hybridity both decenters and undermines the colonial Manichean allegory of inferior colonized and superior colonizer. Meanwhile, although the colonized redefines himself outside this colonial identity of inferior colonized, the new identity he forges, while not determined by its colonial roots, is still influenced by

the colonial experience. For example, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) Fanon suggests that both the colonized negro and the colonizer whiteman must “disalienate” themselves from their previously held colonial identities in an “effort to recapture the self and to scrutinize the self” (231). For Bhabha, however, it is only through the exploration of the binary opposites of the Manichean allegory and hybridity, a third space between them, that the politics of polarity may be evaded (56).

However, hybridity, the gateway to “the others of ourselves” (56) is not so easily embraced by Montgomery, and unfortunately his assumed superior identity as one of the “gilded children of poor old addled Europe” (66) has definition only in its difference to an inferior Other: “We presided among this rabble, Daphne and I, with a kind of grand detachment, like an exiled king and queen waiting daily for word of the counter-rebellion and the summons from the palace to return” (10). However, Kiberd’s post-colonial Ireland would seem to have left Freddie and his lineage with no inferior binary opposite from which to mirror back a superior identity of the self. The following lines display Montgomery’s difficulty in adjusting his identity to more hybrid times:

I suspect she [*Joanne*] was as surprised as I when the will was read. I find it hard to see her as the mistress of Coolgrange. Perhaps that is what my mother intended-after her, the drip. Ah, that is unworthy of me, my new seriousness. I do not hate her for disinheriting me. I think that in her way she was trying to teach me something, to make me look more closely at things, perhaps, to pay more attention to people, such as this poor clumsy girl, with her freckles and her timid smile and her almost invisible eyebrows. (220)

The Colonizer Resists Decolonization

Gerry Smyth in *The Novel and the Nation* (1997) considers the violence of colonialism and decolonization one of the major reasons for the reoccurrence of madness as a theme in Irish fiction (48). According to Smyth, the decolonizing subject, should he attempt to resist the colonial logic of the Manichean allegory or mimesis, becomes in danger of alienation and may slip into a madness which only cements the opposition between (rational) colonizer and (irrational) colonized (49). Using the arguments of both Ashis Nandy and Franz Fanon, Smyth emphasizes how the decolonizing subject’s resistance to colonization from within the psychological rules set by the rulers means that the subject remains a victim of alien modes of thought, trapped within a colonialist logic of Self and Other (49-50). However, issues of decolonization preoccupy both colonizer as well as colonized as the

character of Mr Flory of Orwell's *Burmese Days* exemplifies, Flory, embodying all the characteristics, not of the colonized but of the colonizer in the process of mental decolonization:

Was it possible that they could go on [...] repeating word for word the same evil-minded drivell [...]. What a civilisation is this of ours — this godless civilisation founded on whisky, Blackwood's and the 'Bonzo' pictures! God have mercy on us, for all of us are part of it.

Flory did not say any of this, and he was at some pains not to show it in his face. (31)

Although Flory himself is tormented in his role as superior colonizer over the native Burmese he, nonetheless, conforms to it: "'Steady on,' he said at last, sullenly and rather feebly. 'Steady on. There's no need to get so excited. I never suggested having any native members in here'" (22).

How does this manner of resistance to colonialism apply to Montgomery? Freddie's identity can indeed be interpreted as stemming from the Self/Other logic of colonialism. However, his madness stems not from any attempt on his part to resist colonialism from either inside or outside the colonial system as described by Smyth¹. His madness stems rather from a resistance on his part to decolonize. By way of example, a similar reluctance to decolonize could be argued to lie at the root of Gabriel Conroy's isolation from his housemaids, peers and wife in James Joyce's "The Dead" (1914)². Although he does not descend into madness, Conroy

1 Smyth, Gerry. *The Novel and the Nation*. London: Pluto Press, 1997. According to Smyth, a decolonizing subject may also resist colonialism by refusing to conform to its structures of Manichean allegory and mimesis. If the decolonizing subject resists colonialism from outside its structures he, likewise, risks becoming alienated to such a degree that insanity may take hold (49-50).

2 Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce: The First Revision of the 1959 Classic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. Ireland's struggle to shake off the shackles of colonialism was underway long before 1921. In the biography *James Joyce*, Richard Ellmann describes in detail the backdrop of Irish nationalism against which Joyce's character was formed (33) and out of which Joyce was later to forge a lot of his writing (245). Ellmann elaborates in detail on John Joyce's devotion to Parnell's struggle for Irish Home Rule in the 1880s, stressing the impact of the father's politics on the young James. Ellmann also highlights the young James Joyce's own, at times, differences of opinion with Arthur Griffith of the *United Irishman* on the issue of patriotism in literature (112). Irish nationalism was much in the air in Dublin at the turn of the twentieth century due to Parnell's legacy but also due to the revival of the Irish language, Irish sports and the writings of W.B. Yeats

seems to have descended into an isolation instigated by his reluctance, in the face of Ireland's growing nationalism, to discard what could be described as a mimetic identity. Conroy, whom Miss Ivors reproachfully describes as a "West-Briton" (1595), asserts not only that Irish is not his language but that he is sick of his own country (1596). However, while Gabriel's resistance to Irish nationalism and the discarding of his (arguably) mimetic identity only seems to isolate him from wife, peers and servants, Montgomery's resistance to decolonization triggers the onset of his insanity. When deprived of an opportunity to play his superior colonialist role, Montgomery becomes adrift on a sea of random roles that he puts on or off like a life-jacket, only faster:

[...] for a while, for an hour or two, posing as Charlie's factotum, [...] I fell into a certain manner that was not my own and that yet seemed, even to me, no less authentic, or plausible, at least, than my real self. (My real self!) I became Frederick the Indispensable, Mr French's famous man, without whom that crusty, moneyed old bachelor would not be able to survive. (178)

Colonial Psychosis or Madman's Marginalized Discourse?

Nandy stresses the mental damage that colonialism does to the oppressor as well as to the oppressed (2). Meanwhile, according to Fanon the "victors" in the colonial encounter "are ultimately camouflaged victims, at an advanced stage of psychosocial decay" (*The Wretched of the Earth* XVI). The following quote from *Nandy* illustrates the general inability of the superior colonizer, in this case a police inspector/torturer, to discard his superior colonizer identity outside its context and the inevitable psychosis which ensues:

But what really frightened him was one evening when his wife had criticised him particularly for hitting his children too much. (She had even said to him 'My word, anyone'd think you were going mad.') He threw himself upon her, beat her and tied her to a chair, saying to himself, 'I'll teach her once and for all that I'm master in this house.' (215)

Montgomery's petrified colonialist identity in a modern Ireland could be interpreted as running in a similar vein to that of the subject's in this example in so far as and others. "The Dead" was published in 1914. However, according to Ellmann, Joyce worked on the story between 1904 and 1908 and based the characters on relations and people he knew in the Dublin of his day (244).

Montgomery is unable to shake off his colonial role on the postcolonial stage where it is no longer appropriate. However, his madness can also be read in the Foucaultian sense of a discourse marginalized into the category of madness by society's more dominant discourses. Even in the face of a murder conviction, Montgomery seems unable to consider his situation outside an anachronistic discourse of colonial superiority: "That was when I realised, for the first time, it was *one of theirs* I had killed" (211). According to Foucault, the production of discourse or "will to truth" in every society is controlled, selected, organized and circulated according to procedures whose function it is to avert the powers and dangers of discourse (52). In other words, societal structures tend to nurture a discourse which maintains the status quo while marginalizing any discourse that threatens it. Consequently, dominant discourses may marginalize fringe discourses which they cannot assimilate into the category of madness. In *The Book of Evidence*, Freddie Montgomery emphasizes how public opinion considers him insane, an opinion Montgomery can well understand as his remarks indicate: "I smiled, Mad-dog Montgomery, captured at last" (198). However, for perhaps the Behrenses and others of his "set" (20) who move outside the parameters of conventional post-colonial Irish discourse, Montgomery's story still holds a truth. Inspector Haslet's scepticism regarding the truth of Freddie Montgomery's book of evidence, whether justified or not, is reminiscent of the historical reaction to the speech of the madman as outlined by Foucault:

He gave me a wry look. Did you put in about being a scientist, he said and knowing the Behrens woman, and owing money, all that stuff? I smiled. It's my story, I said, and I'm sticking to it. [...] Come on, Freddie, he said, how much of it is true? It was the first time he had called me by my name. True, Inspector? I said. All of it. None of it. Only the shame. (220)

According to Foucault, since the depths of the Middle Ages the madman has been the one whose discourse may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance and regarded unreliable as evidence in law. However, at the same time the madman's speech may have the power of uttering a hidden truth or of perceiving in naivety what another in wisdom cannot see (52-53). The only truth Freddie Montgomery admits to in his book of evidence is his shame. However, there is a reason why this truth is dismissed by Inspector Haslet as madness along with the rest of Montgomery's story. Montgomery's truth has relevance not for the post-colonial Irish masses, but for the few remaining others of his "set" (20). "Ever since

I reached what they call the use of reason I had been doing one thing and thinking another, because the weight of things seemed so much greater than that of thoughts. What I said was never exactly what I felt, what I felt was never what it seemed I should feel, though the feelings were what felt genuine, and right, and inescapable” (124). Montgomery reveals that his entire identity has been an act, which, as mentioned, he inherited from his family:

[...] the world, the only worthwhile world, had ended with the last viceroy’s departure from these shores, after that it was all just a wrangle among peasants. He [father] really did try to believe in this fantasy of a great good place that had been taken away from us and our kind — our kind being Castle Catholics, as he liked to say, yes, sir, Castle Catholics, and proud of it! But I think there was less pride than chagrin. I think he was secretly ashamed not to be a Protestant [...]. (29)

Montgomery has known since he possessed the use of reason that his identity is an assumed one. However, the truth of his text, relevant only to himself and others of his kind, such as the Behrenses and Frenches, is that the farce of such an identity fools no one. Montgomery’s reoccurring nightmare about the shame he feels, not at having committed a crime but at having being caught out, has a moral in it for others like him. He says of his dream in which he rescues his father: “I used to believe that in the dream it was death I was rescuing him from, but lately I have begun to think that it is, instead, the long calamity of his life I am undoing at a stroke” (89). While Montgomery’s book of evidence seems like the discourse of the insane to Inspector Haslet, his text may ring home a truth for the likes of friendless Charlie French (173) who “could act them all into a cocked hat” (134). The truth is that the colonial act is long-since up; time to melt into hybridity or face the shame of an identity past its use-by date.

The Madman Narrator

Banville’s use of the first-person narrator has the effect of focusing the reader’s attention away from the story and back onto the narrator, Montgomery. It is in the subtext of Montgomery’s narrative that the story of his colonial madness unfolds. Roland Barthes distinguishes between story and discourse, story being what happened and discourse being how what happened is related (“...Structural Analysis of Narratives” 87). However, according to Rimmon-Kenan, a first-person narrator complicates the differentiation between story and discourse. To begin with,

something happens, in this case, a murder. The narrator writes a text based on this matter. However, in the mind of the reader a story may, nonetheless, unfold which is not necessarily the story the narrator thinks he is telling (*Narrative Fiction* 85-86). For example, in his book of evidence, Freddie Montgomery explains how people were afraid of Daphne and him. However, when he elaborates on the fear they instilled in others, the reader is left wondering if Freddie is not misinterpreting contempt or pity for fear:

People in general, I noticed it, were a little afraid of us, now and again I detected it in their eyes, a worried, placatory, doggie sort of look, or else a resentful glare, furtive and sullen. I have pondered this phenomenon, it strikes me as significant. What was it in us — or rather, what was it about us — that impressed them? Oh, we are large, well-made, I am handsome, Daphne is beautiful, but that cannot have been the whole of it. No, after much thought the conclusion I have come to is this, that they imagined they recognised in us a coherence and wholeness, an essential authenticity, which they lacked, and of which they felt they were not entirely worthy. We were — well, yes, we were heroes. (10-11)

The reader deciphers from the subtext a story very different from the one Montgomery thinks he is writing. Although Montgomery realizes the “coherence and wholeness”(10) which he displays is part and parcel of his assumed identity as exiled country “squireen” (95), complete in tweed and bow tie, he is slow to realize others besides himself can see through his act. Hence, he can understand that he might be able to intimidate Reck, his unpaid taxi driver, with an authoritative voice: “I knew who would be driving the taxi, of course. Don’t say anything, I said to him sternly, not a word! He looked at me in the mirror with a mournful, accusing eye” (87). However, Montgomery is perplexed when Reck allows him to leave Mrs Reck’s lodgings without paying:

Just popping out for a moment, I said, get a breath of air. I could feel my horrible smile, like something sticky that had dripped on to my face. He nodded, and a little flicker of sadness passed over his brow and down his sheep’s muzzle. You knew I was going to do a flit, didn’t you? Why did you not stop me? I don’t understand these people. (93)

For Montgomery it is necessary to blot out how transparent his identity is to others,

because as his dream indicates, the shame of exposure is too much: “What is peculiarly awful in all this is not the prospect of being dragged before the courts and put in jail for a crime I am not even sure I have committed, but the simple, terrible fact of having been found out. This is what makes me sweat, what fills my mouth with ashes and my heart with shame” (124).

Shlomith Rimmon describes texts where every bit of information points back at the narrator as stories about stories (“A Comprehensive Theory of Narrative” 52). In Banville’s *Birchwood*, the narrator, Gabriel Godkin, continually focuses attention back onto himself: “Am I mad, starting again, and like this?” (3). Montgomery’s narrative follows a similar vein. He continually focuses attention back on himself, Freddie, and somewhere between Freddie and the story Freddie thinks he is telling unfolds the story of the colonialist’s descent into madness: “[...] young men in cheap raincoats, and women with shopping bags, and one or two silent, grizzled characters who just stood, fixed on me hungrily, haggard with envy” (3). Montgomery sets the scene which supposedly occurred just after his capture. His reference to “cheap raincoats” (3), however, distracts our attention from the image of a raging mob back onto Montgomery. It is curious that someone accused of murder and surrounded by an angry crowd should register that they are wearing cheap raincoats let alone imagine them envious.

“It may not have been like that, any of it. I invent, necessarily” (*Birchwood* 170). According to Rimmon, in psychological novels a character can very often be described more as the sum total of his memories rather than the sum total of his actions (“A Comprehensive Theory of Narrative” 57). Different texts emphasize different levels of narratorial objectivity and subjectivity (Rimmon-Kenan *Narrative Fiction* 94-95). Montgomery focuses attention back on himself as narrator by both insisting on his objectivity and at the same time overtly emphasizing his lack of it. He describes his identity as a sham and a burden to wear. He is relieved by the murder: “When I thought about my past it was like thinking of what someone else had been, someone I had never met but whose history I knew by heart. It all seemed no more than a vivid fiction” (150). However, although Montgomery talks of the freedom the murder affords him from his identity, he still persists in using the identity to his own benefit. His “cultured and authoritative” (117) voice allows him to intimidate a witness and he consequently escapes capture. Meanwhile, he derives much pleasure from a shopping spree yet again afforded him by his superior colonial accent in conjunction with Charlie French’s credit cards: “I thought I detected a slight stiffening of attention when I produced Charlie’s credit cards — my God, did they know him, did he shop here? — but I turned up my accent

to full force and dashed off his signature with aplomb, and everyone relaxed. I was not really worried. In fact, I felt ridiculously excited" (162). Consequently, Montgomery's interpretation of how his murder of Josie Bell freed him from his assumed identity appears to be unreliable. Montgomery would still seem to be availing of this identity of superiority and to his own benefit even after the murder. Apart from these inconsistencies pertaining to the discarding of his phony identity, Montgomery further undermines his own reliability as a narrator by blatantly indulging in still more inconsistencies in his story. His response to Maolseachlainn's cross-examination demonstrates this:

Maolseachlainn frowns [...]. Is it not true that I left my mother's house in anger only a day after my arrival there? Is it not the case that I was in a state of high indignation because I had heard my father's collection of pictures had been sold to Helmut Behrens for what I considered a paltry sum? And is it not further the case that I had reason already to feel resentment against the man Behrens, who had attempted to cuckold my father in — But hold on there, old man, I said: that last bit only came to light later on. (74)

The perspective of Freddie Montgomery focuses attention away from the story he professes to be telling. In the liminal area between his actual text and the tale he claims to be telling lies the story of madness initiated by his inability to discard his colonialist identity and embrace hybridity.

Vanishing Identity Props

Montgomery needs an inferior Irish to reinforce his identity of superiority. However, Irish identity seems to be mutating from the inferior Other into something alien and uncomfortable:

Barefoot urchins ran along beside me whining for pennies. There were drunks everywhere, staggering and swearing, lost in joyless befuddlement. An amazing couple reared up out of a pulsating cellar, a minatory, pockmarked young man with a crest of orange hair, and a stark-faced girl in gladiator boots and ragged, soot-black clothes. They were draped about with ropes and chains and what looked like cartridge belts, and sported gold studs in their nostrils. I had never seen such creatures, I thought they must be members of some fantastic sect. I fled before them, and dived into Wally's pub. Dived is the word. (30)

Montgomery describes Ireland as a sinister place from which he must seek refuge. According to Stam and Shohat in post-colonial times “hybridity” has often served to disempower indigenous peoples of mixed heritage, who may be dismissed as not “real Indians” deserving of rights (375). Could it be that Freddie and the male generations of his family with their Dutch blood and Castle Catholic heritage were afraid of disempowerment in a post-colonial Ireland? Is it this fear that has fossilized generations of Montgomery males in an anachronistic identity? Freddie offers no evidence of persecution in his book of evidence. Still, he dives into Wally’s to escape the “drunks” and other “creatures.” However, the real threat to him stems, not from the urchins and drunks of Dublin, but from “stable-girls” (43) like Joanne who come legally into his family inheritance, solicitors with Irish names like Maolseachlainn and taxi drivers performing acts of charity for bankrupt, homeless colonialists. “Just popping out for a moment [...]. He nodded, and a little flicker of sadness passed over his brow and down his sheep’s muzzle. You knew I was going to do a flit, didn’t you? Why did you not stop me? I don’t understand these people” (93). These Irish do not pose a threat to Freddie because they dismiss him as not “real Irish” and subsequently undeserving of rights. They pose a threat in so far as they can no longer be classified as inferior colonized Irish Other and, consequently, function as a very unsatisfactory foil for his superior identity as colonizer.

Without the economic, political, legal and moral control of colonialist domination to preserve the Manichean allegory of superior colonizer and inferior colonized, Montgomery’s family, and Montgomery in turn, are left with diminishing opportunity to distinguish themselves from the Irish Other. Montgomery’s father still had financial resources to buffer his identity as superior colonizer as its inferior colonized Manichean Other disappeared into hybridity: “He felt sorry for himself. He was convinced the world had used him badly. In recompense he pampered himself, gave himself treats. He wore handmade shoes and Cravat ties, drank good claret, smoked cigarettes specially imported in airtight tins from a shop in the Burlington Arcade” (28). However, as the family money dwindles Montgomery’s mother, despite the “cheekbones of her Dutch forebears, King Billy’s henchmen” (51), seems to be losing her definition (of superiority) and merging into the backdrop, a backdrop which Freddie presents in a very inferior light. Having sold the family pictures to make way for a more viable business in ponies, she has developed a friendship with a stable girl, whom she now considers the son she never had: “The girl, Joan or Jean — I’ll compromise, and call her Jane — got up suddenly from her place, with a gulp of distress, and put her arm awkwardly around my mother’s head, clutching her in a sort of wrestling hold, and laying a hand along

her brow” (49). Meanwhile, Dorothy Montgomery’s physical appearance seems more one of a lowly stable-hand than one of a superior colonial descendant of King Billy: “Her bosom, which cries out to be called ample, had descended to just above her midriff. Also she had grown a little moustache. She wore baggy corduroy trousers and a cardigan with sagging pockets” (42). In fact, Montgomery himself cannot help noticing his mother’s similarity to Joanne, her “stable-girl”: “Her name was Joan or Jean, something like that. Big bum, big chest — obviously mother had felt an affinity” (46).

Although his mother presents more as the hybrid than the superior colonizer, Montgomery, despite his poverty, is not yet ready to surrender his assumed identity as Western intellectual elite. Consequently, he makes use of the last prop available to him in distinguishing himself from the Irish Other: “Madam! I said sternly (she would later describe my voice as *cultured and authoritative*), will you please get on about your business!” (117). Bankrupt Montgomery’s final prop in supporting his role of ascendancy is his cultured authoritative voice, which he uses on several occasions: “It’s a taxi man, she said to me, looking for his fare. I took the phone and spoke harshly to the fellow. She watched me intently, with a kind of avid amusement. When I put down the receiver she said gaily, Oh, Freddie, you’ve got so pompous!” (38). It is only with the murder of Josie Bell that Montgomery claims he can finally lay to rest his role as colonizer: “Now I had struck a blow for the inner man, that guffawing, fat foulmouth who had been telling me all along I was living a lie. [...] To do the worst thing, the very worst thing, that’s the way to be free. I would never again need to pretend to myself to be what I was not” (124-125). However, as we have seen, despite his proclaimed liberation from his assumed identity, Montgomery, nonetheless, continues to utilize it to his advantage and while in custody it is Montgomery who demands answers from his interrogators: “I banged my fist on the table and jumped up and shouted at him that I would do nothing, sign nothing, until I got some answers. I really did say that: *until I get some answers!*” (208). Consequently, despite his professed relief at being able to cast the sham of his identity aside, Montgomery, nonetheless, remains a prisoner to his role as superior colonizer in juxtaposition to a long-since vanished inferior Irish Other.

Nandy describes the “victors” in the colonial encounter as “camouflaged victims, at an advanced stage of psychosocial decay” (XVI). Freddie Montgomery’s false identity and his irrational murder of Josie Bell would seem to classify him within these parameters: “I killed her because I could, I said, what more can I say? We were all startled by that, I as much as they” (198). To persist with the identity of colonizer without a colonized Other to authenticate it is madness in a hybrid nation

whose evolving “will to truth” (Foucault 53-54) has long-since channelled into history the fossilized discourse of colonial Manichean allegory.

Conclusion

“You are a creature of the despotism, a pukka sahib, tied tighter than a monk or a savage by an unbearable system of taboos” (Orwell *Burmese Days* 70). In *The Book of Evidence* the unreliable testimony of Freddie Montgomery elicits a subtext on the inevitable madness of the colonizer trapped in an anachronistic identity of superiority in a post-colonial environment. This argument offers two ways of interpreting the madness of the outdated superior colonizer as depicted by Banville. On the one hand the anachronistic colonial discourse of the colonizer has simply become categorized as madness, in the Foucaultian sense, by the new dominating discourses of a post-colonial society. Alternatively, the inability to discard the identity of superiority in an environment in which the colonial structures of Manichean allegory and mimesis no longer prevail, leads to the colonizer’s alienation and subsequent psychological disorder akin to Fanon’s descriptions of colonial psychosis in *The Wretched of the Earth* (200-201). Nandy stresses how colonialism operates within and is legitimised by the mind (2). The psychologically controlling nature of colonial structures sets a credible backdrop in *The Book of Evidence* for the portrayal of the colonizer’s inability to discard his outdated identity in an environment where colonial discourse has been marginalized into the discourse of madness.

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Sangam Landscapes and Thing Theory: A Study with Reference to *Kurunthogai*

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Abstract Sangam literature is a characteristic feature of Tamil literature. In the annals of Tamil Nadu, the Sangam Age is termed the golden period, and it is widely known for its five types of *thinai*s (landscapes) namely Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Neithal and Paalai, each with its own flora and fauna, and other distinct traits that find a due place in the literary works. *Kurunthogai*, a Tamil literary classic, which is more than two thousand years old, forms a part of Sangam literature. This research paper seeks to trace a few aspects of thing theory in *Kurunthogai*. Introducing the classic with its historical context which specifically encompasses an account of the Sangam *thinai*s and their poetic attributes, the paper examines the significance of things in the contemporary world, and presents a succinct portrayal of the focus of thing theory, followed by a short note on the key implication of the word “thing.” Subsequently, it proceeds to analyse the aspects of thing theory in *Kurunthogai*, exploring how objects become things and how things form, transform and shape the human subjects. It also distinguishes between things and ideas, with an emphasis on the role and physicality of things in *Kurunthogai*. Finally, it explicates the concept of methodological fetishism, and highlights the need for looking *through* things.

Key words Thing theory; Tamil; Sangam *thinai*s; *Kurunthogai*; methodological fetishism.

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Introduction

Tamil Nadu has a very glorious and ancient civilization which is evidenced by its “ancient structures, temples, chavadis (resting homes) and rock carvings” (Adhikari). According to historical records, and the study made by A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, “In Old Tamil Language, the term *Tamilakam* (*Tamilakam*, *Purananuru* 168. 18) referred to the whole of the ancient Tamil-speaking area, corresponding roughly to the area known as south India today, consisting of the territories of the present-day Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, parts of Andhra Pradesh, parts of Karnataka and northern Sri Lanka” (“Sangam Period”). Tamil language is believed to be one of the most ancient languages. Selig S. Harrison, in this regard, remarks that “the comparative age of Tamil and Sanskrit remains a subject of controversy” (40). Tamil, Harold F. Schiffman authentically records, is considered to be more ancient than even Sanskrit (177). It is the mother and the oldest of the South Indian languages. As Sanford B. Steever writes, “First attested about 254 BC, Old Tamil is the oldest recorded member of the Dravidian languages, a family which today encompasses twenty-four distinct languages. Old Tamil belongs to the southern branch of this family, which includes Malayalam, Irula, Kota, Toda, Kannada, Badaga, Kodagu, and Tulu, as well as Modern Tamil” (50). The Sangam Age finds the most significant place in the annals of Tamil Nadu, and it is also said to be the golden period of Tamil Nadu. On account of its central focus on the development of Tamil language and literature, it is also considered “the golden era of the Tamil language” (“Tamil Literature”). During the Sangam Age, the Tamil country was under the regime of the popular kings of the Chera, Chola and Pandya dynasties who maintained peace in the land (“Tamil Literature”).

The Tamil literary classic, *Kurunthogai*, a collection of 400 poems, forms a part of *Ettuthogai* (eight anthologies), belonging to Sangam literature, which derived its name from the word *Sangam* of Tamil poets, who flourished during the age of the Pandya kings of Madurai. As recorded by Vijaya Ramaswamy, the Tamil word, *Sangam*, literally means a ‘gathering’ or an ‘assembly’. It is said that three Sangams were held in the ancient period and that thousands of poets presented their compositions in the Sangams and debated over style, syntax and attainment of excellence in Tamil. The Sangam literature is divided into three phases: (i) the Mudal Sangam (the first Sangam), which is believed to have met about 10,000 BCE, and which is believed to have been convened by the sage Agasthya; (ii) Idai Sangam (the middle Sangam), which is said to have lasted 3,700 years. The Tamil classic, *Tholkapiyam*, is believed to be the only extant literature of this period; and

(iii) Kadai Sangam (the third Sangam), which is believed to have lasted 1,850 years. The entire Sangam literature belongs to the third or Kadai Sangam. It is believed that the literature of the first two Sangams was lost in the Great Flood that spread through ancient Thamilaaham which is also known as Tamil Nadu (220-221). The main Sangam anthologies are: *Pathupattu*, *Ettuthogai*, and *Pathittrupattu*, and later-Sangam anthology *Padinenkizhkanakku*. *Ettuthogai* consists of the following eight anthologies: (i) *Narrinai*, (ii) *Kurunthogai*, (iii) *Aingurunuru*, (iv) *Paddirrupattu*, (v) *Paripadal*, (vi) *Kalithogai*, (vii) *Ahamnanuru*, and (viii) *Puramnanuru*.

Thing theory, a new critical theory, seeks to study the relationship between things and literature. It addresses two significant questions: what do the things mean, and how do the things mean? It was largely created by Bill Brown, a professor of English at the University of Chicago. The Tamil poetic anthology, *Kurunthogai*, serves as a prototypical record of ‘things’ of the five Sangam landscapes which play a significant role in forming, transforming and shaping the human beings of the Sangam age. Hence, it is quite pertinent to analyse *Kurunthogai* from the perspective of thing theory.

Prominence of the Sangam Thinai (Landscapes)

Before analyzing the aspects of thing theory and their relevance to *Kurunthogai*, it is fundamental to be on familiar terms with the Sangam landscapes which are codified in Sangam literature, which, as noted by Aruna Devi, consists of two types: the literature of *aham* and the literature of *puram*. The Tamil word *aham* means ‘inner’ and *puram* signifies ‘outer’. *Aham* literature is centred on the themes of “love and sexual relationships” which are the internal aspects of human life while *puram* literature spotlights the external aspects such as “heroism, war, valour, ethics, benevolence, philanthropy, social life, and customs” (Devi). During the Sangam Age, Tamil Nadu, based on the geographical setup, was categorized into five different landscapes widely known as five *thinai*s namely Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Neithal and Palai. The Sangam literature abounds in “physical descriptions of these landscapes, the indigenous people of the area and their preoccupations, and the flora and fauna native to the region” (Adhikari). Every thinai or landscape is named after a flower which is characteristic of that landscape (“Sangam Landscape”).

Each thinai is characterized by its own distinct features known as *muthal porul*, *karu porul*, and *uri porul*. As wonderfully documented by Piradhiba Grace, *muthal porul* means “the first characteristics of the thinai” which include “[t]he land, season and time” (“Mullai Thinai”). *Karu porul* implies “gist or the lives of

the thinai,” representing “[t]he people, animals, birds, plants, music and musical instruments and God of a particular thinai” (“Mullai Thinai”). Similarly, *uri porul* means “the base characteristics of the poem,” symbolizing “[t]he subject of the poems” (“Mullai Thinai”). It also signifies “the ‘ozhukkam’ i.e., (behaviour or emotions) attributed to a landscape” (“Lesson 1”). Furthermore, the season during which the poetic events occur is called *perumpozhudu* (பெரும்பொழுது), and the time of the day they occur is known as *sirupozhudhu*.

The flora and fauna, the season, the deity and the musical instruments of every thinai are encoded in Sangam poetry to signify the people’s occupations, socio-economic conditions, behaviour patterns and other distinct features of the respective thinais (“Tamil Literature”). Each thinai has its own unique sentimental implication concerning lovers: “Lovers’ meetings, patient waiting, lovers’ quarrels, separation, and the anxiously awaited return” (“Tamil Literature”). *Kurunthogai*, as a Sangam literary work, is intertwined with the encoded depiction of geographical conditions of the Sangam thinais (landscapes). Hence, the basic details of the five thinais and their poetic attributes are outlined in the following.

Kurinji

Kurinji thinai refers to the mountainous regions and their adjoining lands that contain “forested terrain with verdant slopes, flowers, birds, bees and wildlife” (Adhikari). This thinai derives its name from a flower called *kurinji* (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), which blossoms in the mountains once in twelve years. Payal Adhikari’s study reveals that the modern day location of the thinai, Kurinji, “corresponds to the western and eastern Ghats in Tamil Nadu and Kerala” (Adhikari). Besides *kurinji* flower, Piradhiba Grace identifies Kanthal (காந்தள்/ Gloriosa Lily) as another famous flower found on the mountainous slopes (“Kurinji Thinai”). Kurinji thinai is affluent with water sources that include waterfalls. Bamboos, jackfruit trees and venkai trees are plentiful. The ‘Kuravars’, the indigenous people of the thinai are the chief inhabitants whose major occupations are hunting and gathering of honey. The animals specific to this region are monkeys, elephants, horses and bulls. The weather is very cool. The primary deity worshipped by people in the hilly region is Lord Murugan (or Cheyon). Kurinji thinai is symbolic of midnight and the union of lovers. As outlined by Piradhiba Grace, the poetic events in this thinai occur during “kudir kalam” (cold season) and “munpani kalam” (early dew season). Kudir kalam occurs during the Tamil months, Aippasi (mid October to mid November) and Kaarthigai (mid November to mid December). “Munpani kalam” (early dew season) falls during Maargazhi (mid December to mid January) and Thai (mid January to mid February) (“Kurinji Thinai”).

Mullai

Mullai thinai is the region of forests with beautiful pastures. It is usually located at the foothills, and is endowed with rivers. “Its modern day location,” writes Adhikari, “is on the foothills of western and eastern Ghats in Tamil Nadu and Kerala” (“Tamil Nadu’s Landscapes”). This thinai bears the name of a flower called *mullai poo* (flower of *Jasminum trichotomum* B.Heyne ex Roth) which specifically blooms in the forestlands. The chief inhabitants of the region are “the cowherds, or the *aayars*, who spent their time herding cattle and playing the flute, just like the eternal Krishna (also called Maayon), their chosen god” (Adhikari). Konrai trees are abundant in this thinai where millet and wild grains are the major crops. The main animal specific to the thinai is deer. According to Piradhiba Grace, the season or *perumpozhudu* (பெரும்பொழுது) during which the poetic events take place in this thinai is “kaar kaalam,” i.e. the rainy season that occurs during the Tamil months, Aavani and Purattaasi (“Mullai Thinai”). *Sirupozhudhu* (சிறுபொழுது) or the time of the day wherein the poetry of Mullai thinai is set is “maalai’ or evening,” i.e. from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. (“Mullai Thinai”). Mullai thinai is emblematic of the ladylove’s waiting for her lover who has gone to a distant land for earning money.

Marutham

Marutham thinai, which is named after a flower called *marutham poo* (flower of *Terminalia elliptica* Willd, a characteristic tree of the land), refers to the agricultural lands and their adjoining areas. Mango trees are abundant in the region, and ponds are the main source of water. This thinai is largely inhabited by farmers. There are also “goldsmiths, artists and blacksmiths” besides “the elite, the rich and the powerful” (Adhikari). The capital towns of kings in the thinai are surrounded by fertile farmlands (Adhikari). “The farmers ploughed in rural Marudham, on the banks of the rivers like Cauvery. People in these areas prospered because of the fertility of the land, making Indra, the god of rain, their preferred deity” (Adhikari). The god, Indra (Wanji-ko or Seyyon), is popularly known as Vendhan in Marutham thinai. Water buffalos and freshwater fish are specific to the thinai. As mentioned by Grace, there are also other common creatures like crocodiles, crabs, lotus, water lilies, herons and pelicans which are portrayed in Marutham thinai poems. Water bodies like wells, rivers and streams too find a place in the land. Other than mango and Marutham trees, we also find Vanji and Kanji trees (“Marutham Thinai”). Piradhiba Grace enlists the *perumpozhudu* (பெரும்பொழுது) or the seasons during which the poetic events take place in the Marutham landscape:

The ‘kulir kaalam’ or the cold season, which falls during the Tamil months ‘[A]

ippasi' and '[K]aarththikai'

The 'kaar kaalam' or the rainy season, which falls during the Tamil months '[A]avani' and '[P]urattaasi'

The 'munpani kaalam' or the early dew season, which falls during the Tamil months '[M]aarkazhi' and '[T]hai'

The 'pin pani kaalam' or the late dew season, which falls during the Tamil months '[M]aasi' and '[P]anguni'

The 'ilavenir kaalam' or the early spring season, which falls during the Tamil months '[C]hiththirai' and '[V]aikaasi'

The 'mudhuvener kaalam' or the late spring season, which falls during the Tamil months '[A]ani' and '[A]adi'. ("Marutham Thinai")

Sirupozhudhu or the time of Marutham poetic events is "vaikarai' or early morning", i.e. from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. ("Marutham Thinai"). Mautham thinai is symbolic of unfaithfulness of the lover, and the resultant anger of his ladylove. The lover leaves his ladylove and indulges in sexual pleasure with concubines. When his ladylove becomes cognizant of his infidelity to her, she suffers from profound mental agony and is immensely angry with her lover. This theme becomes the major *uri porul* or the subject matter of Marutham thinai poems.

Neithal

Neithal thinai denotes the seashore and the regions associated with sea. It is chiefly inhabited by fishermen and sailors. It derives its name from the flower, *neithal* (*Nymphaea stellata* Willd), which is the characteristic flower of the region. There are "different groups of people like Duraivan, Cherppan, Parathavar, Nullayar and Alavar" ("Poems of Neithal Thinai"). The birds such as sea crow and swan, and the animals such as whale and crocodile are specific to this region. People's dwelling area is known as Pattinam and Paakkam. Sand-well is the chief source of water. Punnai tree is a distinct mark of the region, and we find Thaazhai trees as well. The chief occupations of people are fishing and selling salt ("Poems of Neithal Thinai"). The people in this region worship "the ocean god Varuna" (Adhikari). Pining of the ladylove is the *uri porul* (subject matter) of the poems that are set in the Neithal landscape. That is, the lover leaves the ladylove and goes to the deep sea for fishing. The ladylove is anxiously waiting for his safe return, and the delay in his return makes her grief-stricken. Neithal thinai does not have any particular season or *perumpozhudu* (பெரும்பொழுது). However, the *sirupozhudhu* or the time of the Neithal poetic events is the sunset.

Paalai

Paalai thinai, which is named after *paalai poo* (flower of *Wrightia tinctoria*) commonly found in the parched region, refers to the wasteland and its adjoining areas. It is “scarcely populated but often frequented by travelers and merchants en route” (Adhikari). People, here, worship the goddess, Durga (Kotravai), who is believed to serve as “a source of the divine rectitude and strength needed to survive in this environment” (Adhikari). Poems set in Paalai thinai depict “the harsher side of nature and its consequences on the lives of the people” (Adhikari), and thus tend to exhibit the pangs of journey undertaken by the couples in the arid wasteland, which also houses the animals like tiger, wolf and sometimes elephants. As water sources are very rare except a few dry wells and stagnant water here and there, cactus becomes the characteristic plant of the land. Summer is the season or *perumpozhudu* (பெரும்பொழுது) of poetic events, and *sirupozhudhu* or the time of their occurrence is the scorching noon. Paalai thinai is associated with the separation of lovers. The poetic attributes of the five thinais which have been discussed so far are part and parcel of *Kurunthogai*. Therefore, one cannot understand *Kurunthogai* without the basic knowledge of the Sangam thinais and their encoded attributes.

The Significance of Things in the Contemporary World

Humans are very closely interlinked with things, and human life is impracticable devoid of material things. In this regard, Sherry Turkle has rightly pointed out that “[w]e live our lives in the middle of things” (6). In the recent times, things have begun to draw the attention of the academic research. Speculative Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology are the most apposite examples in this regard. For instance, through his book, *The Democracy of Objects*, Levi R. Bryant, who develops his own object-oriented ontology which he calls onticology, “strives to think a *subjectless* object” (19). As noted by Timothy Morton, “ooo [object-oriented ontology] holds that everything is an object, including the seemingly special one we call *subject*” (63).

In his onticology, Levi R. Bryant too shares the same view that “there is only one type of being: objects” (20) in the world. By this statement, Bryant means that even human beings are “objects *among* the various types of objects that exist or populate the world, each with their own specific powers and capacities” (20). It is in Aristotle’s view of the primary substances that Bryant finds the source for the concept of “equality of things” or what he calls “democracy of objects.” According to Aristotle, “of the primary substances one is no more a substance than another: the individual man is no more a substance than the individual ox” (as quoted in Bryant

73). The chief tenet of object-oriented philosophy is that it places all entities on equal footing. In this regard, Ian Bogost makes an interesting remark in relation to flat ontology: “*all things equally exist, yet they do not exist equally*” (11). That is, flat ontology, as defined by Bogost, affirms that “things can *be* many and various, specific and concrete, while their *being* remains identical” (12).

All object-oriented ontologists denounce human privilege over non-human entities. Graham Harman, a leading object-oriented philosopher, decides to deviate from the conventional philosophy which has failed to emphasize things. He feels that “[t]he inherent reality of things is never addressed” (191). Therefore, he urges philosophy to “turn its attention towards *objects*” (190). Most of the thing-oriented thinkers prefer to advocate a flat world. Tristan Garcia, for example, speaks of a flat world wherein “each thing is neither more nor less than a thing” (31).

As Bill Brown, a foremost thing theorist, claims, these days, there are books on things like “the pencil, the zipper, the toilet, the banana, the chair, the potato, the bowler hat” (“Thing Theory” 2). Today, “history can unabashedly begin with things and with the senses by which we apprehend them” (3). The prominence gained by things is well recorded in the proclamation of Rainer Maria Rilke: “Only things speak to me” (as cited in “Thing Theory” 2). Rilke’s view unveils the fact that things play a pivotal role in communicating messages.

The Focal Point of Thing Theory

In an interview with Austin Allen, Bill Brown elucidates that thing theory deals with how “the inanimate object world helps to form and transform human beings alike.” That is, thing theory addresses the question, “how does our material environment shape us?” Brown says that it also talks about the production of “value” and “economic value” in Marxist terms, and also various kinds of “symbolic value.” Thing theorists, according to him, are concerned with “particular ways of understanding the power and meaning of objects,” and are “ultimately interested in the subject/object relation or the human/un-human relation” (“Nature of Things”). It is to be borne in mind that “‘thing theory’ interrogates the extent to which the subjects construct the objects and, in turn, objects construct subjects” (Bullon-Fernandez 184).

Thing: A Notable Implication

The word “thing” has multiple meanings. In normal sense, the word “thing” refers to “an object whose name you do not use because you do not need to or want to, or because you do not know it,” or “an object that is not alive in the way people or plants are” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* 1607). It also refers to objects,

clothing or tools used for a particular purpose (1607). To understand the word ‘thing’ in the light of thing theory, it is quite essential to understand the philosophical meaning of this word. In many of the European languages, the word ‘thing’ has a link with ancient words for an assembly or a gathering, such as the Icelandic term for Parliament, *Althing* (Morgan 178). To Heidegger, the Old High German word *thing* means gathering. That is, thing is something that gathers.

Kant made a distinction between the “noumena” (the things-in-themselves) and the “phenomena” (things-for-themselves), and he argued that only the latter is accessible to human knowledge (Britto 7). To him, even God is a thing that does not appear. That is, he is a “thing-in-itself”. According to Heidegger, “in the language of philosophy both the things-in-themselves and things that appear, all beings that in any way are, are called things” (21). In this context, he says, the word “thing” refers to “whatever is not simply nothing” (21). According to this implication, everything in the universe comes under the category of “thing.” In this paper, with the exception of human being, the word “thing” is used with this implication to accommodate even the nonhuman beings in nature such as animals, birds, plants, trees, flowers, fish and so forth.

Select Aspects of Thing Theory in *Kurunthogai*

The Vitality of Things

A central claim of thing theory is that human beings are formed, transformed and controlled by things in several ways. It signifies that like humans, even material things do have vitality and power. This is obvious in the words of Jane Bennett who says that “‘vitality is shared by *all* things,’ and not limited to ourselves alone” (Shaviro 3). Things, both animate and inanimate, have greater power and control over human beings. For instance, human being has no control absolutely over the natural phenomena like lightening, thunder, storm and so forth. Even a tiny inanimate object, at times, controls a human person to a great extent. For example, a person who happens to get hurt by a tiny and very sharp particle of iron, glass or wooden log, cannot just overlook it and go. The sharp inanimate particle makes him/her stop there and observe what happened. Things play a vital role in the life of every human being. On scores of occasions, human person is formed, transformed and at times shaped by the things he or she encounters. In this context, it is quite essential to know the distinction between objects and things to comprehend how things shape the human subjects.

Distinction between Objects and Things

From the viewpoint of thing theory, there is a difference between objects and things.

This is evident in Bill Brown's answer to the question, "what separates an ordinary *object* from a *thing* worthy of critical study?" asked by Austin Allen in an interview:

in my work, I understand objects to be, in some sense, what we don't notice. You know, you pick up a glass of water, do you notice the glass? And probably not. Do you notice the water in the glass? Probably not, you're doing this while you're doing something else. But I would say that the thing-ness of objects becomes palpable or visible or in some sense knowable, where there's an interruption within that circuit, the sort of, the circuit whereby we, you know, float, as we do, through objects.

And so it's when objects become excessive one way or another, and I think one way is certainly that they break, right? You go to pick up the glass and it breaks in your hand, suddenly you notice it and you notice lots about it. It's at that moment, I would say, that that object becomes a thing.... ("Nature of Things")

***Kurunthogai*: Objects Becoming Things Which then Form, Transform and Shape the Human Beings**

According to thing theory, as long as an object is seen without being noticed, it continues to be an object to the person who sees it. The object becomes a thing to the person, the moment he/she begins to notice it. When the person begins to look at the things closely and constantly, there is a greater possibility for him/ her to be influenced or shaped by them. The reading of *Kurunthogai*, wherein "things" are in abundance, unveils the fact that the poets, who have composed the poems, were not mere seers of the objects, but observers of "things." In fact, during the Sangam age, the poets were immensely transformed by the natural "things." This is obvious in the observation made by Samy Chidambaranar, who claims that the Sangam poets had so much of aesthetic sense that they were able to infuse their aesthetic sense into the nature and derive pleasure from it. With the noble aim of sharing their joy from nature with the entire world, they replicated in their works the things that they observed in the external nature (34). It means that the Sangam poets did not merely see the objects in nature but observed them meticulously and they were enormously influenced by the 'things' they observed. From this fact, it follows that they were formed, transformed and shaped by the "things." The twenty-first poem of *Kurunthogai* given in the following, followed by its transliteration and illustration will serve as an apt example to demonstrate how ordinary objects become things, and how the things shape the human persons:

Poem 21 from *Kurunthogai*

(Ōdhalānthaiyār 22)

Vaṇḍu padath thaintha kodi iṇar idaiyidubu,
 Poṇ sei puṇai iḷai kattiya maḥaḷir
 Kadhuppiṇ thōṇḍrum puthup pūṅ koṇraik
 Kāṇam, 'kār' eṇak kūriṇum,
 Yāṇō thērēṇ; avar poai vaḷangalarē.

The paraphrasing of the poem goes like this:

Long clusters of (golden) beetle-infested flowers have blossomed afresh in between dark green leaves of Konrai trees. They look like maidens' locks adorned with jewels. Even if such a Konrai-grown forest bespeaks of the setting in of the wintry season, I believe it not. For my lord never utters falsehood. (He told me that he would return at the setting in of the winter season. He has not returned yet. So the wintry season could not have set in!). (Mudaliyar 23)

The above-mentioned poem, authored by Ōdhalānthaiyār, is set in Mullai thinai, where the *Konrai* trees contain clusters of blossoms. It is natural for the trees known as *Konrai* to bloom during the winter season. When there are blossoms, it is quite natural for the beetles to go and drink the honey from the flowers. Furthermore, the sight of flowers between the dark green leaves of the *Konrai* trees looks so gorgeous. In the poem, these natural things are not merely seen but noticed by the confidante of a married lady, whose husband has gone on business, entrusting her to her confidante and promising that he would come back before the arrival of the winter. The confidante feels that it is her responsibility to take care of the married woman who has been entrusted to her, and to make her happy till her husband arrives.

Since the flowering of the *Konrai* trees is the mark of the advent of the winter, it does not seem to the confidante as an ordinary object to be just seen and ignored. On the contrary, it makes her notice it closely, shocking her and alarming her of the fact that the husband has not yet arrived and thus he has broken the promise given to his wife, who will, consequently, become love-sick and get grieved over the delay of his arrival. Thus, the object becomes the thing here. The confidante realizes the interruption of the natural objects so much that they make her utter a lie to the wife in order to save her from agony, saying that her husband is so faithful that he

would never break his promise to his wife, and so the winter has not yet arrived, and the *Konrai* trees have blossomed in the wrong season. In actuality, the *Konrai* trees have blossomed in the right season, i.e. winter. But in order to make the woman happy till her husband comes, the confidante puts the blame on the natural things. Here, it is crystal clear how objects can become things, and how things can control, form and shape human beings. Here, what is controlled, formed and shaped is the mental thought of the confidante. This is also applicable to the poet, Ōdhalānthaiyār, who composed this poem. The “things” that he mentions in the poem very clearly illustrate that he has observed the natural “things” which have made him meditate upon them. This pondering over things makes him use them as medium to convey his thoughts.

Things and Ideas: A Contrast

Things Delight us, and Ideas Give us Nausea

Leo Stein, in his book, *The A-B-C of Aesthetics*, says, “Things are what we encounter, ideas are what we project” (as cited in “Thing Theory” 4). Mere recording of ideas or historical elements will not provide a clear understanding of those ideas or history. When they are conveyed through things or in the form of images and symbols, the human mind is able to have a clear and better understanding of the ideas that are conveyed. This is apparent in the Francis Ponge’s distinction between “ideas” and “things.” According to Ponge, ideas give us queasy feeling or nausea. On the contrary, objects in the external world, give us delight. Francis Ponge affirms that objects may seem substitutable for things. To him, “siding with things” means taking the side of specified objects like doorknobs, figs, crates, blackberries, stoves, water and the like (3). Stated differently, things, for Ponge, are specified objects.

The Link between Things and Ideas in *Kurunthogai*

Things have played a significant role in *Kurunthogai*, which accommodates love as the major theme. Many poems depict how the ladylove suffers psychologically and becomes physically weak on account of her separation from her lover who has gone to a foreign land to earn wealth. At times, the ladylove becomes infuriated, and laments the stealthy act of her lover who becomes prey to the harlots and enjoys carnal pleasure from them. This is portrayed in some of the poems. Here, it is to borne in mind that if the concept of love, which is recurrent in most poems of *Kurunthogai*, is discussed only in an abstract and theoretical manner, no reader will have any forbearance to read it and appreciate it delightfully. In the words of Francis Ponge, it would only create queasy feeling or nausea. By contrast, in all most

all the poems of *Kurunthogai*, the ideas are conveyed through the ‘things’ in the natural world in the form of simile, metaphor, objective correlative and other poetic devices. That is why, the readers are able to grasp the ideas, register them in their mind and relish them for years together. This can be explained with the illustration of a poem from *Kurunthogai*:

Poem 54 from *Kurunthogai*

யானடே ஈண்டயனே; என் நலனே
 ஏனல் காவலர் கவண் ஒலி வரீஇக்
 கான யானை கை விடு பசுங் கழை
 மீன் எறி தூண்டிலின் நிவக்கும்
 கானக நாடனொடு, ஆண்டு, ஒழிந்தன்றே.

(Mīneri Thūndilār 53)

Yāṇē īṇḍaiyēṇē; eṇ nalanē

ēṇal kāvalar kavaṇ oli veriyik

kāṇa yāṇai kai vidu pasung gaḷai

mīṇ eri thūṇḍiliṇ nivakkum

kāṇaha nāḍaṇodu, āṇdu, oḷinthandrē.

Mīneri Thūndilār is the author of the poem fifty four, which is set in Kurinji thinai. Samy Chidambaranar beautifully explains the meaning of the poem in the following way. As illustrated by him, the ladylove, in the poem, eagerly expects and believes that her lover, who continues to have secret courtship with her, will come fast and marry her. Shockingly, the lover does not come and marry her as he had promised her. In this situation, the ladylove conveys her anguish to her confidante through this poem. The ladylove says that the hungry elephant in the forest attempts to bend the long-grown bamboo tree and tries to eat the tender part of its twig. In the meantime, the watchman of the millet-fields throws the stones to chase away the birds that are eating the grains in the fields. The elephant, frightened by the noise of the sling-stone, leaves the bamboo tree which it had bent, and so the bamboo tree, with sudden speed, gets straightened again. The bamboo tree, which is bent by the elephant and which is straightened up again after the release, is like the fishing rod, which the fisher man lifts up with baited fish. Through this simile, the ladylove attempts to communicate that she had fallen in love with a man who lives on the hilly region where this beautiful sight occurs. Now, she feels that only her body exists here alone, and that since her lover has not yet married her, she has lost the charm away in the place where she had met him (187-188).

This poem becomes more valuable and significant not because of the lady-love's sharing of her sorrow, but because of the way she uses the "things" in nature to convey her agony, or the way the poet uses the things to convey his ideas in the form of poetic device called simile. As noted by Balachandra Mudaliyar, it is because of this graphic simile and appropriate phrasing that the writer of this poem came to be known by that appellation (53). In the poem above, if the ladylove were to convey her sorrow to her confidante simply without the simile, the latter would not have been touched so much as now. This example serves as the tip of the iceberg to assert that *Kurunthogai* becomes more delightful and more valuable because of the 'things' that are recorded in it.

Things' Assertion of their Presence

According to Bill Brown, things assert their presence and power on occasions of the following kinds: when you cut your finger on a sheet of paper; when you trip over some toy; when you get bopped on the head by a falling nut. Occasions like these teach us that you are "caught up in things", and that "body is a thing among things," as Maurice Merleau-Ponty puts it (as cited in "Thing Theory" 4). In fact, "[t]hey are occasions of contingency — the chance interruption — that disclose a physicality of things" (4).

In *Kurunthogai*, the readers can categorically recognize that the human characters presented in it are "caught up in things." The way they are caught up in things in *Kurunthogai* is to be interpreted. For an instance, in many of the poems, the ladylove, as pointed out earlier, languishes in love-sickness because of the separation of her lover who has gone abroad to earn money for marriage. Hence, she becomes emotionally troubled and her mind becomes turbulent. With this mindset, when she perceives the objects in the world, they become things to her, and even the natural happenings disturb her psyche immensely. Thereby, she is able to associate her psychological and emotional feelings with the things in the world, and encode those things with her suffering. Here is where the things assert their presence and their power over human mind, and this is where the things exhibit their physicality.

Poem 92 from *Kurunthogai*

ஞாயிறு பட்ட அகல் வாய் வானத்து—
 அளியதாமடே—கொடுஞ் சிறைப் பறவை,
 இறவை உற ஓங்கிய நடுநி அயல் மராஅத்த
 பிள்ளை உள்வாய்ச் சரீ இய
 இரவை கொண்டமயின், விரயைமால் சலெவவே.

(Dhāmodharan 92)

Gnāyīru patta ahal vāi vāṅatthu—
 Aḷiyathāme—kodunch chiraiṅṅaravai,
 Irai uṅa ōṅgiya neṅi ayal marāattha
 Piḷḷai uḷvāich cherīyia
 Irai koṇdamaiyiṅ, viraiyumāl chelavē.

The poem was authored by Dhāmodharan, and it has its setting in Neithal thinai. The lover has gone to a distant land to earn money for his marriage. The ladylove who is separated from her lover is severely suffering from love-sickness and is longing for his return. In the evening, the ladylove happens to notice the parent birds carrying bits of prey for their young ones in the nest. This sight in nature disturbs the ladylove and enhances her suffering. Thus, the natural “things” create a transformation in her experience of love-sickness and shapes her mindset. That is, it is true that the ladylove languishes over the separation of her lover. This mental suffering, which is normal, is transformed and shaped into severe agony by the things she noticed in nature. The ladylove is not able to overlook and forget the sight she had noticed in nature. On the contrary, she is caught up in things. In other words, the things that she observed in nature make her reflect on them and thereby make her associate her personal agony with them. Thus, the things, assert the presence in the mind of the ladylove. Consequently, the ladylove feels unable to eliminate the presence of things she had observed, and she is transformed by the presence of the sight of the things she noticed in nature.

Methodological Fetishism

Things play a vigorous role in human life. No human being can boldly claim that he or she can live in the world without any thing in the world. In Arjun Appadurai’s view, the process of things illuminating the human and social context is what known as methodological fetishism, which means the effort to “follow the things themselves” (6). Put differently, methodological fetishism refers to the process wherein things illuminate the human and social context.

A Contrast between Theoretical and Methodological Point of View: Difference between Human Actors and Things-in-Motion

Based on the idea of the ‘fetishism of commodities’ drawn from Karl Marx’s *Capital*, Arjun Appadurai, in his book, *The Social Life of Things* (1986), makes a distinction between human beings and the things-in-motion (4-5). In his opinion, “from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance,” and “from a *methodological* point of view, it is the things-in-motion that illuminate

their human and social context” (Appadurai 5; “Thing Theory” 6). This idea of Appadurai is very relevant to *Kurunthogai*.

From a theoretical point of view, the human actors (here, the poets of *Kurunthogai*) have encoded the things recorded by them in their poems with immensity of significance, which implies meaning, message or ideas. Here, the human actors also signify the different characters in the poems such as lover, ladylove, confidante and so forth mentioned in the poems. These human actors encode the ‘things’ with their personal, psychological and emotional feelings. To put it in a nutshell in the context of the analysis of *Kurunthogai*, it can be, in the light of Leo Stein’s view, held that things are what the human actors (here, the poets of *Kurunthogai* or the human characters mentioned therein) encountered, and ideas are what they projected. From a methodological point of view, these things become active and they become “things-in-motion.” In this sense, it can be stated that insofar as things are able to illuminate the human mind, they are “things-in-motion.” That is, when the readers read the poems of *Kurunthogai*, the things in those poems illuminate the readers’ mind and make them look at those things closely to perceive what is conveyed through them. Furthermore, these things illuminate the readers to understand the geographical, human, social, cultural, political, economic and religious context of the Sangam age. Appadurai suggests that “we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories” (5). There are multiple meanings and information inscribed in the things which are depicted in the form of images and metaphors in the poems of *Kurunthogai*. Therefore, by following and analyzing the things registered in *Kurunthogai*, we will be able to gain immense knowledge about people and their way of life in the Sangam age.

The Familiar Things Becoming Unfamiliar

Beyond the phenomena that we see and touch, one can find some other life and the law of things, the swarm of electrons. Even when the objects are within the field of phenomenality, they often become less clear when we look at them closer (“Thing Theory” 6). In this context, what Georg Simmel said of telescopic technology, in his book, *The Philosophy of Money*, becomes relevant even to things. According to him, “coming closer to things often only shows us how far away they still are from us” (as cited in “Thing Theory” 6). That is, when the most familiar things are closely looked at, they seem unpredictable and inexplicable to poets and physicists (6). Similarly, when the readers read *Kurunthogai*, things that are recorded in it may seem to be ordinary and familiar things. But when they closely read it and look at the objects therein, those objects become things and have many things to convey.

Looking through Things in *Kurunthogai*: Things as the Record of the Past

As pointed out by Bill Brown, we look through the objects to see what they disclose about history, society, nature or culture, above all about us. We look *through* objects because there are codes whereby our interpretative attention makes them meaningful (“Thing Theory” 4). The act of looking through the objects is one of the central facets of thing theory. After reading the first few poems of *Kurunthogai*, a reader who reads it for the first time, may feel excited of its theme. However, as the reading proceeds, he or she may tend to get filled with nausea or queasy feeling because of recurrence of the same topics all through the poems of *Kurunthogai*. Therefore, a thought may occur in his or her mind as to what need is there for such a huge anthology of 400 poems just to portray the married or private life, secret courtship, illicit affairs, obscenity and prostitution. But a close reading will unveil that besides the depiction of the private life, there are scores of things which are communicated through *Kurunthogai*.

As Brown puts it, “The past seems to reside in objects; historical *insight* seems to be graspable from *inside* the material record, from the way a *genius rei* seems to animate objects with the presence of the past” (*Sense* 112). Timothy Morton also admits that “[e]very object is a marvelous archeological record of everything that ever happened to it” (112). In fact, things in *Kurunthogai* offer an extensive account of the past. When we look *through* the objects or things recorded in the poems of *Kurunthogai* very closely, we can identify the depiction of the geographical regions, history, society, nature, culture and people of the Sangam age. We are also able to study not only people’s private life, but also the people’s political and social life, their food habits, their gods and their religious practices, rituals, customs, and different types of people. Subsequently, we realize that the *Kurunthogai* is not a mere record of the internal or private life alone, but a treasure house of the natural environment, history, society and culture of the people of the Sangam age. In fact, the poets of *Kurunthogai* used the theme of private life of people as a key to open the door of the huge palace of the Sangam age to notice the “things” which reflect the geographical regions and the people’s life associated with them.

Thereby, the subject/ object relation, or human/un-human relation is created between the human beings and the things. That is, the poets, as brilliant observers, have encountered the things in nature, and projected their ideas on them. In other words, they have encoded the things with plentiful ideas and messages. When the readers read the text (here, *Kurunthogai*) and look through things therein, they will be able to receive those ideas or messages which are projected on and encoded through things that are recorded in the poems. Thus, there is a give-and-take

relationship between things and human subjects. Thing theory gives importance to this sort of relationship.

Conclusion

The analysis of *Kurunthogai* in the light of thing theory demonstrates evidently how things are quite important in human life and in the academic domain of literature, and how things play a remarkable role in shaping the human subjects. Literature is plentiful of things. When we look through objects, we are able to perceive many things. Furthermore, we will be able to have a glance of the sensuous presence of things. As Bill Brown says, things could be understood “as what is excessive in objects” and “as what exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects” (“Thing Theory” 5). The force or “the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols, and totems” is known as the sensuous presence or the metaphysical presence of things (5). Hence, it is right time to apprehend the significance of the relationship between literature and things.

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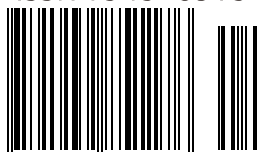
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