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The Poetics of Artificial Intelligence and Posthumanism[1]

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Abstract Martin Heidegger posits a significant future-directed question concerning the human existence in relation to the essence of technology, a question which builds a way for anticipating the poetics of Artificial Intelligence and posthumanism. What is missing in the Heideggerian concept of modern technology is the part of the human activity, which represents the physical human embedded-embodied mind who thinks, reads, and writes, and acts with gestures and bodily movement. Human brain is the center of these activities. Maryanne Wolf in her *Proust and the Squid* (2007) posits reading as a human invention, and elaborates the human brain's plastic ability in relation to the act of reading. Wolf's models of Proust and the Squid in terms of the intellectual and the biological is closely related to the linguistic and the neurocognitive aspects of the Artificial Intelligence. The complementary examples of human brain's reading processes have analogically elaborated how various neuro-cognitive processes will work algorithmically in the data-processing of the AI. Both cases of reading by Maryanne Wolf are referring to human intelligence's information processing in terms of the human brain's automatic learning which reminds us of machine learning and deep learning algorithms. The development of artificial intelligence in tandem with that of human intelligence may be the last great challenge of humanism and the first great endeavor of posthumanism. Cognitive neuroscience and artificial intelligence have undergone revolutionary changes in the past decades, and they now foreground the embodied and environmentally embedded nature of intelligent action. What is at stake is the ethical articulation of intelligence (both human and artificial) in this "second machine age."

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Key words Artificial Intelligence; posthumanism; Martin Heidegger; human brain; ethics,

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Introduction: Heideggerian Technology

In his essay "The Question Concerning the Technology," Martin Heidegger posits a significant future-directed question concerning the human existence in relation to the essence of technology, a question which builds a way for anticipating the poetics of Artificial Intelligence and posthumanism. In this essay, Heidegger traces the origin of this question:

> According to ancient doctrine, the essence of a thing is considered to be *what* the thing is. We ask the question concerning technology when we ask what it is. Everyone knows the two statements that answer our question. One says: Technology is a means to an end. The other says: Technology is a human activity. The two definitions of technology belong together. For to posit ends and procure and utilize the means to them is a human activity. The manufacture and utilization of equipment, tools, and machines, the manufactured and used things themselves, and the needs and ends they serve, all belong to what technology is. The whole complex of these contrivances is technology. Technology itself is a contrivance—in Latin, an *instrumentum*. (288)

On the one hand, Heidegger defines the traditional understanding of "technology" as "a means to an end." He provides the list of the instrumental attributes: "the manufacture and utilization of equipment, tools, and machines, the manufactured and used things themselves, and the needs and ends that they serve," the list of which reveal the whole complexity of interrelationship of contrivance or "instrumentality." On the other hand, Heidegger also includes his focus on the aspect of "a human activity," which has the ends in mind and fulfills them by getting and using the means. Modern concept of technology is completely different from the "older handwork technology," Heidegger claims, in that the instrumentality

conditions "every attempt to bring man into the right relation to technology," and therefore everything in technology depends on human manipulating of the means in the proper manner, thus becoming "instrumental and anthropological." Humans get "technology spiritually in hand" in the manner of mastering it, and "the will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control" (289). In an attempt to get to closer to the primal causes of this instrumentality, Heidegger tries to identify the Aristotelian "four-fold causality" in the human activity:

> For centuries philosophy has taught that there are four causes: (1) the *causa materialis*, the material, the matter out of which, for example, a silver chalice is made; (2) the *causa formalis*, the form, the shape into which the material enters; (3) the *causa finalis*, the end, for example, the sacrificial rite in relation to which the chalice requires is determined to its forms and matter; (4) the *cause efficiens*, which brings about the effect that is the finished, actual chalice, in this instance, the silversmith. What technology is, when represented as a means, discloses itself when we trace instrumentality back to fourfold causality. (289-290)

The four causes are the matter (material), the form (shape), the end, and the effect. Humans use instruments for materializing or constructing (the end) the shape (the form) out of the materials (the matter) to produce the final product (the effect) through the process of these complex interconnected causality. In fact, Heidegger views the "significance" of the technology from the context of the "relevance" of an instrumental means to an anthropological human activity. Heidegger posits the responsibility of technology in the context of "bringing something into appearance," by uniting and revealing what was concealed in the history of being and essence. What Heidegger attempts to do in this questioning concerning the technology is to open and reach directly the essence of human being in tandem with technology, by grappling with "the instrumentality" of the means to an end and "the will to mastery" (289) of the human activity, both of which belong together. In short, Heidegger regards technology as "instrumental" (*techné*) which is "the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts" (294). Heidegger retrieves the word *epistêmê* in linking with the term *techné*, both of which are terms for "knowing" in the widest sense,

meaning entirely at home in something as an expert in understanding.[1] In line with Heideggerian questioning or critique of technology, it is my position to regard technology as first "instrumental" in terms of *techné* (technics) and then revealing "the human activity" in terms of *episteme* (knowing). My discussion of the human intelligence and the artificial intelligence will follow from this positionality.

Artificial Intelligence

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerged in the US, and the AI programmers of the MIT's AI Lab led by Marvin Minsky initiated their programs by limiting their research in artificial situations. They were convinced that "representing a few million facts about objects including their functions" would solve "the commonsense knowledge problem" of "storing millions of facts" by predetermining small number of "relevant" features and using the techniques to construct realistic micro-worlds. However, "the frame problem" remained unsolved. Dreyfus (2007) articulates this frame problem in a rhetorical question:

> If the computer is running a representation of the current state of the world and something in the world changes, how does the program determine which of its represented facts can be assumed to have stayed the same, and which might have to be updated? (248)

This AI project with its frame problem unsolved is called Symbolic AI, and John Haugeland called it as "Good Old Fashioned AI" (GOFAI).

Michael Wheeler in his *Reconstructing the Cognitive World: The Next Step* (2005) suggested alternatives for the Symbolic AI: Rodney Brooks' behaviorist approach at MIT, Phil Agre's pragmatist model, and Walter Freeman's dynamic neural model. In his essay, "Why Heideggerian AI failed and how Dixing It Would Require Making it Morea Heideggerian," Hubert L. Dreyfus provides these models in a genealogical way. (Dreyfus 249-262)

First, Rodney Brooks' behaviorist approach at MIT. Brooks published a paper criticizing the Symbolic AI represented by the GODAI robots, based on the idea that the mobile robot uses the world itself as its own representation rather than an internal description of the world. The internal description of the world would

1 See my essay on "Sublime and Technology: Nietzsche/Kant/Heidegger," *JELL* 62.1 (March 2020): 3-20. I discussed how Heidegger posits the responsibility of technology in the context of "bringing something into appearance." The first part of the questioning for Heidegger has traced the old definition of technology based upon the three key words: "instrumentality," "causality," and "revealing," in line with Heideggerian questioning or critique of technology.

quickly be outdated if the world changes. However, Brook's robots responded only to fixed features of the environment, disregarding the changing significance of the context. The robots are called "animats," which is simple insect-like behavior-based devices like ants, which operate in a fixed world and respond only to the small set of relevant features, thereby failing to solve the frame problem. Brook with Daniel Dennet went on to design and build a humanoid robot, Cog, who was equipped with cognitive ability, including "speech, eye-coordinated manipulation of objects, and a host of self- protective, self-regulatory and self-exploring activities" (Dreyfus 249-251).

Second, Phil Agre's pragmatist model. After the animats (ant-like robot) and Cog (humanoid robot), Phil Agre and David Chapman programmed *Pengo,* a virtual computer game, in which the player and penguins (the Pengi agents) kick large and deadly blocks of ice at each other. Agre's pragmatist model is called "interactionism." The Pengi agents acts in the game world which is constructed of the possibilities for action which triggers the agents to respond in a certain proper way. This interaction between an agent and its objects represents a certain time-extended pattern in the environment of an everyday routine activities. Agre's pragmatist model provides a leap from Brook's behaviorist approach by revealing how our experience feeds back and changes our sense of the significance and the relevance of the next situation, although the relevance was predetermined in putting his virtual agent in a virtual world without new relevancies (Dreyfus 251-253).

Third, Walter Freeman's dynamic neural model. Freeman's dynamic neural model is based upon the idea of "skillful coping" which "takes place on the background coping" without being involved in any form of representation. According to this model, "the mind is essentially inner," although we sometimes make use of the external representational equipment such as pencil, paper, and computers. Our basic way of relating to the external world is by using representations of the mind such as beliefs and memories which are not necessarily inner entities. Therefore, the mind represented by thinking links the inner with the outer representations, thereby becoming the extended mind. When we are coping at our best, we are drawn in by solicitations and respond directly to them, so that the distinction between us and our equipment vanishes. In this context, our mind is "extended" into the world and is involved in the "embedded-embodied" coping with the world, that is, becoming one with the world (Dreyfus 253-255).

As three models reveal, improving the familiarity and the coping with the objects of its research was the first priority of what Artificial Intelligence researchers have in mind. Therefore, this pragmatic perspective of the familiarity

and the coping requires skilled activities to achieve a better grip on the situation at stake as well as to get refined and secure sense of the objects and the environment under investigation. What one needs in this context is to know how an organism, animal or human, interacts with the environment, in particular, how the embedded-embodied mind in relation to the biological body copes with the environment in acting in response to one's sense of the situation. In fact, Dreyfus argues that "when one's situation deviates from some optimal body-environment gestalt, one's activity takes one closer to that optimum and thereby relieves the 'tension' of the deviation. One does not need to know what that optimum is in order to move towards it. One's embodied-embedded mind is simply solicited by the situation to lower the tension" (255). This phenomenon of the relief of the tension of the deviation in the extended mind and the environment relation creates "the dynamic relation" moving towards the equilibrium. What is at stake is the challenging issue of facing up to the incompatibility of the human intelligence and the artificial intelligence.

Walter Freeman's neurodynamics model in his *Societies of Brains: A Study in the Neuroscience of Love and Hate* (1995) was such a challenge. Freeman took rabbit's brain as a nonlinear dynamical system and proposes a neurodynamic model, elaborating how the brain of an active animal can find and augment significance in its world, based on the coupling of the brain and the environment. Freeman, as the founding figure of neuroscience, reading from the rabbit's brain, claims in conclusion that brain activity patterns in the cerebral memory system which has no boundaries:

> I conclude that context dependence is an essential property of the cerebral memory system, in which each new experience must change all of the existing store by some small amount, in order that a new entry can be incorporated and fully deployed in the existing body of experience. This property contrasts with memory stores in computers. . . in which each item is positioned by an address or a branch of a search tree. There, each item has a compartment, and new item don't change the old ones. Our data indicate that in brains the store has no boundaries or compartment. (99)

Therefore, the patterns are constantly changing in relation to one another, unlike memory stores in computers. What Freeman offers is a genuine Maurice Merleau-

Ponty's "intentional arc,"[1] according to which there are no linear casual connections nor a fixed library of data. The whole perceptual world of the animal changes when the agent encounters a new significance in "feedback loops." I will deal with this neurodynamics model further in the section, "Human Intelligence: Human Brain avec Human Intellect," particularly in terms of the cognition represented by reading/writing.

Human Intelligence: Human Intellect avec Human Brain

What is missing in the Heideggerian concept of modern technology is the part of the human activity, which represents the physical human embedded-embodied mind who thinks, reads, and writes, and acts with gestures and bodily movement. Human brain is the center of these activities. Maryanne Wolf in her *Proust and the Squid* (2007) posits reading as a human invention, and elaborates the human brain's plastic ability in relation to the act of reading:

> Underlying the brain's ability to learn reading lies its protean capacity to make new connections among structures and circuits originally devoted to other more basic brain processes that have enjoyed a longer existence in human evolution, such as vision and spoken language. We now know that groups of neurons create new connections and pathways among every time we acquire a new skill. Computer scientists use the term "open architecture" to describe a system that is versatile enough to change—or rearrange—to accommodate the varying demands on it. Within the constraints of our genetic legacy, our brain presents a beautiful example of open architecture. Thanks to this design, we come into the world programmed with the capacity to change what is given to us by nature, so that we can go beyond it. We are, it would seem from the start, genetically poised for breakthroughs. (5)

Wolf's understanding of the brain's "plastic design" to "make new connections among structures and circuits" is based upon the process of recollection which is activated in the reading brain in milli-second. The human reading brain, designed to store and retrieve words, can "elicit an entire history of myriad connections, associations, and long-stored emotions" in human evolution such as vision and spoken language. Wolf claims that the two dimensions of the reading brain's

1 Intentional arc is what "project around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation, or rather, that ensures that we are situated within all of these relationships." See Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenogy of Perception*. trans. Donald Landes. London: Routledge, 2012. 137.

development and evolution are the intellectual and the biological, using French novelist Marcel Proust as metaphor for the intellectual and the squid as analogy for the biological (5-6). Proust saw reading as "a kind of intellectual sanctuary" where human beings could provoke their intelligence and desires to experience the Real out of their transformed imagination. Scientists in the 1950s used the squid to illustrate "how neurons fire and transmit to each other, and in some cases to see how neurons repair and compensate when something goes awry" (6). These two complementary examples of human brain's reading processes elaborate how various cognitive or mental processes work in the reading brain, which is the main issue of the current research of cognitive neuroscience in relation to Artificial Intelligence.

The first case of reading is on the level of the intellectual. While reading and interpreting *Proust's On Reading* (1905), Maryanne Wolf perceives the phenomenon of "Passing over." In this process of passing over, reading "enables us to try on, identify with, and ultimately enter for a brief time the wholly different perspective of another person's consciousness," as well as to "leave our own consciousness, and pass over into the consciousness of another person, another age, another culture" (7). When this passing over happens, the readers cross "original boundaries" that are "challenged, teased, and gradually placed somewhere new," becoming "other" than "what we are" and "what we imagine we can be" (8). When we speed up this reading process as if we watch the video and move forward the video-tape as fast as we can, we will observe the human "brain's uncanny ability to learn to connect and integrate at rapid-fire speeds." Let us read what Wolf is describing concerning human intelligence's information processing:

> Let's go back to what you did when I asked you to switch your attention from this book to Proust's passage and to read as fast as you could without losing Proust's meaning. In response to this request you engaged *an array of mental or cognitive processes: attention; memory; and visual, auditory, and linguistic processes*. Promptly, your brain's attentional and executive systems began to plan how to read Proust speedily and still understand it. Next, your visual system raced into action swooping quickly across the page, forwarding its gleanings about letter shapes word forms, and common phrases to linguistic systems awaiting the information. These systems rapidly connected subtly differentiated visual symbols with essential information about the sounds contained in words. Without a single moment of conscious awareness you applied *highly automatic rules* about the sounds of letters in the English writing system, and used a great many linguistic processes to do so. This is

> the essence of what is called *the alphabetic principle*, and it depends on your *brain's uncanny ability to learn to connect and integrate at rapid-fire speeds* what it sees and what it hears to what it knows. (8) (Italics mine)

This "alphabetic principle" in reading process is what Bernard Stiegler calls "a temporalization of the spatial object that is the book."[1] In his *Nanjing Lecture Series 2016-2019* (2020), Stieger comments on what happens during the act of reading in the brain in terms of human intellect, while Wolf was reading Proust's *On Reading*:

> I have argued that these technical supports of the transindividual are tertiary retentions, that is, material exteriorizations of motor behaviors and mental contents that amount to an inorganic memory, external to the cerebral organ and the nervous system, but essential to its functioning from the moment it becomes noetic. I say tertiary retention because psychic memory is composed of secondary retentions and perception is the production of primary retentions, which are the time of perception. To put it more precisely, tertiary retentions condition the play of primary and secondary retentions. What Maryanne Wolf shows, on the basis of an example taken from Proust's *On Reading*, is the way in which these tertiary retentions are arranged and organized during the act of reading. Among these tertiary retentions, there emerges indeed a particular class, which I call hypomnesic, and which are specifically dedicated to the conservation and the transmission of mental contents. Such is the case for writing (253).

Stiegler defines each term, such as "primary retentions," "secondary retentions," and "tertiary retentions" in detail in his *Nanjing Lectures 2016*. When a reader practices reading "an alphabetical writing," a written speech that he/she might read with close attention, can constitute itself as an aggregation of what Husserl called "primary retentions." In the course of this speech that the reader is reading, the reader "retain[s] in a primary way each of the elements that are presented." "Each element that presents itself in each instant aggregates itself to the element that follows it in

1 Bernard Stiegler, in his footnote # 274 to *Nanjing Lectures 2016-2019* (2020), discusses reading and writing in terms of primary, secondary, and tertiary retentions, based upon perception, memory, and retaining. To Stiegler, "reading is a temporalization of the spatial object that is the book: it is in its temporality that we can and must observe the collection of alphabetical textual traces in which reading consists, through which we make selections from possible semantic combinations, while *limiting* them." (355). See Stiegler's *Nanjing Lectures 2016-2019*. ed. and trans. Daniel Ross (2020).

the next instant, and is retained in it, with which it forms the 'now' of the temporal flow: hence phonemes that aggregate to form a word, words that aggregate to form a sentence, sentences that aggregate to form a paragraph and so on – so that a unity of meaning is formed" (Stiegler 18-19). These primary retentions "are *retained* only on the basis of retentional *criteria,* criteria that are formed in the course of my prior experience." Thus, the primary retentions have become past, and constitute "the stuff of my memory" and become *secondary retentions*" (Stiegler 19). Tertiary retention modifies the relations between the psychic retentions of *perception* (*primary* retentions) and the psychic retentions of *memory* (*secondary* retentions). What is called 'reason' (thinking) is a form of attention, which arranges the intermediary of technical retentions (mnemotechnics) between retentions (R, memories) and protentions (P, expectations). This technical retentions are called "*tertiary* retentions" by Stiegler. And alphabetical writing (A), like digital writing, is a type of tertiary retention (Stigler 18).

A = R3 (R/P)

Thinking is constituted by temporally attentional forms (combining *primary* and *secondary* retentions and protentions). Memorization mediates retentions and protentions by mnemotechnical forms of memorization. To make it short, perception is the primary retentions, psychic memory is secondary retentions, and writing hypomnesic is tertiary retentions. And writing as tertiary retentions is the "inorganic memory" which is "external to the celebral organ and the nervous system," thus constructing the material exteriorization of motor-behavior and mental contents. In this context, Wolf's reading Proust's *On Reading* represents the intellectual (or "noetic") processes of human brain in the act of reading, as Stiegler contextualizes.

The second case of reading is biological. Wolf's squid represents human behavioral act of reading on the biological level, revealing "basic attentional, perceptual, conceptual, linguistic, and motor processes" which rest on "tangible neurological structures that are made up of neurons built up and then guided by the interaction between genes and the environment." Wolf's description is self-manifesting:

> [A]ll human *behaviors* are based upon multiple *cognitive processes*, which are based on the rapid integration of information from very specific *neurological structures*, which rely on billions of *neurons* capable of trillions of possible connections, which are programmed in large part by *genes*. In order to learn to work together to perform our most basic human function neurons need

> instructions from genes about how to form efficient *circuits* or *pathways* among the neurological structures. (10)

In fact, Wolf inserts in her text a figure of pyramid to "illustrate how various levels operate together when we read a single word" ("a bear"), with the reading the word "bear" in the top layer and the figures of genes-neurons-brain-speaking child from the bottom layer up above. This pyramid of "neurological structure" functions like a three-dimensional map for understanding how any genetically programmed behavior, such as vision and speech act, happens. The five layers form the reading "circuits or pathways" each time an individual brain acquires a new reading. The French neuroscientist Stanislas Dehaene calls this process of reading brain "neuronal recycling" (10). This biological and cognitive capacity of the human reading brain is intriguing, not only because all the reading activities of the brain occur without a single moment of conscious awareness and follow "highly automatic rules" about the sounds of letters in the English writing system. This is the essence of what is called the alphabetic principle, depending on the "automation" of your brain's uncanny ability to learn to connect and integrate "at rapid-fire speeds" what it sees and what it hears to what it knows.

Human reading brain of human intelligence which artificial intelligence attempts to imitate is also organologically (both as an psychosomatic endosomatic organic organ and as artefactual/technological exosomatic organological organ) inscrutable because of its "rich associations, inferences, and insights emerging from this capacity" and inviting us to "reach beyond the specific content of what we read to form new thoughts," thereby reflecting and reenacting "the brain's capacity for cognitive breakthroughs" (17). Wolf's quotation (from Stanislas Dehaene's *Reading in the Brain*) of Proust's *On Reading* concerning the ability of reading to evoke human thinking is revealing:

> We feel quite truly that our wisdom begins where that of the author ends, and we would like to have him give us answers, while all he can do is give us desires. And these desires he can around in us only by making us contemplate the supreme beauty which the last effort of his art has permitted him to reach. But … a law which perhaps signifies that we can receive the truth from nobody, and that we must create it ourselves that which is the end of their wisdom appears to us as but the beginning of ours (Wolf 17)

Bernard Stiegler, discussing his own concept of "Neganthropology" (86-91)

in his *The Neganthropocene*, takes the issue of Stanislas Dehaene's "neuronal recycling" as "the condition of possibility of learning to read" and suggests the interrelationships between the biological organs (brains) and the artificial/technical organs (writing):

> The consequence of this recycling, … is that the noetic cerebral organ, that is, the brain capable of questioning the truth and in return of transforming the world, is perpetually in dialogue with the artificial organs that it creates from flint tools to smartphones, passing of course through writing, and in particular the alphabetical writing that we ourselves have learned to read, and that allows us to be trans-formed by Proust during the passage to the act of reading. (86)

This process of what Stiegler calls "exteriorization" (manifested in the forms of "flint tools," "smartphones," and "alphabetical writing"), through which "artificial memory" is retained and formed, is essential to the functioning of the "nervous memory" of human beings. In fact, Stiegler claims the "feedback loops" between brain (mind) and the artificial organ of alphabetical writing (environment) in which human memory has co-evolved "from the outset (more than two million years ago)" with a "social memory." Stiegler calls this co-evolution of the mind and the environment as "organology" in terms of "Neganthropology" which is not organic.[1] This will lead us to the next section: "Artificial Intelligence and Posthumanism."

Artificial Intelligence and Posthumanism

As we have seen in the above, Wolf's models of Proust and the Squid in terms of the intellectual and the biological is closely related to the linguistic and the

1 Stiegler in his *Nanjing Lectures 2016-2019* (2018: Eighth Lecture) claims that "Neuronal recycling, which makes the noetic brain capable of profoundly disorganizing and reorganizing itself in order to interiorize the possibilities afforded by *the artificial memorization that I call organology*, is the condition of this exosomatic organogenesis in which consists the individuation of the technical organs that constitute an artificial milieu, and where the pursuit of evolution no longer occurs by submitting to biological constraints but through the individuation of social organizations. This is why, beyond the scientific and epistemological stakes of her work, the research of Maryanne Wolf greatly opens up the question of a politics of the organology of the brain in the context of what we are calling the age of disruption, that is, an epoch of innovation in which exosomatization is now completely controlled by economic powers and subject to the constraints of short-term profitability. Hence we must hear the alarm sounded by Proust and the Squid, even if we must not unduly dramatize it: '*the digital brain,' which is being organologically transformed at a dizzying rate, raises the question of the preservation of a capacity for deep reading and therefore for deep attention.* What is being referred to here as 'deep attention,' however, is nothing other than the ability to reason by inheriting the experience of our ancestors and by making a worthwhile contribution to the fruitful growth of this heritage." (256)

neurocognitive aspects of the Artificial Intelligence. The complementary examples of human brain's reading processes have analogically elaborated how various neuro-cognitive processes will work algorithmically in the data-processing of the AI. Both cases of reading of Maryanne Wolf are referring to human intelligence's information processing in terms of the human brain's automatic learning which reminds us of machine learning and deep learning. In the process of Wolf's "passing over," the cognitive mind of the AI algorithm analogically can cross original boundaries" that are "challenged, teased, and gradually placed somewhere new," becoming other than what it is and what it imagine it can be automatically. AI's "inorganic memory," which is "exteriorization" of the human intelligence, thus will construct the material exteriorization of motor-behavior and mental contents in accordance with the algorithm of the "alphabetic principle" in reading its own database. This belongs to what Bernard Stiegler calls "a temporalization of the spatial object" in a mega-macro scale.

The second case of Wolf's squid is revealing "basic attentional, perceptual, conceptual, linguistic, and motor processes" which rest on "tangible neurological structures that are made up of neurons built up and then guided by the interaction between genes and the environment." Analogically, this pyramid of "neurological structure" will function like a multi-dimensional map for the AI in understanding how any algorithmically programmed captured data will formulate the data-processing "circuits or pathways" which can be transformed into "feedback loops," an AI version of "neuronal recycling." This algorithmic cognitive capacity of the AI will follow "light-speed automatic rules" about the data in the system, depending on the algorithmic automata of the AI's ability to connect and integrate "at light speed." In short, the artefactual/technological inorganic organ of the AI performs its "rich associations, inferences, and insights emerging from this capacity," reaching beyond the specific content of what human brains can read to form new thoughts, thereby reenacting "the AI's capacity for cognitive breakthroughs." In fact, requoting Wolf's quotation (from Stanislas Dehaene's *Reading in the Brain*) of Proust's *On Reading* concerning the ability of reading, Bernard Stiegler, discussing his own concept of "Neganthropology" (86-91) in the context of Stanislas Dehaene's "neuronal recycling" as "the condition of possibility of learning to read," suggests the interrelationships between the human intelligence and the artificial/technical organs of the Artificial Intelligence.

As we have seen so far, the development of artificial intelligence in tandem with that of human intelligence may be the last great challenge of humanism and the first great endeavor of posthumanism. Cognitive neuroscience and artificial

intelligence have undergone revolutionary changes in the past decades, and they now foreground the embodied and environmentally embedded nature of intelligent action. Via computer and information technology, posthumanism has been able to articulate the retreat of the human agent into a larger ecological environment. The autonomy of the human agent is now confronted with the sublimation of matter into the digital. N. Katherine Hayles, who has been the trailblazer in the posthuman discourse, elaborates a definition of posthumanism in relation to cybernetics and a new attentiveness to the body and the materiality in an interview at UiT Tromso, Norway, in 2014:

> Posthumanism as I define it in my book *How We Became Posthuman* (1999) was in part about the deconstruction of the liberal humanist subject and the attributes normally associated with it such as autonomy, free will, self-determination and so forth. What I saw happening in the 1980s and 1990s was the rise of a new way of thinking about human beings that was in flat contradiction to all these attributes; that was what I called posthumanism. One of its manifestations was the idea that if you capture the informational patterns of the human brain, you could then upload it to a computer and achieve effective immortality. To me this seemed absolutely wrong, even pernicious, because it plays on mere fantasies of cognition and of what constitutes human life. I was, at this point, very concerned to insert embodiment back into the equation. It seemed significant to me that the foremost proponents of this reductionist view of human life, such as Hans Moravec, were not neuroscientists or physiologists, but worked within robotics. As much as the science of robotics has advanced, it still is no way near the capacity to reconstruct the complexity of the human brain and its relation to the body and its surroundings. The embodied nature of human cognition is highly relevant to the question of whether downloading a human personality might ever be possible.

Key issues of her claim are "robotics," "the embodied nature of human cognition" and "the capacity to reconstruct the complexity of the human brain and its relation to the body and its surroundings." It is significant that N. Katherine Hayles's *How we Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (1999) was written, following after the robot scientist Hans Moravec's *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (1988) and the scientist/inventor Ray Kurzweil's *The Age*

of the Spiritual Machines: How We Will Live, Work, and Think in the New Age of Intelligent Machines (1999). When asked in the same interview about whether the question of uploading a human personality technologically to the robots in the remote future is possible, Hayles answered with reservation:

> We currently have no computational platform that approaches the complexity of the human neuro-system; neural nets, for example, model synaptic connections but lack any connection to the complexities of the endocrine system and hormonal regulation. And even if we had such a device, the questions of the embodied nature of cognition and varying relations enabled by the sensory system still remain unanswered. Humans are enormously complex systems and we have nothing like that in regard to technological systems.

Now six years have passed since this interview, what is happening? It is quite tricky to catch up with the current trend of AI research, because of the disruptive, transforming, hyper-connective, and speedy development in this field. In fact, in her *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* in 2012, Hayles has already claimed this issue of the human embodiment which "takes the form of extended cognition, in which human agency and thought are enmeshed within larger networks that extend beyond the desktop computer into the environment" (3). For Hayles, "all cognition is embodied, which is to say that for humans, it exists throughout the body, not only in the neocortex. Moreover, it extends beyond the body's boundaries in ways that challenge our ability to say where or even if cognitive networks end" (17).

Hayles's own statement about the posthuman agency is revealing:

> Thinkers such as Gilbert Simondon and later Bernard Stiegler have alerted us to the fact that *humans have always been integrated into their environment and have co-evolved with it*. What is new at the present moment is the unprecedented degree with which we actively build and change these environments. This enables *new feedback loops and new forms of amplification between human evolution and technical developments*. Take, for example, human attention. Humans are equipped with two mechanisms of attention: deep and hyper attention. *Deep attention* has a high threshold for boredom and enables one to engage in a specific task or problem over an extended period time to develop expert knowledge; *hyper attention* requires constant gratification yet enables one quickly to scan significant amounts of data to gain

> an overview or identify certain patterns. Both forms of attention have been with us since the beginning of humankind, and both have specific advantages. Now, with *the development of ubiquitously networked digital devices*, however, we have created a socio-technical environment that systemically privileges hyper attention. This has profound effects on human cognition and stimulates the development of hyper attention. Humans with this ontogenetic adaptation actively reconfigure their technical environments in a direction that requires even more hyper attentiveness. *The biological, technical, and socio-cultural implications of smart phones* are a good example of the mutual amplification of technical devices and human social and neurological co-evolution. This is something I try to get at with the term "technogenesis" in my book *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (2012). (Emphasis mine)

Hayles's discussion of two mechanisms of human attention (hyper attention and deep attention) here, various types of reading (hyper-reading, distant reading, close reading) in other publications,[1] and co-evolution of humans and their environment, embodiment and ubiquitous networked digital media, prepares the ground for the concept of "technogenesis." Briefly, this can be defined as "the idea that human and technics have coevolved together" (*How We Think* 10), particularly in the mechanism of "feedback loops" where "epigenetic changes in human biology can be accelerated by changes in the environment that make them even more adaptive, which leads to further epigenetic changes" (*How We Think* 10).[2]

Conclusion: On the Way to the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

The fact that the biological and cognitive function of the human brain in connecting and integrating at rapid-fire speeds without a single moment of consciousness brings the question of the automation. The autonomy of the human agent is now confronted

1 See N. Katherine Hayles's *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (2012) and "Combining Close and Distant Reading: Jonathan Safran Foer's Tree of Codes and the Aesthetic of Bookishness," *PMLA* 128.1 (2013).

2 N. Katherine Hayles's contribution to the posthuman discourse is immense, particularly in terms of human cognition and technical cognitions, co-evolution of the human and technological environment in terms of "feedback loops," ethics and future of posthumanism. See her "Complex dynamics in literature and science." In: Hayles, N. Katherine. (ed.) *Chaos and Order: Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science* (1991), *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (1999), *Writing Machines* (2002), *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (2005), *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (2012), *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious* (2017).

with the automation which loses its human autonomy and transforms itself into the system of automatism, and the matter is sublimated into the digital. The augmentation and absorption of human agents by the digital now seems inevitable, leaving the question of man and technology initiated by Heidegger still incomplete. Nevertheless, for the past five years, a second AI renaissance has arrived with big data storage and processing and deep learning neural network algorithms. In 2016, there has been the historical Google DeepMind Challenge Go-match between the artificial intelligence and human intelligence, between AlphaGo backed by the Google DeepMind and South Korean Go Master Lee Sedol who was defeated. This match has been in line with the previous historic 1997 chess match between Deep Blue and Garry Kasparov. This Go-match was enhanced and enriched by the principles of machine learning algorithms in tandem with human thinking and human intelligence in an interactive operational conversation.

In this age of what Klaus Schwab called "The Fourth Wave of the Industrial Revolution," the new environment of the unlimited possibilities of hyper-connectivity and convergence emerges, revealing "emerging technology breakthroughs" across the physical, digital, and biological worlds: neural network structured artificial intelligence research, big data driven social media, the rapid adoption of 5G small screen device computer technology, reality augmenting software, and what not. The development of artificial intelligence via computer and information technology, in particular, initiates posthumanism which articulates the retreat of the human agent into the background of a larger ecological environment. What is at stake is the ethical articulation of intelligence (both human and artificial), tools, machines, and forms of life in this "second machine age" described by MIT professors Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee.

One may recall Heidegger's essay, "The Questioning Concerning the Technology." At the end of the essay, Heidegger in his own words presents two possible directions for ethical articulation one might take with technology, by saying "The essence of technology is in a lofty sense ambiguous. Such ambiguity points to the mystery of all revealing, i.e., of truth" (314):

> Route 1 (On the one hand): Enframing (Gestell) challenges forth into the frenziedness of ordering that blocks every view into the propriative event of revealing and so radically endangers the relation to the essence of truth.
>
> Route 2: (On the other hand): Enframing (Gestell) propriates for its part in the granting that lets man endure—as yet inexperienced, but perhaps more

> experienced in the future—that he may be. the one who is needed and used for the safekeeping of the essence of truth. Thus the rising of the saving power appears. (314)

Whichever route they may choose, humans are on the way to the ethics of the Artificial Intelligence.

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Theoretical and Literary Discourses and the Problem of Literary Style

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Abstract In this paper, there has been concretized the specification of various theoretical and literary discourses—the eidosic one, the personalistic one and the literary grammar, which found upon different methods and set various research objectives. Hence, it is proved that the vision of "style" is different in each of them. The eidosic theory of literature is characterized by conviction in the importance and advantage of poetic cognition through images. Eidosic comprehension of style is a crucially valuable concept, which characterizes aesthetic perfection, namely, "the correlation of the word picture with something which is Anderssein for it" (according to A.F. Losev). Among these lines of research, literary grammar is the most epistemological, as it corresponds to the modern European ideal of scientific character. The notion of style within the boundaries of literary grammar is pre-aesthetic, since the sensual, that is, the "inner form" as a plastic-pictorial and vivid component of the image, is not considered. In personalistic discourse, all the problems associated with the perception and interpretation of the literary text, are transferred to the sphere of intersubjective relations. Dialogical relations—relations between the subjects of utterance—are the objects in personalism. In the personalistic theory of literature, the author-creator is the constitutive moment of artistic creation. Literary style is a method of "aesthetic consummation," which is not conceivable without the finishing ability of the image, that is, the concept of style in personalism is post-aesthetic. The article states the main difference between academic theories of literature and philological theory, which lies in the attitude toward language. The essence of the philological theory is determined by interrogative thinking, different from the representative thinking, which underlies the modern theory of literature.

Key words theoretical and literary discourse; literary style; eidos; author-creator; content form; representative thinking; interrogative thinking

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Introduction

In the present article, we cater to three areas in the modern academic theory of literature, to the theoretical and literary discourses: eidosic discourse, personalistic discourse and literary grammar. We have to comprehend the difference between these discourses and to show how "the style" is regarded within each of them. It stands to mention separately the "philological" theory, that is constituted beyond the limits of the considered theoretical and literary discourses, which objectify and dementalize the stylistic harmony.

Modern theoretical and literary discourses differ in the subject of study, and, consequently, in methodology. Their scientific character is preserved only within the limits of the corresponding methodology, and poetry is the subject of scientific research within the boundaries of various discourses. At the core of the current areas of the modern academic theory of literature lies the representative thinking, whereas the basis of the "philological" theory is the interrogative thinking[1]. Through the differentiation of cogitation patterns, it is also possible to distinguish between the ways of understanding the poetical work. The first thing that needs to be done is to clarify the origin of the mentioned academic theories of literature. Thus, "the eidosic" (from the Greek ειδος—look, view, appearance, beauty) theory of literature comes from the theory of the word picture of the nineteenth century. The "literary grammar" issues from theoretical objectives of the founders of OPOJAZ (short for the Russian: "Society for the Study of Poetic Language"), and the "personalistic" theory of literature is based on the theoretical concept of M.M. Bakhtin[2].

The Eidosic Discourse

In the eidosic discourse, the problem of the representativeness of a poetic word is thought through very deeply. For the eidosic discourse, the poetic representation is objectified in words, and therefore it is the subject of literary-theoretic

1 Domashchenko A. V. *Concerning interpretation and elucidation: the monograph* (Donetsk: The publishing house «DonNU», 2007) 7.

2 Domashchenko A. V. *Concerning interpretation and elucidation: the monograph* (Donetsk: The publishing house «DonNU», 2007) 10.

comprehension. The emanation of various conceptions is the internal form of the literary work, taken to mean "an image" (according to A.A. Potebnya). Picturesque imagery is an external "sensual expression of this or that internally given spiritual life"[1], it is an integral part and feature of belles-lettres. The word picture (artistic image) has an independent and self-sufficient character in the poetic work, it is variable, which is due to the fact that the image in the works of oral lore "always changes, always floats or runs against, always becomes"[2]. Within the limits of the eidosic theory of literature, researchers deal with the problem of the aesthetic completion of the literary work, since the aesthetically completed thing is the one that is realized in space and time and opens up to a visual (poetic) representation. The image, demonstrativeness, and hence representative thinking are from the very beginning relevant for poetry. The essence of poetry can be opened up in visualization, however, the original Truth is conceived in its over-verbal givenness, when the interrogative thinking turns out to be relevant to poetry.

The eidosic discourse presents us an "aesthetically complete literary world, revealed in the visualization"[3]. The eidosic theory of literature contemplates "expressive faces of genesis" (according to A.F. Losev). "Expressive faces of genesis" are "eidoses," "picture forms" or images. Since the word picture/artistic image ("eidos") is the main category for eidosic discourse, it becomes necessary to turn to the history of this term's formation. The conception of an "eidos" was developed in antiquity. (Plato, Aristotle, Neo-Platonists), but it should be noted that the concept of "eidos" does not always correlate in the minds of ancient philosophers with the notion of "word picture/artistic image." But the appeal to the theory of "eidos" in antiquity is important, since then the groundwork for the eidosic theory, which has its further development, was laid. The central problem of Plato's philosophy is the problem of ideas (eidos). The doctrine of ideas (eidoses) gives the name to the whole direction in philosophy. What is meant here is the existence of two worlds: the world of ideas and the world of things, or forms. The prototypes, the initial sources of things, are the ideas that underlie the whole multitude of things formed from shapeless substance[4]. "Eidos" acquires an ontologically independent status precisely in the Platonic philosophy. It was said by Plato, that the world of

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1 Losev A. F. *Sign. Symbol. Myth* (M.: The publishing house of Moscow University, 1982) 415.

2 Losev A. F. *Sign. Symbol. Myth* (M.: The publishing house of Moscow University, 1982) 410-415.

3 Domashchenko A. V. *Concerning interpretation and elucidation: the monograph* (Donetsk: The publishing house «DonNU», 2007) 20.

4 Losev A. F. *Essays on ancient symbolism and mythology* (M.: The publishing house «Thought», 1993) 234-235.

"eidos," the transcendental world of ideas, appears as an assemblage of absolute and perfect examples of conceivable things. Eidosic theory of the twentieth century refers to the ancient heritage, that is, the ancient theory influences the formation of modern theories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the late-classical and neo-classical philosophies the concept of "eidos" gets a second wind. On the basis of the ancient concept of "eidos," the concepts of unfolding the content of the Absolute idea grow up to its objectification in the Anderssein of nature by G.W.F. Hegel, the doctrine of A. Schopenhauer about the "world of rational ideas," the "eidology" of E. Husserl and many other philosophical theories. The greatest influence upon the theory of literature since the nineteenth century is exercised by G.W.F. Hegel's system of philosophy. The very concept of "word picture/ artistic image" was developed by G.W.F. Hegel as part of aesthetics. G.W.F. Hegel considers art as one of the ways to implement the Absolute Idea. Art is an aesthetic self-knowing of the Absolute Idea. "It is art," G.W.F. Hegel emphasized,—that drives home the truth in the form of a sensual image, which in its very phenomenon has a higher, more profound meaning and importance"[1]. The aesthetic conception of G.W.F. Hegel is built on the basis of the concept of "visualization," the revelation of which is impossible without resorting to the "image." The appeal to the "image" as the basis for the perception of a literary work has a deep tradition. So, according to G.W.F. Hegel, it is eye-mindedness that becomes the basis for the interpretation of the work. The essence of the poetic diction is also included in the character of the visualization. In fact, poetic representation is figurative. G.W.F. Hegel as follows gave reasons for the assertion that the poetic representation is figurative: it is figurative in that "it sets before our eyes, instead of an abstract essence, its concrete reality, instead of an accidental genesis—the phenomenon in which we perceive the mind-body principle directly through the very appearance and its individuality in their continuity ...." Poetry "is not satisfied with abstract comprehension," but it "gives us a concept in its genesis, the generation—in a certain individuality"; it "removes purely abstract understanding, putting a real certainty in its place"; it is in the "nature and property" of the poetic representation that the "beauty and perfection" of poetry are chiefly composed[2]. The poetic representation is significant for the eidosic theory of literature: "When we in the prosaic comprehension of the work leave aside (reduce) the character of the poetic representation (the form of vision), we destroy the poetic essence of the work itself, although it seems to

1 Hegel G. V. F. *Aesthetics: in 4 volumes. Volume 1* (M.: The publishing house «Art», 1968) 109.

2 Hegel G. V. F. *Writings. Volume 14: Lectures on aesthetics* (M.: The publishing house «Social and Economic Literature Publishers», 1958) 193-197.

us that we analyze it"[1]. Visual presentation of the ideas is the sphere where the essence of the artistic work is revealed most deeply and most fully. The content of a fictional work should be developed in such a way so as to get as close as possible to the soul, to the "eidos" of the subject. The conception of visual thinking turns out to be especially attractive, because it lies at the heart of any fictional work. The mythological school, which develops the eidosic theory, gives us the idea of words-images. This school and its representatives studied first of all the mythological imagery of the language, but they do not deal with the ontological characteristics of the "image," remaining within the boundaries of representative thinking. The word is sacral and meaning-making. It not only transmits the ready thought, but also creates it. Analysis of the poetic word in all its shades, in all its manifestations becomes, eventually, a means for understanding the action of thought, the movement of feeling, the formation and development of an idea. The word has a complex internal structure, the aesthetic—the moment of the word; its sound, figurative and semantic composition acquires a different kind of significance, which is awoken by connections with other words. Interconnected words generate images and give rise to the semantic completeness that makes the representative thought itself possible. It is important to emphasize that for the eidosic theoretical-literary discourse, the artistic content of the poetic work is manifested only in perceptually-based representation (specie), for which the word in its linguistic givenness is only a means.

So, as was already mentioned above, the primary teaching for the eidosic theory of literature is the teaching of G.W.F. Hegel on the poetic representation, the comprehension of the essence of which is impossible without the main aesthetic category—the "word picture/artistic image." An important moment that determines the eidosic discourse is not only the revelation of the concept of the "word picture/artistic image," but also the setting for the possibility of inclusion into the inner essence of the work of fiction. Within the framework of the eidosic theory of literature, style is an aesthetic category that lies within the boundaries of "representative thinking." According to G.W.F. Hegel's classification any representation can be characterized either as a poetic or as a prosaic one. The essence of the poetic work is "in the nature and property of poetic representation," which is visual, that is why it is figurative. To comprehend the aesthetic nature of a fictional work within the boundaries of representative thinking is possible only through the revealed, objectified in words. It is necessary to bear it in mind during

1 Domashchenko A. V. *Concerning interpretation and elucidation: the monograph* (Donetsk: The publishing house «DonNU», 2007) 83.

the theoretical comprehension of the eidosic vision of the style. The works by A.A. Potebnya remain overwhelmingly important for eidosic discourse. Trying to understand the nature of the poetic word, the scientist notes that in addition to the external, audial form, the word carries in itself also the image constituting the "inner form" that "directs the thought," thus revealing the content of the word (fictional work), and is also the basic condition for the aesthetic perception of the word. It should be highlighted that the content is revealed in images; therefore one cannot equate the internal form (plastic-pictorial and vivid component of the image,) and the content. The word's inner form touches the entire structure of the word, it expresses the word meaning picturesquely, being a visualization of the word, and it is the imagery of the language. A.A. Potebny's theory of the "word's inner form" uncovers itself to scientists in different contexts, as he understands it either linguistically, thinking of it as of "the nearest etymological meaning," or from the point of view of literary criticism, speaking about visual representation, about the "lost aestheticism of impression" that can be restored by the "consciousness of the word's inner form." A.A. Potebnya feels the boundaries of various discourses, moving freely from one to another, not mixing them, but understanding their tasks from within.

Another important postulate of A.A. Potebnya's theory is the analogy between a word and a work of fiction. "The word's inner form" corresponds to the "inner form" of the literary work. The internal form of the fictional work is interpreted by A.A. Potebnya as an "image, ... corresponding to the idea"[1]. It can be assumed that, for A.A. Potebnya, the style of the fictional work has the source in the word's inner form. Then we can speak of the "inner style" of a fictional work as of its "inner form." In the work of art, the "inner style" comes out, that is, the aesthetic itself in style—is the "inner style" of the literary work.

In the twentieth century, the most influential representative of the eidosic theoretical-literary discourse was A.F. Losev. In his work "The problem of literary style" A.F. Losev defines the style in the following way: "Literary style is the development of the entire potential of a fictional work on the basis of certain over-structural and beyond-literary set courses and its primary patterns, which are felt, however, immanently by the artistic structures of the fictional work"[2]. Style is the correlation of the word picture/artistic image with that which is not itself, with what is Anderssein for it. "If we are able to define in the style of a given

1 Potebnya A. A. *Word and Myth* (M.: The publishing house «Truth», 1989) 165.

2 Losev A. F. *The problem of literary style* (K.: The publishing house «Collegium, Kiev Academy of Eurobusiness», 1994) 196.

literary work something else that is not actually a literary work itself, it means ... that we have entered the field of style"[1]. As A.F. Losev puts it, the problem of style is associated with the distinction between "the artistic structure" and its "ontological basis." It is the main source of style—its "prototype" or "primary pattern" and "composition scheme of the work which style is being discussed." The "inner style" of a fictional work (by analogy with "the word's inner form")—this is directly aesthetic, identified with the image as such, taken in the aspect of its expressiveness; "internal" means an aesthetically given one. It may be said that style is a high tension of thought, striving for an aesthetic ideal. It expresses the elements of form and content; this is both a material phenomenon and an "Anderssein of a thing" (A.F. Losev) at the same time. Within the eidosic theory of literature, it is important to "comprehend" and to "clarify" the inner form of a literary work filled with symbolic meaning. Therefore speaking of the style of a fictional work within the boundaries of this discourse, we must comprehend the images "created by the representative spirit in their national and temporal originality, bearing in mind the subjective creative manner"[2]. A purely rational and reasonably discursive understanding deprives us of a significant style component, the "inner" style, which acts as the "genuine soul" of the work, as its aesthetic component. Eidosic theory of literature objectifies the "inner" form of the work, trying to consider a work of art in a purely artistic aspect. But referring to the formalized side of art (an image), we are also turned to the implication—deep meaning (the prototype), which arises in the inextricable connection with a specific literary form and has a real objective reality only in it. "Figuratively presented" is thematized in the "eidosly" understood style. Consequently, the "eidosic" vision of style is the correlation of the word picture/artistic image with that which is Anderssein for him. This is a fundamentally value-based concept that characterizes aesthetic perfection, the highest degree that art can achieve.

The Literary Grammar

At the outset of the twentieth century the question of definition of literary research methods was high on the agenda. The representatives of the formalistic school, and later structuralists, aspired to make the literature searches, including language and style, exact sciences. The principles of specification and concretism of literary

1 Losev A. F. *The problem of literary style* (K.: The publishing house «Collegium, Kiev Academy of Eurobusiness», 1994) 172.

2 Hegel G. V. F. *Writings. Volume 14: Lectures on aesthetics* (M.: The publishing house «Social and Economic Literature Publishers», 1958) 361.

science, the development of clear methodology became the focus of interest for literary grammar. Denying unprincipled mixture of sciences, the representatives of literary grammar strain after high level of theorization. The approach, striving for theoretical nature, has both its advantages and disadvantages. The search for a cognition method takes on a dimension. But, having provided themselves of the methods of their science and not going beyond their limits, literary grammar "deadens" the work of art. The reality of literary grammar is such that it is relevant to refrain from examining general issues of aesthetics, psychology, and philosophy. Fundamental separation from aesthetics can be called the most characteristic feature. The formalists leave aside a number of common problems (for example, the problem of beauty, the problem of meaning of art and its aims). The representatives of this area focused on "specific" problems of literary criticism. Strong principles of literary analysis, the "axioms" of the science dealing with literature, are being developed in the hope of escaping the methodological discord that characterizes the modern theory of literature. Their main statement has consisted in the fact that the subject of literary criticism as an "exact science" should be the study of the specific features of the literary material that distinguishes it from any other material. It also concerns the cases when this material, through its secondary, indirect features, gives rise to the right to use it as an auxiliary one in other sciences too. Describing the characteristics of literary grammar, we should note a constant dialogue with the Symbolists, in the struggle against whom the literary grammar forms its positions with respect to poetics. Lobbying "for the purity of its subject," literary grammar consistently refuses to interact with works on the history of culture, psychology, aesthetics, and refuses from their established and generally accepted terminological apparatus. The "refined" terms, different from the "foreign" categorical apparatus, are being formed. Such terminology turns out to be isolated, having a "self-made" look that does not refer the researcher to the conceptual apparatus of any philosophical system or scientific discipline. Striving for the uniqueness of their terminology, the representatives of literary grammar refuse from the "inner form" of the word. Clearly articulating its position, literary grammar accepts and allows etymological and semantic doublets in terminology.

The most important feature of the literary grammar discourse is the orientation toward linguistics. "Instead of the desire, peculiar to the historic literary science, to use philosophy, the history of culture, psychology in the literary investigation, the formalists focus on linguistics, the methods of philological analysis of a work

of art, and on the specific study of the specific features of literary material"[1]. It is linguistics that, from the perspective of the representatives of literary grammar, comes into contact with poetics, but approaches language with a different goal. In literary grammar, the material of poetry is the word, therefore the basis for the systematic construction of poetics is the classification of language facts, which is given by linguistics. This was due to the fact that the facts of the poetic language, revealed when compared with the practical language, could be considered in the realm of purely linguistic problems as language facts in general. Thus, the representatives of literary grammar insist on the paramount importance of linguistic material for constructing the theory of literature. Such an approach can not be evaluated as unambiguously positive; therefore, Yu. Kristeva notes that when one turns to a linguistic method in the analysis of a poetic work, the literary object itself disappears "under the weight of language categories." These language categories constitute a "scientific object" which is "immanent to formalistic discourse and refers to its implicit level, but has nothing or very little in common with its original subject—literature as a special way of signifying, that is, taking into account the subject's space, its topology, its history, its ideology"[2].

The language of literary grammar is instrumental. It cannot be "symbolic," because in this discourse the aesthetic, "inner form" of a literary work, filled with symbolic meaning, is not the subject of conceptualization, as well as the language is not a "house of existence" (according to M. Heidegger). Considering the questions of tone painting and abstruse language, the representatives of literary grammar come to a conclusion that is fundamentally contrary to the traditional opinion: poetic language is not only the language of images, sounds have an independent meaning, and the theory of the word picture (artistic image) is archaic.

The literary grammar, leaning toward precision and specificity, is constituted on the border with linguistics: "Precision is the banner of literary grammar and the main guarantee of its superiority over other directions in the theory of literature"[3]. However, it should be emphasized that "... it is extremely dangerous to require of the material such a degree of accuracy that it does not have, and cannot have, by its

1 Mashinsky S. *Ways and Crossroads: (from the history of Soviet literary criticism) // Literature issues* (1966, No. 5) 74-75.

2 Kristeva Yu. *The Destruction of Poetics // M.M. Bakhtin: pro et contra. The creativity and heritage of M.M. Bakhtin in the context of world culture* (St. Petersburg, 2002) 10.

3 Domashchenko A. V. *Concerning interpretation and elucidation: the monograph* (Donetsk: The publishing house «DonNU», 2007) 13.

very nature"[1].

The representatives of this discourse have outlined the revision of A.A. Potebnia's general theory, built on the assertion that poetry is thinking with images, and they have made the aesthetic orientation of his poetics the main object of their criticism. The most indicative in this regard is the work by V.B. Shklovskyi "Art as an approach," which points to the difference between the poetic and the prosaic images. The article begins with objections to the main fundamental principles of A.A. Potebnia concerning imagery and the relationship of the image to the explained. V.B. Shklovskyi points out, among other things, that images are almost immovable, they are "unchangeable," and therefore are rarely created by a poet. For V.B. Shklovskyi the images are given, and in poetry there is much more memory of images than thinking by them: "Visual thinking is not in any case what unites all kinds of art or even all kinds of verbal art, it is not that, the change of what constitutes the essence of the movement of poetry"[2].

The poetic image is defined as one of the means of a poetic language—a device equal in its task to other methods of poetic language: simple and negative parallelism, comparison, repetition, symmetry, hyperbole, etc. The notion of the image was pushed into the general system of poetic devices and lost its role, dominant in theory.

In the article "Potebnia" V.B. Shklovskyi once again accentuates that imagery, symbolism do not constitute a specific difference between the poetic language and the prosaic (practical) one: "Poetic language differs from prosaic language by the perceptibility of its construction. Either acoustic, or pronouncing, or semasiological side can be felt. Sometimes one can perceive not the structure, but the construction of words, their location. One of the means to create a tangible, experienced in its very fabric construction is a poetic image, but it is only one of the means. The creation of scientific poetics should be introduced with the factual recognition, based on mass facts, that there are "poetic" and "prosaic" languages, the laws of which are different, and with an analysis of these differences"[3].

It is the discussion with A.A. Potebnia that has an important influence on the formation of its own position in science. Having started his work with the

1 Likhachev D. S. *On the accuracy of literary criticism // Literary trends and styles: collected papers, dedicated to the 75th anniversary of G. N. Pospelov* (M.: The publishing house of Moscow University, 1976) 15.

2 Shklovsky V. B. *Art as a method* URL:http://www.opojaz.ru/manifests/kakpriem.html (Date of access: 10.03.2020).

3 Shklovsky V. B. *Potebnya* URL: http://www.opojaz.ru/shklovsky/potebnja.html (Date of access: 10.03.2020).

question of verse sounds, as with the most fundamental question for that time, the representatives of literary grammar related to a number of basic questions of poetics. Poetry as thinking by images is denied; literary grammar seeks to give priority attention to language, rhythm, sound and syntax. Having refused to interpret the literary text from an aesthetic point of view, literary grammar gives preference in the analysis to the formal side.

For literary grammar natural-science knowledge with its orientation to accuracy and objectivity is the reference point and the ideal of scientific character. Within this discourse, the conviction of the coincidence of the true and the rational dominates. The desire for a purely rational development of knowledge caused such rejection of the eidosic theory. It also becomes clear that the literary grammar seeks to work within the boundaries of the instrumental language, and the maximum possible purity of this language is its deliberately formulated goal. The literary grammar dementalises the external form of the fictional work and differs in the depth of the interpretation of the intratextual relations, but can not profess the conclusions of aesthetic or ontological nature. The elements of the external form of a literary work are considered in this discourse in isolation from its internal form and from the content. So the style was characterized as "the unity of literary devices" and it was protected of the contact with the internal form. In literary grammar, distinctive marks and style features are recognized as the construction of a literary work, the scheme by which it is constructed, which motivates the appearance of certain "distinctive marks" of style. At the same time, it was forgotten that artistic creation can not be reproduced as some kind of mechanical construction principle, because the style combines "the predictable," that is, the recognizable, and "the unpredictable," unrepeatable. The characteristics of style that are so to say on the "surface" of the literary work, are the result of processing the linguistic material. But, in this case, there remains without attention a certain generating principle that is in the depth of the artistic creation. After all, the style of a literary work is some kind of self-sufficient aesthetic value.

Therefore, literary grammar does not set itself the task of revealing the style of a literary work as the unity of all the moments of artistic form and content, but it helps to identify the specificity of one of the essential style components—the language. Characteristic linguistic properties of a literary work are the subject of literary grammar, while the "core" of the image, its "inner form," being a non-linguistic phenomenon, remains beyond its understanding. At the same time, no one, of course, denies that the language expression, special "queerness" of the syllable are of great importance for understanding the whole work.

According to A.A. Potebnia, we call the visual image, its very actualization in the word—the "internal form." Equating the "visual image" to the "signs of style," this discourse appeals to the "external form," to the "semantic shell," which can not reveal the aesthetic and content-related nature of the poetic work. According to this approach, style is a systemic unity of formal components, or style bearers—of composition, generic and genre features, language. Without attention there are such style categories as the ratio of the objective and the subjective in style, figurativeness and expressiveness, the main attention is devoted to the use of language means for certain ideas. Thus, the idea of style within the limits of literary grammar is pre-aesthetic, since the sensual, that is, the "inner form" as a plastic-pictorial component of the image is reduced. Interpretation in the field of literary grammar is of constructive and technical nature.

The Personalistic Discourse

The third direction in the modern academic theory of literature is the personalistic one; its founder was M.M. Bakhtin. The primary reality of artistic creativity for M.M. Bakhtin is a situation of communication, which generates new meanings. The subject of the "personalistic" theory of literature are "voices and dialogical relations between them," their interaction and mutual illumination opens up the boundless (unaccomplished) semantic perspective of the work"[1]. This is because personalism is focused more on "semantic" rather than purely aesthetic combinations. Considering the generation process of the personalistic discourse in the works by M.M. Bakhtin, it should be noted that philosophical views of the scientist were formed in the mainstream of neo-Kantianism. In his writings, polemics is evident, and hence, becomes obvious connection with the concepts of H. Rickert, H. Cohen, M. Buber. We can say that the creativity of M.M. Bakhtin belongs to the hermeneutic philosophical tradition, it is the tradition of the sciences of the spirit, hermeneutics, marked first of all by the names of F. Schleiermacher, V. Dilthey, M. Heidegger, and H.-G. Gadamer. Interaction with hermeneutics is one of the key moments for personalistic discourse, since it is this philosophical school that turns to the interpretation of texts, being, according to H.G. Gadamer, a classical discipline engaged in the art of understanding texts[2]. However, M.M. Bakhtin himself claimed that "from the students of E. Husserl ... I was most of all closer to Max Scheler and his personalism. Heidegger somehow almost completely

1 Domashchenko A. V. *Concerning interpretation and elucidation: the monograph* (Donetsk: The publishing house «DonNU», 2007) 20.

2 Gadamer H.-G. *Truth and method* (M.: The publishing house «Progress», 1988) 215.

remained outside the field of my philosophical sympathies"[1]. In the theory of M.M. Bakhtin there takes place the transformation of the languages of neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, determining the personalistic dominant of his language. Understanding the dialogue in the theories of M.M. Bakhtin is close to the understanding of dialogue by M. Buber. According to M.M. Bakhtin, the dialogue corresponds to such a situation, when the interlocutor is interested in his partner in his own deep existence, when the interlocutors are directed at each other. Dialogue is more a distinctive feature of a person rather than a special verbal form. A person exists only in interaction with other people: "Life is dialogical by its nature. To live is to participate in a dialogue"[2]. As for the understanding of literary work, M.M. Bakhtin asserts that "genuine understanding in literature and literary criticism is always historical and personified"[3]. Original categories, formed by M.M. Bakhtin—outsideness, polyphony, participatory thinking, the Other—are precisely characteristic for "personalistic" discourse. Describing the philosophical approach of M.M. Bakhtin, S.S. Averintsev writes the following: "A notionalist who was never tired of repeating that no human word is either final or complete in itself—whether he does not invite us to finish speaking "with respect to" and to assume "tangentially," either this or that way unwinding the non-cut-off thread of conversation?"[4]

The personalistic discourse tends toward "metalinguistics," which studies "the word, that is, the language, in its concrete and living entirety, and not language as a specific subject of linguistics, obtained by a perfectly legitimate and necessary diversion from some aspects of the concrete life of the word."[5] The key point of the word "metalinguistics" is the prefix "meta"—in this context, which means "over" or "after." It is a question of a specific methodological transcendence, going beyond the bounds of traditional theorizing, in which there remains essential relationship with that beyond which the solution is accomplished. Therefore, the interpretation of a literary work in personalistic discourse is post-esthetic, acquires its universal significance, approaching the pole of personification. According to M.M. Bakhtin, the dialogue as one of the most important concepts, can only be described within the

1 Bakhtin M. M. *The problems of Dostoevsky's creation. Articles about L. Tolstoy. Records of a lecture course on the history of Russian literature* (M.: The publishing house «Russian dictionaries», 2000) 693.

2 Bakhtin M. M. *Aesthetics of the written word* (M.: The publishing house «Art», 1979) 318.

3 Bakhtin M. M. *Aesthetics of the written word* (M.: The publishing house «Art», 1979) 365.

4 Averintsev S. S. *The link of times* (K.: Spirit and Littera, 2005) 342.

5 Bakhtin M. M. *The problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (M.: The publishing house «Soviet Russia», 1979) 210.

framework of metalinguistics: "Dialogue relations (including the dialogical relations of the speaker to his own word), are the subject of metalinguistics. In the language as a subject of linguistics there is no, and there can not be any dialogical relations. Among other things, there can not be any dialogical relationship between texts, again with a strictly linguistic approach to these texts"[1]. Dialogic communication, "appealing," according to personalism, is the real life sphere of the language, the word. Linguistics studies the language itself with its specific logic as what makes dialogic communication possible; linguistics does not approach dialogic relations themselves. "Dialogic relations ... are extra-linguistic. But at the same time they can not be torn away from the domain of the word, that is, from language as a concrete entire phenomenon. The language lives only in the dialogic communication of those who use it. Dialogic communication is the real life sphere of the language"[2]. It is obvious that dialogical relations should be studied by metalinguistics, which goes beyond the bounds of linguistics and has its own tasks. The language of the "personalistic" theory of literature is affected by the metalinguistic factors associated with the actual dialogical essence of verbal communication. It is no coincidence that M.M. Bakhtin creates metalinguistic terms with a clear personalistic attitude. Thus, in personalistic discourse "the word" is one of the main objects of attention. All the diverse areas of human activity are associated with the use of language. The exceptional importance of specific forms of the language use lies in the fact that the world of a man, in the words of H.-G. Gadamer, is the language itself. The subject of the personalistic theory of literature is "the expressive and messaging existence," how it is embodied in a literary work, that is, this discourse is constituted on the border with ontology. Also the author-creator is the constitutive moment of artistic creativity in the personalistic theory of literature. "A single person, a subject, experiences himself as a creator only in art. The positive-subjective creative personality is the constitutive moment of the artistic form, here its subjectivity finds an original objectification, becomes a culturally significant, creative subjectivity..."[3]. For M.M. Bakhtin "the unity of the aesthetic form is ... the unity of the position of the acting soul and body, the functioning man of integrity, resting on himself"[4].

1 Bakhtin M. M. *The problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (M.: The publishing house «Soviet Russia», 1979) 211.

2 Bakhtin M. M. *The problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (M.: The publishing house «Soviet Russia», 1979) 212.

3 Bakhtin M. M. *The questions of literature and aesthetics* (M.: The publishing house «Belles-Lettres», 1975) 69.

4 Bakhtin M. M. *The questions of literature and aesthetics* (M.: The publishing house «Belles-Lettres», 1975) 64.

Following the arguments of M.M. Bakhtin, style derives from the creative activity of a person and only thus acquires its tangible existence. But you can not say that the style is created by the person consciously and purposefully. A person creates not style, since the style is objective, that is, undeliberate, unintentional; so it can not be the result of a person's subjectively-conscious choice. The style expresses creative originality of the writer, but the style characterizes more "a creative individuality" and "a creative subject" only because the style always has "the memory" of certain style traditions. This, of course, does not mean that the style of a brilliant writer can only be an epoch style or a current style. It should be noted that the ability to perceive a living, thinking author of a work is an essential link in the understanding of the style, although the concept of style does not at all lead to its identification with the subject. Literary style is not only the personal property of an artist, it is also the property of a certain culture, a certain historical epoch, since every style is necessarily historical. However, the personalistic theory of literature believes that "style is a way of being a creative individuality, a way of being an author-person in his creation"[1]. In the opinion of M.M. Girshman, the style is endowed with "unifying energy," as a "form-building center" it "concretizes relations," "forms the boundaries," at which meetings, interactions, mutual transitions of participants in the communication process take place. "The correct formulation of the problem of style—one of the most important problems of aesthetics—is impossible beyond the strict delimitation of architectonic and composite forms",—as it was noted by M.M. Bakhtin[2]. For M.M. Bakhtin architectonic forms are "purely meaningful," "but ... we have no basis ... to understand them as a purely content-related category… Architectonic forms ... are determined by innovative take, that is timely for this or that author, for a particular work. And in this sense architectonic forms also belong to the composition"[3]. Thus, identifying "the aesthetic" and "the content-related" in the literary style, M.M. Bakhtin defines it as "a set of methods for the formation and completion of a person and his world"[4]. In the literary style, the "inner style" and the content are interconnected, and the content is revealed in images. For personalism—the literary style does not work with words, but with the moments of the world, with world and life values, it is a "way of processing" a person and his world, that is, a

1 Girshman M. M. *The Style // Literary Collection* (Donetsk, 2000. Number 3) 255.

2 Bakhtin M. M. *The questions of literature and aesthetics* (M.: The publishing house «Belles-Lettres», 1975) 22.

3 Domashchenko A. V. *Concerning interpretation and elucidation: the monograph* (Donetsk: The publishing house «DonNU», 2007) 99.

4 Bakhtin M. M. *Aesthetics of the written word* (M.: The publishing house «Art», 1979) 169.

way of "aesthetic completion." However, without the finishing ability of the image, "aesthetic completion" is impossible. M.M. Bakhtin deprives the literary style of the main thing—the inner core, which in the verbal art is the image.

Conclusion

So, each of the considered theoretical and literary discourses of the modern academic theory of literature (eidosic, personalistic and literary grammar) is based on different methods and sets itself various research objectives, respectively—the vision of "style" is different in each of them. To understand what the "philological" theory is and what is its difference from modern academic literary theories, one should clearly understand the difference between representative thinking that is in the metaphysical dimension and interrogative thinking, related to the fundamental ontology. One of the important conditions is the perception of language not as an object of scientific knowledge, but as an ontological basis, which predetermines the very possibility of human thinking, and therefore of scientific cognition. Questioning, addressed to language, to poetic speech is the source of interrogative thinking, within the boundaries of which the essence of philological theory can be understood.

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Nostalgia in Autobiographies: Close Reading of Banine's Life-Writing

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Abstract This paper explores the notion of nostalgia and its revealing nature in the formation of the autobiographical self, in cultural and gendered self-identity. Truth and lie are popular topics for discussion regarding autobiographies. Different from factual diversions there can sometimes take place prevarications when the authors try to conceal their emotions but their discourse makes these denied feelings obvious. Azerbaijani emigrant writer Banine's autobiography is analysed in this paper with the purpose to find evidences of nostalgia for her native land while living in Paris. Qualitative studies, discourse analysis, close reading are employed to unfold the author's cultural identity and her perception of this identity. The method of hermeneutic phenomenology is applied to find goes further than the author's own understanding or confession, to offer point of departure in the situation suggesting meanings which then allow the possibility of analysis, description, and interpretation. Through interpretation of microcontexts are offered insights into macrocontexts (the whole picture). The feeling of nostalgia which takes part in life-writings, has diverse expressions in different works what is influenced by culture, personality, social status of the authors. In Banine's autobiography it is multilayered and has been expressed both through silence and eloquent denial of its existence.

Key words Power; autobiography; Banine; nostalgia; life-writing.

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Introduction

This paper explores the notion of nostalgia and its revealing nature in the formation

of the autobiographical self, in cultural and gendered self-identity. Different from factual diversions there can sometimes take place prevarications when the authors try to conceal their emotions but their discourse makes these denied feelings obvious. Azerbaijani emigrant writer Banine's autobiography is analysed to find evidences of nostalgia for her native land while living in Paris. Discourse analysis is employed to unfold the author's cultural identity and her perception of this identity. The method of hermeneutic phenomenology is applied to find "that is deeper or goes further than the author's own understanding or confession. The feeling of nostalgia which takes part in life-writings, has diverse expressions in different works influenced by culture, personality, social status of the authors. In Banine's autobiography it is multilayered and has been expressed both through silence and eloquent denial of its existence. "People become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries: when they encounter other cultures, or when they become aware of other ways of doing things, or merely of contradictions to their own culture"[1].

The paper will investigate Azerbaijani's emigrant writer Banine's self-identity which can be observed in its dynamics through the process of her autobiography writing. Describing stages of her adaptation to the new place after moving from Baku to Paris, she demonstrates her going through hyphenation in-between position, a characteristic status for migrants which puts them in the status of ever-lasting search of identity. She seems neither assimilated, nor isolated (alienated and\or discriminated). Banine's position is interesting because as she was expecting, the immigration provided her with individual power coming from independence, but unexpectedly for her, it deprived her of community related power. It was the community she used to deny, to reject previously. The autobiography shows the author's prevarication in the topics concerning her homeland, purposely avoiding the theme of nostalgia.

Nostalgia in Banine's autobiography attracted my attention because she actively denied its presence in all her interviews. Besides, her literary heir Rolf Sturmer, who kindly answered my question on social media, was very affirmative about her attitude to Azerbaijan claiming that Banine did not miss it at all. Banine's autobiography depicts her attitude to her homeland exactly repeating that she did not experience any nostalgia. However, a close reading finds certain traces of her longing for her childhood memorable moments. The autobiography depicts the

1 Anthony P Cohen. *The symbolic construction of community* (First published in 1985 by Ellis Horwood Ltd and Tavistock Publications Ltd). This edition is published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library (2001) 69.

author's unconscious fear to be dropped from one chronotope (time-space reality) and not to be accepted in another. The discourse analysis also reveals the author's intention to conceal this.

Banine, France and Azerbaijan

Days in the Caucasus and *Days in Paris* are two parts of the autobiography written by Azerbaijani emigrant writer Banine, who was a granddaughter of Baku's wealthiest oil magnates, Shamsi Asadullayev, her paternal grandfather and Mirza Agha Musa Naghiyev her maternal grandfather. She was the youngest of four sisters in her family. Her father Mirza Asadullayev besides of running business also served as the minister of trade and industry under Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (1918-20).

Apart from these two works Banine also wrote, "Rencontres avec Ernst Jünger" (Meetings with Ernst Junger, 1951, with the German writer Ernst Jünger she kept friendly relationships, as well as with the Russian writer, the owner of Nobel prize Ivan Bunin), "J'aichoisil'opium"(I chose opium, 1960), Apres (After, 1962), "Portrait d'ErnstJünger :lettres, textes, rencontres" (The Portrait of Ernst Junger. Letters, texts, Reminiscence, 1971) and other novels still not translated into her native Azerbaijani language. Banine wrote most of her works in French, except for some short stories in Russian, which, encouraged by Ivan Bunin. The Russian writer was well aware of Banine's fluency in Russian and insisted on her writing in his native language. In one of his books which he presented to Banine, Bunin wrote: "Dear madam Banine. A black rose of Allah's divine garden. Get accustomed to writing in Russian. Ivan Bunin, June 21, 1947"[1].

Banine's autobiographical duology "Days in the Caucasus" and "Days in Paris" was written and published in French in 1946 and 1947, respectively. It interweaves cultural, historical and feminist analyses of self in order to reach the core of self-identity. The titles of the two books are informative and show the dynamics of the author's quest for identity.

Days in the Caucasus

The first book of the autobiography illustrates the author's life from birth to her 17, the time span she spent in Baku. As the book is written in France, Banine contrasts and interweaves her mature perspective in Paris with a retrospective about her childhood in Baku. This part offers a picture of growing up in a culturally

1 Aynur Mustafayeva, Banine Asadullayeva. *The Last Love of Ivan Bunin*. http://samlib.ru/a/ajnur_m/banindoc.shtml.

heterogeneous environment. Born to traditional and very wealthy Azerbaijani parents and having lost her mother at her birth, Banine grew up among relatives: her grandmother, aunts, uncles and cousins. The German nanny's presence played an important role in the pivotal twists of Banine's self-identity. Her paternal grandmother is described as a fanatical religious and veiled Muslim woman, who did not speak with any male, if he was not a family member. She devotedly observed Islamic practices and Azerbaijani customs; she also insisted that family members only marry fellow Muslims, became disgusted if her home appliances were touched by non-Muslims and would hand such items over to the poor. Banine's grandmother was very far from European culture and considered Europeans and Russians to be destroyers of national traditions. Her husband had left her for a Russian woman, her children did not take religion seriously, her daughters refused to wear veil. Unable to prevent her children from getting integrated into "new cultural life" she kept querulously complaining about the changes time was bringing. As Banine's grandmother repudiated everything different to her own lifestyle, she despised Fraulein Anna, the German nanny of her grandchildren.

Deprived of her mother on birth, Banine saw her grandmother as a mother figure, a symbol of family, an incarnation of her native culture. Her subconscious strove to reconcile two contradictory parts of her life. She writes that her grandmother, who was very strict to her other grandchildren, treated her with kid's gloves, as she had been an early orphan and in Azerbaijani culture nobody would dare to offend an orphan. Banine found this custom to be very beneficial, but with time's passing she felt pulled away from the family towards her nanny, subconsciously choosing Europe as her innermost identity. It is the German woman who provided cultural context for her. The author describes Fraulein Anna contrasting her appearance to the countenances of her female family members. This portrait eloquently reveals her childhood self-identity. Her nanny with her silky blond hair and smooth white skin was for her the incarnation of intelligence, beauty, kindness, and honesty. The contrast Banine made between the Fraulein and herself with her sisters is more than the description of appearances. It is a way of life, a mentality, a way of thinking and living.

Banine's description of the other family members openly reveals her attitude toward them. She does not accept the ways they think, the clothes they wear, their behavior and their values. She feels drawn to her nanny—a German lady, known to her as Fraulein Anna. Banine writes: "That German woman from the beaches of the Baltic Sea was my nanny, mom, and guardian in my life. She spent her health, life, and nerves on us. She endured all kind of pains and suffers for us without expecting

any reward or reparation for it. To be brief, she was a noble person who was able to self-sacrifice gratuitously."[1]

"Fraulein Anna strived to annihilate our inherited features and transfer to our hearts her pure sentimental German girl's soul. But our ancestors' heritage was in our sinew. As we were growing, our thighs became huge, noses enormous, breasts big. We, four sisters, were dark skinned, black haired, our legs and arms were hairy, and we were Eastern kids. When we gathered around her to have our photo taken, it made a really amazing picture."[2]

From her childhood Banine seems to view herself as a recluse within her own family. Surrounded by all comforts of affluence, she does not feel comfortable, yet her sisters, cousins, and aunts do. She is indifferent to the wealth of her family, and she cannot accept the ways her family members think and act because of it. The author subconsciously denies her native culture, but simultaneously she seems uncertain about her suitability to the other culture and the other culture's pertinence to her. Her young mind is conflicted between the two cultures, feeling at home within neither. This early maturity liberated her from the cultural frames of her homeland, enabling to look at them from distance as an observer, not a participant.

"Poor Fraulein was desperately observing the process of our growing up. She could still bear the changes in our bodies. When these alterations started to concern our hearts and souls, she got really terrified. When my sister Leyla who had just turned 13 said that she was in love with our cousin, Fraulein Anna became very much astonished and lost her peace from this very moment. Sacrificing herself both physically and emotionally she did manage to guard us for a while. But we became more and more cruel to our nanny with each of her restrictions." [3]

In *Days in the Caucasus* the author demonstrates a deep understanding of what was happening in her home country. The time and space distance makes it imbued with nostalgic and at the same time ironic mood. The author does not hide her frustration about being part of this environment. Such an attitude is highly unusual for collectivist cultures including Azerbaijani culture, as individual interests in such communities are held below the values and behavioral preferences of collectives.

Egan and Helms write: "Nation…describes in general the communities into, out of, and between which narrators adjust their identities"[4]. As Banine wrote *Days*

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1 Ummulbanoo (Banine). Days in the Caucasus. Baku, Yazichi (1992) 6.

2 Ummulbanoo (Banine), p.9.

3 Ummulbanoo (Banine), p.10.

4 Susanna Egan, Gabriele Helms. "Autobiography and Changing Identities: Introduction." *Biography*. Volume 24, Number 1, Winter (2001) ix-xx.

in the Caucasus in France, after having spent over twenty years in this European country, she views her childhood from the contemporary French present, in the absence of national stereotypes obscuring the mind of objective evaluation. She tries to solve the riddle of her identity. This puzzle tortures her and is a constant theme throughout the duology. Her solutions seem to come with the aid of retrospection, and from the perspective of a new time and new place. The sense of alienation that Banine had experienced in her childhood was explained by her as an attempt to identify herself as an individual. Describing the process of growing up, she tries to find her personal and cultural identity. However, the expected state did not come even at the end of the second book of the duology. Like endless turns of a gyre, each visible approach to the destination of a definitive identity opens a new and wider circle of enquires.

The author's identity quest is incessant and dynamic. In spite of not being marginalized as a woman, she once confesses that she had wished to be male, what is understandable as the modern reader embraces the opinion that males had a stronger, if not absolute voice in Azerbaijan in the beginning of the 20th century. In Banine's autobiography we do not observe any segregation and the males' ultimate right of decision. Her momentary desire to be a man seems to be determined by the stereotypes of the society trusting men rather than women, and her inner need for urgency of independence, freedom of choice.

As Banine's father was an adherent of Western views, she does not describe the differences among generations as being a problem. Despite the grandmother's remonstration, Banine's father hired Western tutors for his daughters, married an educated woman, allowed her to organize parties at home and invite whomever she wanted. The aunt's objections also could not stop her own sons and her daughter Gulnar from acting in a manner she felt was not suitable for Muslims. Quite the contrary to contemporary reader's expectation, it was not the old generation who dictated the rules, but the young generation who entirely relegated to the parents' role. The generational and cultural boundaries in Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 20th century appeared to be an anathema to that of earlier centuries. That was one of the reasons why the duology by Banine encountered confusion and disapproval from modern readers, whose confidence in previous beliefs about social conditions in the early 20th century were shattered by the unexpectedly confessional notes of a person from that time. What used to seem obvious, now appeared to be completely incorrect. The story of identity, of a personal investigation, initially intended to help the author in forming her own identity, overturned modern readers' confidence about the knowledge of their own cultural values and beliefs.

A retrospective look aims to fill the gap of knowledge which is a hurdle in understanding of self-identity. Childhood is an ideal object for nostalgic remembering. The juxtaposition of Caucasian and European selves appears as an attempt to understand herself through multilayered relationships with language and culture. Seemingly authoritative voice of the autobiography writer is an illusion, as autobiographical narratives are conventionally multivocal[1]. Nostalgic autobiographies contain affirmations of the golden age and rarely take a conflict view of history[2].

The retrospection is centered on childhood efforts to define her own genuine self-identity. She remembers herself as a child contrasting her grandmother as embodiment of Muslims, Easterners, and as a repository of old Azerbaijani traditions, while attributing enlightened values to the nanny whom she saw as a paradigm of beauty, benevolence, erudition, the qualities she integrated under the term European. She found the majority of traditions in her culture too meaningless to stick to. Her grandmother's hatred towards non-believers, her approach to education, her aunts' manner of loud speaking and ceaseless gossiping increasingly intensified her negative attitude towards her native environment.

The author creates a suitable medium enabling her to convey childhood experiences that were spent between two cultures with their competing claims and compelling authorities upon her. In the process of growing up the narrator faces the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. While to the former she belongs by birth, to the latter by preference. The childish maximalism makes her strive to find an appropriate way of living and of thinking. The process of self-identity construction coincides with an unstable historical period as it was the time of the Soviet invasion of Azerbaijan and with it the complete change of governmental and societal structure. Banine's father, Mirza Asadullayev, beyond owning oil companies, also held the position of the minister of trade and industry. Yet on April 27, 1920, this era suddenly ended.

"I woke up to the sound of the 'Internationale' playing in the street," Banine writes in *Days in the Caucasus*: "When I got up, I saw soldiers not looking Azerbaijani by either their personages, or their uniforms. These were Russian soldiers. The Azerbaijani army "disappeared without firing a single shot," she continued. "The republic was destroyed . . . I witnessed the end of a world, saw this

1 Sidonie Smith, Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, Second Edition (University of Minnesota, 2010) 174.

2 Kate Douglas. *Contesting Childhood: Autobiography, Trauma, and Memory* (Rutgers University Press, 2010) 99.

process with my own eyes."[1]

The Soviet regime tightened the borders of Azerbaijan with Turkey and removed them between Azerbaijan and Russia. Communist occupation drove wealthy Azerbaijanis to European countries, because they were judiciously scared of being deprived of their fortunes and arrested by Bolsheviks, who actually jailed Banine's father. At 15, she felt obliged to marry a man for the sole purpose of him providing a passport for her father to leave the country. Banine's father was released from the prison and went to Paris, leaving Banine with her 35-year-old husband, who adored her and was patient to all her caprices.

At 17, Banine left her husband to join her family in Paris, where her father, stepmother, stepbrother and sister had been living for a couple of years. When she first appeared in Paris, among the many emotions she experienced there was a notable lack of culture shock. Her arrival in Paris brought her unmitigated joy. Nothing, even her brother-in-law's mocking her clothes while first meeting her in the Parisian train station could hurt her or spoil her happiness. She describes her first passing through Parisian streets as a cheering ceremony not to be overshadowed even by the incongruous view of her dream city's real, dirty streets.

Banine proved to be loyal to the European values cultivated in her childhood. All evidences say that she never felt nostalgic for the bygone careless and wealthy days in her homeland. In Paris Banine worked as a secretary, translator, and fashion model, while her family lived on savings from their previous wealthy life. She became acquainted with, and befriended some celebrities, among whom were Ernst Jünger and Ivan Bunin.

The other, utterly different reality, facilitated her looking at her childish and early youth identity, at a distance and from an absolutely different perspective. Even though this perspective was somewhat familiar to her, being from Azerbaijan she felt herself to belong to another reality, but the Parisian environment molded her shapeless thoughts with an order and certainty of an outsider. Narrating her life from birth to the life changing event of her resettlement to Paris, *Days in the Caucasus* was published in 1946 and brought success to Banine. Such celebrities as Ivan Bunin, Anri Montherlant, Mikos Kazantzakis, Andre Malraux, and Ernst Jünger highly appreciated her autobiography. In the following year Banine published the second book of her autobiography "Days in Paris," which illustrated the author's life after she had moved to France. Until the collapse of Soviet Union in 1990, few in Azerbaijan knew of this autobiographical duology. When it was found in France, translated from French to Azerbaijani and introduced to Azerbaijani readers, they

1 Ummulbanoo (Banine). *Days in the Caucasus* (Baku, Yazichi, 1992) 103.

were rather perplexed, as they did not know how to react to such an individualist approach taken by a female representative of a well-known family.

A Book about a Southern Caucasian Country Published in France. Two Tultures in One Autobiography

The geographical position of Azerbaijan makes both Eastern and Western cultures' influences on its culture and literature inevitable. Its history is long and its literary traditions are quite heterogeneous. Medieval Azerbaijani literary works include a huge number of Persian and Arabic words and their associated cultural concepts. Nineteenth-century Azerbaijani literature is written on a foundation of Turkish literary traditions. Twentieth-century Azerbaijani literature has much in common with contemporary Russian literature. Within this diversity of literary traditions scarcity of autobiographies is obvious, which can be explained by a reluctance of those from Eastern societies to reveal family secrets, Asian part of Azerbaijani collective unconscious which prevent the author from frankly confessing her own inner world, secrets of family members and friends. The western influence on Azerbaijani consciousness prevented the authors from writing about life events, and adapting individual attitudes and feelings to be more in line with societal norms. Semi-conscious rivalry settled between European and Asian influenced authors peddling a form of autobiographical confession full of understatements and prevarications under the disguise of eloquence.

Autobiographies cannot be culture free, quite the opposite, as these texts are inevitably cultural. "Generic and geographical border crossing form the basis of the autobiographical enterprise and represent definitory features of major autobiographical texts. The unfolding of a national identity in autobiographies is hence connected to generic and geographical transgressions and begins outside of one's country of birth."[1]

Days in the Caucasus and *Days in Paris* are not multicultural in the same manner as most other autobiographies, as this life-writing does not deal with a family involving participants from diverse cultures. Banine's parents were monocultural to their cores. However, multiculturalism is a major factor in both works because the author makes a conscious effort to belong to another culture. She navigates, through the process of social interaction, between opposing value systems. Her understanding of empowerment encompasses changes in consciousness, or a sense of agency, including their sense of self-worth and social

1 Alfred Hornung, "Out of Place: Extraterritorial Existence and Autobiography," ZAA 52.4 (2004): 368.

identity, their capacity to exercise strategic control over their own lives, and to renegotiate their relationships with others[1].

The memoirs are blurred with the passage of time and become clarified from a new temporal and spatial perspective. The culture Banine belonged to and which she had left was collectivist, the culture into which she moved, and from which she was looking at the past - individualist. In Azerbaijan as in many Eastern cultures family and societal goals are considered above individual needs or desires. People in this country simply take the culture's stance for granted, bothering about the attitude of others to their choices and behaviours even when those are entirely personal and concern only their own selves. She chooses the individualistic approach characteristic for Western European cultures. Even though she spent her childhood in Azerbaijan, the description of childhood events and thoughts is also individualistic. The subconscious choice of culture remained unchanged throughout her life.

The language the author preferred to use for the writing of her duology is French. The language choice is reasonable, as had it been written in Azerbaijani, nobody would be able to read it in Europe, and as it would not be able to cross the borders into Azerbaijan, it would certainly fall into oblivion. When it comes to individualism, from the narrative we can guess that the author's recalcitrance would not allow her to join any community. Her evaluation was selective and mature enough to assess positive and negative aspects in one person, in one culture, rather than to marginalize people and cultures as utterly bad or good. Gulnar, the author's cousin, was a girl with a rather corrupted morality from the points of both cultural value systems; she jilted many lovers, and once eloped with a Russian soldier, who was Banine's beloved. She hesitated to tell her father about her affair with a Bolshevik-official, "Andrei," who later ran off with her cousin. Andrei arranged time to meet with Banine and elope, but by then Banine changed her mind, as she did not dare disappoint her father. She sent Gulnar to Andrei to inform him of her decision. Gulnar did not come from that meeting, as she remained with Andrei. Banine found it reprehensible the way her cousin behaved, but she still adored her as a friend, as someone she could share her secrets and with whom she could enjoy life with.

If Banine had remained in Azerbaijan, she would certainly not have been able to create such well-rounded characters; or to be more exact, collectivist perspective, which tends to classify people as good and bad, would not have allowed her to see multilayered nature of her relatives and express her heterogeneous attitude

1 Naila Kabeer. *Mainstreaming Gender in Social Protection for the Informal Economy* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2008) 27.

towards life. This individualist approach, her lack of tendency to generalize, her unwillingness to classify concepts firmly into entirely negative or positive, might have been formed from living in France, but the author's attitude does not seem to have been changed as she moved into exile. On the contrary, all childhood reminiscences, faults, secret thoughts, immoral desires seem to be confessions of an aged person, who upon reaching maturity is no longer concerned about her reputation anymore. Banine seems to have had all these attitudes, and had reached these conclusions, firmly established in her youth. Settlement in Paris created a context for her to compile her ideas and arrange them in a discourse that would allow her to summarize her lifelong search for her individual identity.

Nostalgia and Its Denial.

"While life writers like Anna Porter and Modris Eksteins, who remember their personal experiences in Europe more or less directly, return to reconnect with their family roots and their implications in the historical developments, the return visits of life writers who have only an indirect knowledge of their family's origin and were too young to remember concretely are carefully planned excursions into a past only known to them by their parents' and grandparents' life stories[1].

Banine remembers her personal experience in a Caucasian country very clearly, however she does not wish to return either physically or psychologically to reconnect with her family roots and their implications in her personal identity. On the contrary, she appears to be trying to avoid the confrontation with her past, though she is aware of inevitability to meet the past in order to understand herself and create a new, more harmonic self. She has her own childhood story which is eventful and able to shed a bright light on many aspects of identity. But due to painfulness of this confrontation, Banine does not allow her mind to dwell on the happenings of these days. The reminiscences are painful because they are obviously and eloquently deconstructing her childhood pictures about idealized European life. Deconstruction of childhood ideals creates discomfort, sense of doubt in her own assessment ability. This fear of possible disempowerment through "previous fallacious values" makes her disguise the affinity to go back to the childhood years which she was longing for, though thoroughly trying to hide this feeling.

Banine seems, or tries to seem, comfortable in Paris. She insists on her irrevocable break up with her native culture. In spite of her efforts to keep silent about her attitude to her homeland and intense denial of her homesickness, there are

1 Alfred Hornung, "Return Visits: The European Background of Transcultural Life Writing," *The European Journal of Life Writing* VOLUME II (2013) 18.

episodes in *Days in Paris* which provoke the readers' thoughts about the author's real attitude to her childhood linked to her homeland.

"I could not sleep. I was pondering and dreaming. Now my dreams were connected to the past. I remembered the beach of the Caspian Sea, those beloved places where we grew up. Our garden with poplars, blossoming acacias, honeysuckles with intoxicating scent. It had a scent of Paradise. And our marvelous pools with fresh water! Warm waves of the Caspian… Is my heart yearning indeed? No… Maybe a little little bit. I yearned for the blue sky, sea, trees, flowers… so precious to my heart beauty… But no… I renounced my past. Where did these reminiscences come from? Why?" [1]

The place where she was growing up remained in her memory as a Paradise. Carl Jung regards Paradise as an unconscious archetype associating with a longing for redemption. Nostalgia for the lost paradise shows that Banine was longing for her life in her homeland. She did not renounce her past though she is insisting on this. This familiar, recognizable world had obtained a shape and form when the author was looking at them in time and space distance. The process of reminiscence is pleasing and thus different from the real time she experienced those events. The negotiations between her personal accounts and public discourse obtain a different colour. The beauty which remained unnoticeable during childhood and youth because of social and political events, becomes discernible when the author is free from these distractors and is situated in a different public discourse. Poplars, blossoming acacias, honeysuckles with intoxicating scent create an idyllic picture of a careless childhood and indicate the author's longing for the past. Particular places and objects, smell, touch, music, weather, sea together make a picture of a harmonic and happy childhood, which it seems to the author from spatial and temporal distance and in retrospect.

In the first part of the autobiography, Banine talks about religious rituals to which her grandmother used to take her, with a touch of disdain. In the second part she remembers them while listening to jazz in Paris. Even unpleasant events from her childhood create a good memory for her and she allows her mind to dwell on those episodes.

"The sounds of jazz returned me back to Baku. When I was 8, grandma used to take me to religious traditional annual commemoration of tragic Kerbela events to develop in me the sense of true religion. I was sitting in the women's part suffering from stuffiness. In the men's part men were beating themselves with chains, wounded themselves with swords. I was shivering with fear looking at this

1 Ummulbanoo (Banine). *Days in Paris*. Baku, Yazichi (in Azerbaijani) (1998), 126.

nightmare and wanted to run away. Now, when we are away from the turbulent Caucasus I go back to that time without trembling, without a sense of fear."[1]

The author recalls these episodes and the feelings they were bringing up. Her complicated and not understood by herself emotions are cleared through the acquired perception of cultural identities. She remembers those events nostalgically and without a sense of fear. Nostalgia implies comparison of a present situation with a past one. The sounds of jazz which was alien to the author and probably imposed a sense of unfamiliarity brought about the reminiscences about religious commemorations. A little girl in Baku and a mature woman in Paris seemed to be feeling the same reclusiveness. The author's frustration was coming from the feeling that the ideal place, which she considered Paris to be, appeared to be not friendly but as harsh as the previous environment she was eager to leave.

In another episode the author is writing about Bunin, who had been her friend for many years. "Bunin who gained acknowledgement in exile, also was feeling burdened by a foreign land, but he did not want to go back. Though he was invited. He was answering that "They will force me to tell what I do not want to, what I do not believe in." The Nobel prize had been spent. But the old and sick man rejected both fame and money. It requires an exceptional willpower"[2].

The word "also" leaks from her feelings and reveals her own attitude to her immigration. She knew that she would also refuse if they invited her. Banine's reasons for refusal would be the same with Bunin's. But why is she writing that refusal to go back to one's homeland requires a distinguished willpower? It raises a question about her candidness while talking that she considered France to be her homeland and had forgotten Azerbaijan at all. Socio-spatial trajectories lead to individual and cultural self-perception and self-identity.

The following episode disapproves again the author's claim about her consideration of France as a native land and repudiation of Azerbaijan. Patriotic feeling she tried to conceal, come to surface and demonstrates the author's feeling about her native land. She expresses her proud for her homeland and for the religion of its population, because this country remained unique and not assimilated and melted into other cultures.

"In spite of occupation (Soviet), we did not become Slavonic. We kept our national peculiarities, language and religion. Assimilation of the locals is a dream of every colonizer. But to change and assimilate a very different nation, especially if

1 Ummulbanoo (Banine), (1998) 84.

2 Ummulbanoo (Banine), (1998) 77.

they are devoted Muslims is very difficult."[1] [Banine. Parisian Days]

While criticizing local social and religious norms in the first book, she talks in exclusive terms (they). However, in the second book she uses inclusive terms(we) and seems to want to be a part of a community, her native "chronotop."[2]

Banine's cousin decided that in Banine's life there should be a man, because her cousin did not imagine a woman's life without a man. When she invited her husband's French friend home in order to introduce him to Banine, he asked: Do you like Paris? She writes about it: "he asked me the question which the French always ask foreigners. The question was senseless, because it assumed deliberately positive answer. Even if somebody did not like France, ethics required this answer. For this reason, French people think that all people like their country"[3].

This passage and the episodes scattered around "*Days in Paris",* in which Banine, after every unpleasant event in her life, repeats that "I am still happy, because I am in Paris" build a conclusive evidence that she just tried to believe that she was happy in France. What she was silencing instead was fear of in-between position, which she tried to escape but seemed to experience all her life. The discourse analysis reveals the long lasting conflict between persona and personality, eloquence and silence.

"Before lunch, wine was served. After drinking, everything seemed to me as a stupid dream. What are we doing in France if even after many years of our living here could not uproot in ourselves the spirit of Islam? I remembered my grandma, veiled in chadra (chador). What would she think if she saw us sitting and drinking with men? The memories of the past were depressing me. Was not it more reasonable to get rid of them? Why do I so strongly want to weep?"[4] [Banine. Parisian Days]

The rhetoric questions she asks herself break a silence which lasted over 20 years. For the first time in her life she allowed her feelings which she was so determinedly suppressing to come to the surface. The conflict of her personality and persona, silence and eloquence created so huge a tension that she wished to weep and release it out.

At the wedding party of her cousin, Banine feels lonely, feels envious to her cousin because she is always loved and admired by men, though Banine herself is unwilling to build relationships. She goes to the bathroom, closes it from inside and

1 Ummulbanoo (Banine), (1998) 66.

2 Time-space, the term offered by M. Bakhtin.

3 Ummulbanoo (Banine), (1998) 75.

4 Ummulbanoo (Banine), (1998) 129.

weeps again. Having noticed her absence, everybody, including the bride rushes to break the door and let her out. She goes out, her cousin's anxiety and care softens her heart, she puts her head on the cousin's shoulder and asks: "Do you remember our balcony with the view to the sea? And our sandcastles? Do you remember? And the "devil house" we built in the summer house? Do you remember? Maybe we could have been happier if remained there, would be wearing veils like our grandmothers? Would not look for a job, men, freedom. Would have had many kids, would have been gossiping with women… Ah, I am so unhappy"[1].

This eloquence is another extreme different from that which was nourished by the euphoria of having come to France. This stream of consciousness makes it obvious that she is missing what is native to her heart. Even what she used to dislike seems to her attractive. This episode creates a specific kind of integrity with the beginning of the "Days in Paris". These two streams of consciousness describe the dynamics of the author's cognitive changes, the process of formation her self-identity. In the beginning of the second book she writes:

"At last I understood what crucial moments of human life were. And right now, in one of those fateful moments I was approaching to the divine gates of a new, unknown but longed for life. I was so excited that did not feel my body, I was hardly breathing, and heart seemed to be beating in every cell of my organism. I entirely was one knocking heart filled with feelings. Looking through the window I did not notice dirty, rubbished streets. I saw what I wanted to see. – my dreams, my imagined happiness. Now I will firmly keep it and never release. It is my victory. I will not let it go. I have come to the threshold of my Hope."[2]

In the end, after the previously mentioned event at her cousin's wedding there followed this last and most revealing episode.

"…I found myself in a half dark street. I do not know how I have come to this park where Sun rays hardly were reaching. Stepped along a narrow path and approached to a bench. Sat down. Felt hopeless. I was fed up with everything. Could death be the only solution?...No. I am still not ready. And what to do? I looked at the Sky where lives God. A bird flew over my head. Suddenly I felt fine. In my heart glowed a light. A weak one, but it was a light of Hope. I understood the truth. While a fly of a bird, rustling leaves, sea waves make you happy it worth living. I am young and can do much. Why not to try myself in writing? The sadness disappeared. It seems that death is not the only solution. Life was waiting for me. I

1 Ummulbanoo (Banine), (1998) 130.

2 Ummulbanoo (Banine), (1998) 132.

had to hurry."[1]

Conclusion

The feeling of hope unites these episodes, but in the beginning the hope was connected to the power she expected the new place would provide, whereas, in the end, the Hope was evoked by an internal power, understanding of the own identity, significance, potential and power. Nostalgia in Banine's autobiography is prompted by feelings of meaninglessness, loneliness and disconnectedness. After having got empowered through retrospective self-analysis and defined self-identity, she becomes empowered enough to decide to start writing her life, which would allow her to be in a role of the ruler in this. Accepted nostalgia allowed Banine to maintain consistent self-identity, to have a coherent and harmonic picture of self which is continual because it consists of past-self and present-self, different from the previous self which denied the past self. Unfolding of selfhood through time removed the burden of imagined ideal life, brought the hidden conflicts to surface, and this cathartic nostalgia seemed to serve as reconciliation of different stages of life, different selves and prompted beginning of a new stage in life.

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Acculturation of an Immigrant Family with Pakistani Heritage in The Post 9/11 United States

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Abstract This paper aims to provide a critical analysis of an American miniseries named *The Night Of*. The show narrates the story of Nasir/Naz Khan, a second-generation Pakistani immigrant and the problems he and his family encounter in the United States in the context of post 9/11. Movie critics and reviewers have pointed out briefly the racial discriminations against Naz by the society as a Muslim and the possible terrorist following the 9/11 events regardless of analyzing the psychological changes happening to him as an immigrant with Pakistani heritage. Acculturation strategies as a branch of cross-cultural psychology provided by Berry and his colleagues, considering the values of society of origin and the host country, offers a framework for analyzing the psychological and cultural aspects of immigrants' lives. This study endeavors to investigate the Khans' process of acculturation and cultural maintenance in encountering different societal institutions. Moreover, it is shown how they oscillate between acculturation strategies so as to fit in the mainstream. Consequently, it is concluded how certain strategies does not work and Naz resorts to the strategy of marginalization which is moving away from both American and Pakistani values and thus becomes a potential criminal.

Key words Cross-Cultural Psychology; Pakistani Immigrants; Post 9/11; Acculturation Strategies; *The Night Of*

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Introduction*:* The Night of an Accident Turning into a Tragedy

Movies and TV series like a mirror hold up the issues of the society. *The Night Of*, a mini TV series, created in 2016, is a post 9/11 cultural product which revolves around immigration and its continuous cultural and psychological effects to the next generation of immigrants. It unfolds painful rupturing experiences of living in two cultures, Pakistani and American. Gaining opportunities by living in the USA, the Pakistani family tries to adapt and assimilate to the mainstream. However, being a Pakistani immigrant in the United States is considered a bad combination in the era when war on terror policies are regulated in different institutions of the host country.

The Night Of, an American mini TV series, offers a tale of survival. The story traces the life of Nasir/Naz Khan, an American-born college student who is living with his Pakistani immigrant parents in Queens struggling to meet both ends of fitting in the American mainstream while respecting Pakistani heritage. He goes to school outside his neighborhood for better education. He is a good student and tutors the schools' basketball team players. His brother also is a talented student. One night, Naz ignores his parents' cultural values and experiences a wild night of drugs, alcohol, and sex with the stranger. When he wakes up, he finds himself in a house where there is a girl murdered in blood. Although he tries to flee the crime scene, he is arrested in the vicinity of the house with a bloody weapon on his pocket. Furthermore, there are witnesses confirming his entrance to the house while accompanying her. Despite the allegations against Pakistani-American Naz, his lawyers find a way to refute them. The jury deadlocks six to six and the District Attorney withdraws the law suit for continuance since the police find another suspect. Naz is released from prison but he now realizes that he has failed in cherishing both Pakistani and American values and the show ends with a scene in which he is alone on the beach taking drugs.

Movie reviewers have criticized the miniseries from racial aspects. They have mentioned the stereotyping against Naz and his family as Muslims in different social settings of school, the court, the police station and media. Among them, the most in-depth analyses are the reviews by *Vox* and *AV/TV CLUB* which mentioned stereotypes against Naz as a Muslim immigrant in the Post 9/11 in the police and judicial system (WanDerWerff; Wilkins). Moreover, it is proposed that there is a lack of respect towards Naz and his immigrant family and they are deliberately manipulated by authorities such as detective Box and Alison Crowe, the lawyer who accepted Naz's case pro-bono (Wilkins). Additionally, the review in *New York*

Times mentioned how the dark and violent side of Naz is unveiled as the narration progresses (Tobias).

Although movie critics focus on the racial bias against Pakistani Muslim Naz in the TV series, they did not consider psychological effects of racism as a cultural conflict between American and Pakistani values and accordingly their adjustment strategies in the context of post 9/11 have been ignored. In order to fill this gap this study attempts to show how the Pakistani family, the Khans, acculturate in the United States. The characters' acculturation is analyzed by the help of cross-cultural studies. Berry and his colleagues in their theory on acculturation strategies focus on reactions of different individuals in an alien culture regarding the values of the society of origin and settlement. In this case of study two issues are addressed; one is the acculturation of an immigrant family and the other is their Pakistani Muslim background. This research benefiting from theories by Berry and his colleagues tries to highlight how the Khans reanalyze their acculturation strategies and oscillate among different strategies of assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization in order to survive the different crises they face; incidents such as 9/11, its consequences, and Naz's trial are among them. In doing so, their interactions with different institutions (education, media, police force, and judicial system) are investigated.

To discuss the context of Pakistani diaspora in the United States, this study utilizes Considine's doctoral dissertation, *Family, Religion, and Identity in the Pakistani Diaspora: A Case Study of Young Pakistani Men in Dublin and Boston*, which he later published as a book in 2018. Considine elaborated on the cultural conflicts of Pakistanis in the United States and Ireland. He has interviewed several first and second-generation Pakistanis in America and shed light on their dual identities due to the Pakistani heritage that have to be embraced at home and American culture which is encountered at school and work. The book offers different cultural conflicts between American and Pakistani values on notions such as drugs and alcohol, premarital sex, and dependency of the Pakistani youth to their parents which help this study to investigate the Khans' behaviors from different perspectives.

Acculturation Strategies: Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and Marginalization

Acculturation is a process that happens in plural societies to those with different cultures experiencing first-hand contact with the new culture and this leads to the changes in behaviors of either or both groups (Berry et al., "Acculturation Attitudes"

186; Redfield et al. 149). In order to discuss acculturation, the two cultures of origin and settlement should be investigated (Berry and Sam 300). Mainly, place of settlement in which cultural changes occur is plural societies with different peoples from different ethics. Plural societies are defined as societies in which "more than one cultural or ethnic group is represented in the population, and for which there is some likelihood that such groups will be able to maintain themselves into the future" (Berry et al., "Acculturation Attitudes" 186). Hence, diverse cultural values as a result of individuals with two societies of origin and settlement in plural societies can create conflicts which can be settled by their adjustment strategies (Berry et al., "Comparative Studies" 494).

Another factor that should be analyzed in the process of acculturation is considering which type of acculturating group individuals are. "Many kinds of cultural groups may exist in plural societies and their variety is primarily due to three factors: voluntariness, mobility, and permanence" (Berry, "Immigration" 8). One of these groups are the immigrants who migrated to the new land to experience acculturation voluntarily and permanently (Berry, "Immigration" 8; Berry and Sam 295).

Although it seems that immigrants voluntarily choose to become part of a new culture and will acculturate easily, they undergo psychological problems resulted from encountering new socio-cultural values, language, food preferences and dress codes (Berry and Sam 301-302; Berry, "Acculturation" 699). Sometimes such changes can create cultural conflict and acculturative stress such as confusion, anxiety, and discrimination from the dominant culture during intercultural exchanges (Berry et al., "Comparative Studies" 492; Berry, "Acculturation" 700). Moreover, advanced acculturative stress can be shown in psychopathology or mental disease such as serious mental disturbances and severe depression and anxiety as a result of acculturation (Berry, "Immigration" 12; Berry and Sam 298). To manage such conflicts, they adapt and use acculturation strategies as a response to the stress entailed by the new cultural setting.

Berry and his colleagues presented a model of acculturating strategies from the view of the non-dominant groups which individuals use in plural societies. Two main factors are taken into notice in categorizing four modes of acculturation which are cultural maintenance and participating in the host country's activities. While the former focuses on how preserving motherland's culture impacts immigrants' lives, the latter emphasizes the importance of being involved with the mainstream in the process of acculturation (Berry, "Immigration" 9). The influence of these two points (1 & 2) is shown in the following figure.

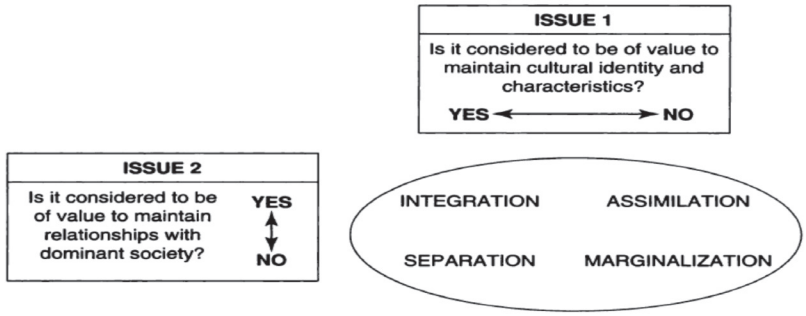

Fig.1. Acculturation Strategies (Berry and Sam 296)

Four modes of acculturation, assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization are introduced by Berry and his colleagues as a result of the two mentioned factors. Assimilation occurs when "individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures" (Berry, "Immigration" 9). By utilizing separation, individuals try to become closer to their heritage and distance themselves from the values of the host land (Berry, "Immigration" 9). When individuals show interest in both maintaining their original culture and simultaneously seek participation in the dominant culture of the larger society, they use integration as the strategy (Berry, "Immigration" 9). According to Berry, integration is the best strategy for reducing stress caused by immigration when neither the host land nor the homeland is superior to each other in promoting their cultural values ("Acculturation" 708). The final ultimatum happens when the individuals are under feelings of alienation, loss of identity, and what has been termed acculturative stress (Berry, "Cultural Relations" 13). Coping with such feelings, they resort to marginalization as acculturation in which they lose "interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and [also] in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination)" (Berry, "Immigration" 9).

Post 9/11 and South Asians' Acculturation Strategies in the United States

One of the most important factors in analyzing acculturation strategies of the immigrants is considering the nature of the host or the larger society (Berry et al., "Comparative Studies" 494). The society of settlement tries to protect its cultural maintenance from diasporic communities, their cultural varieties and their influence on the culture of the mainstream. Hence, "national majority [not only the host government and institutions, but also the people of the country] considers migrants to be the root of its difficulties, and draws on racial definitions that combine the idea of natural race and the idea of culture in order to make them scapegoats" (Wieviorka 71).

Although the United States has been described a country which welcomes immigrants regardless of ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have changed the American policies toward Muslim immigrants from several countries including Pakistan. Considine in his study on the Pakistani diaspora in the United States discussed the racism toward the Pakistanis by the mainstream and its linkage to the 9/11 events and the subsequent "War on Terror" policies (*Family, Religion, and Identity* 49-50). In 2009, in continuance of the post 9/11 laws against Muslims, Pakistan was announced the most dangerous place in the world by White House and a haven for fundamentalists and anti-western terrorist activities (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 1). Pakistanis in the United States, also, are targeted as threats to national security by different institutions because of their racial, ethnic, and religious similarities to the 9/11 hijackers (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 49-50). Such policies lead to the "confusion and anxiety amongst second generation Pakistani Americans, who started to see themselves as strangers in and potential enemies of the only country that they had ever considered home" (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 4). Considine outlined the racial discrimination towards Pakistanis in American context to show that Pakistanis are institutionally stereotyped and associated with terrorism because of their Muslim background (see table 1).

Common theme	Ireland	US
Marker of racism	Skin colour and ethnic background	'Muslim features' and religious background
Racial slur	'Paki'	'Terrorist'
Type of crisis racism	Mainly economic-based, linked to collapse of Celtic Tiger and the culture talk of migrants taking jobs from 'natives'	Mainly national security-based, linked to the events of 9/11 and the culture talk of young Pakistani Muslim men being a threat to American security
Forms of racism	Racist violence	Racial profiling and institutional racism

Table 1: Markers of Racism, Racial Slurs, and Types and Forms of Racism against Pakistanis in the United States. Source: (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 168).

Pakistanis are stereotyped in the United States after the events of 9/11 and their acculturation accordingly should be distinguished from other immigrants. Bhatia and Ram challenged the universalist model presented by Berry and his colleagues which suggests that all immigrants undergo the same psychological process. In the modified model, historical and political events related to non-western and non-

European immigrants in the United States are considered as factors of analysis. Bhatia mentioned narratives from post 9/11 era in which instances of psychological distress among the South Asians are offered. Sharing the same religion, race, and color skin with the 9/11 hijackers, South Asians are stereotyped as potential terrorists (25-26). Thus, the context of post 9/11 is significant in discussing the immigrants' interactions in society of settlement.

Another matter being modified by Bhatia is presenting counter argument to the clear boundaries in Berry's model. By considering notions of post colonialism, hybridity, and diaspora, and focusing on the acculturation as a process and not a product, Bhatia emphasized on the constant negotiation among acculturation strategies (36). According to Bhatia and Ram, there is no neat boundary in choosing one strategy ("Rethinking Acculturation" 15). The individuals experience "the sense of constantly negotiating between here and there, past and present, homeland and host land, self and other" (Bhatia and Ram, "Rethinking Acculturation" 3). He cites instances from South Asian immigrants who oscillate among strategies. There are South Asian families, for instance, who thought that they were integrated; yet, after 9/11 they were proven wrong and they resorted to marginalization so as to be safe from verbal and physical harassments against South Asians (Bhatia and Ram, "Theorizing Identity" 144-146). Thus, although integration is considered the best strategy in Berry's model, it cannot be applied by South Asians in Post 9/11 United States and it is shown that oscillation is a key to survive such conditions.

The Khans Struggling Racial Bias and Cultural-Intergenerational Conflicts

The Khans, Nasir and Hassan's parents, move to the United States from Pakistan in search of the American Dream of success, standard lifestyle, better social condition and prospect for themselves and their children. Considerable rate of Pakistanis has left their homeland to settle in America during the last decades. "Pakistanis are the seventh largest ethnic minority in the US, and within the Muslim population, they are the single largest group" (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 1). Naz is the son of a cab driver and a saleswoman who are working hard so that their children can have a peaceful life. The sons also search for better lives than their parents'. Hassan is a straight-A student at school and Naz is also a good student tutoring his classmates. They want to pursue higher education for better employment opportunities than minimum-wage jobs such as his father's which he repeatedly detaches himself away from. When Naz is asked about the ownership of the cab by Andrea and later by the detective and lawyer, he mentions that his father is the owner and not him.

Stereotyping against the Khans as Pakistani immigrants in different institutions are vividly portrayed throughout the narration. After 9/11 Pakistanis are introduced national threats and enemies to the nation by the American government and such announcements paved the way for the verbal and physical harassments by the mainstream (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 1-4; Maira 267). In court, when Naz is accused of being a violent child at school toward his classmates, he justifies them as part of his defense to the physical aggressions against him and his father in the immediate days of post 9/11. He says that he was bullied physically at school because he was a Pakistani Muslim and could be easily associated with the terrorist attackers. Additionally, he mentions how his father for the same reasons was assaulted in his cab.

The Police stereotypes Naz because of his Pakistani heritage, dark skin, and Muslim background. With no enough evidence to be charged, Naz is forced to plead guilty. Detective Box or as Naz's lawyer calls him "subtle beast" tries to obtain his confession by manipulating him and pretending to be friendly to him and his family. He uses the testimony of witnesses whose reliability are under question. During the trial the same evidence against Naz is challenged by his lawyers and it leads to the police's announcement on new discoveries regarding other suspects which have been neglected initially. One witness says that he "could have been light- skinned black, uh, Latino, I really don't know" leading by the Police, he becomes uncertain and says "could have been [not Caucasian], sure, why not?" Other instances of racism are recounted when Pakistani Naz is called by racial epithets. Another witness, who has addressed Naz a terrorist on the street, "Ah, look, Mustafa left his bombs home," mentions that he has warned Andrea not to go out with a guy like that. He states that he does not know either of them, Andrea or Naz, but by the judge of his light dark skin ,he associates Naz with terrorists (Episode 1, 00:48:20-00:48:43).

Regarding Naz's trial, media has drastic effects against Pakistani Muslims. The media and news agencies play a seminal role in misrepresenting and vilifying the Muslim minority as the vicious other. (Alsultany 9). The press disseminates information on Naz's conviction and his background while he is still on trial so as to attract more audience. Under the influence of media's misrepresented news about Naz's trial, Hassan is harassed verbally and physically at school. Defending himself and his brother's innocence, he fights back and gets suspended. Another impact stemming from an earlier conviction of Naz by the media is the racist graffiti sprayed on the city wall saying "Muslims go home."

Such measures, not only do perpetuate against the Khans they create hostility

among the mainstream but also by the Pakistani-Americans who blame the Khans for the greater reinforcements of their marginalization in the host country. According to Considine after the events of 9/11, Pakistanis experience Pakophobia, aversion toward Pakistanis, as they are called terrorist not only from the the Americans but also from who try to distance themselves from their motherland (*Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 24). In one part of the show, a Muslim woman wearing burka swears at the Khans. Another instance of Pakophobia can be traced in the testimony of Naz's friend as a hostile witness who helps the prosecution in character assassination of Naz, describing him as a drug dealer and a criminal in front of the jury.

Police and media create adverse condition for Naz's trial. Media's allegations against Naz may not influence the jury since they are not permitted to have access to the news, but the stereotypes disseminated against Pakistanis and Muslims after 9/11 and Naz after the incident affect the witnesses' testimony. Being under the same influence, the prosecutor does not withdraw charges against Naz when the new possible suspects ,Andrea's ex-boyfriend, is identified. The jury cannot agree on a verdict and Naz's case is declared a mistrial. Mistrial cases according to American judicial system may be tried again later if the prosecutor brings the case again. The DA, Ms. Weiss does not ask for the retrial, the charges are dropped, and Naz goes free. If Naz's lawyers did not undermine the testimonies and evidence against Naz, the jury would not lock six to six and he would be imprisoned for the crime he did not commit. Although he is released from prison, Naz and his family experience stress after 9/11 and Andrea's murder. Hence, racial biases has brought anxiety for the family..

Apart from being offended by the mainstream and American institutions, the Khans' cultural conflicts (meriting both Pakistani and American values) can lead to their acculturative stress. In Berry's terms, it is important to notice the distinction between the home culture and host culture in analyzing individuals' acculturation. Such diversity in cultures can be traced in the languages, ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral patterns, religions, social patterns, manner of speaking, foods, and dress protocols. To elaborate more on the different values of American and Pakistani culture, the TV series unfolds several incidents on different characters' interactions.

Naz's acculturative stress stems from the contradiction between his American values and his parents' Pakistani heritage. Some Pakistani tradition, values, attitudes, and norms are in contradiction with everyday American culture. Naz in search of having intimate relations goes to a party without his mother's consent. He is a dependent 21-year college boy living with his parents; whereas in American culture young adults leave their parents' house at the age of 18 to become independent. In

Pakistani culture, family is considered a significant factor in their lives; moreover, Muslim communities are collective rather than independent (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 33). A study by Cheung and Spears suggests that moving from interdependent cultures (such as Muslim countries) to independent cultures (like western countries) create psychological distress for the immigrants due to their incapability to adjust (Khawaja 41-42). Naz needs his family's support at the age of 21 and they instill their values into his life. Seeking his parents' approval at home and American society's acceptance, he is obliged to fulfill Pakistani and American values which are sometimes in opposition. Therefore, such contradictions add to the confusion and distress of an immigrant who is already stigmatized. This stress is manifested in a scene when he is alone on the street and practices talking to girls at the party. He seizes the opportunity to meet girls when Andrea rides on his father's cab for a destination. He abuses drugs and alcohol and spends the night with a stranger at her house. While alcohol consumption is considered a normal everyday activity of American life, it is called immoral western pastime by Pakistanis (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 108); premarital sex is also discouraged (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 90). All these integral elements of social activities in the United States are considered red flags from Pakistanis' perspective.

Naz tries to distance himself from his parents and disobeys them so that he can assimilate in the mainstream. Naz, a second-generation immigrant, seeks to blend in the American mainstream by mimicking his African American college friends. In doing so, he shows interest in hip hop music and speaks with African American accent while his parents speak Urdu and watch Pakistani movies at home. Therefore, along with his cultural conflicts, Naz's acculturative stress stems from his intergenerational conflicts with his parents. "These intergenerational conflicts [among Pakistani generations] are typically caused because younger individuals breach traditional family roles, standards of behavior, friendship choices, and parental expectations" (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 34). Tensions between Naz and his parents creats largely on notions such as sex before marriage, partying, meeting girls, dating, drug and alcohol abuse, having different taste in music, having African-American friends, and eventually prioritizing American culture over Pakistani values.

Having been born and raised in Pakistan, Naz's parents are more concerned about values and norms originating from the homeland. Although the parents mention that they have abandoned Pakistan, they merit some of its values. Naz's mother disapproves of Naz's friends and forbids him to go to the party. However, she wears no burka, no hijab, works outside the house, and speaks directly to men (the detectives

and the male lawyer); which are all considered disobeying Pakistani and Muslim values (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 78). So, she also shows some deviation from the principles of the homeland. Naz's father, allows his wife to work outside house and he talks face-to-face with women which are considered unconventional in Pakistan. Therefore, surviving the new culture, the Khans sometimes adopt flexible attitudes in facing different situations in an attempt to reduce the detrimental effects of cultural conflicts on their live.

The Khan's Acculturation Strategies; Oscillation from Integration and Assimilation to Separation and Marginalization

Naz's parents try to utilize integration of both Pakistani and American culture to fit in the mainstream and instill such tendencies to their children. Naz's mother merits both Pakistani and American culture. In other words, she sometimes renounces her Pakistani background by not wearing burka, or hijab and working as a sales woman. Unlike to what her Pakistani heritage dictates, she attempts to integrate in the mainstream. On the other hand, she is depicted as a woman who clings to Pakistani norms, language, music, movies, food, tradition and tries to foster them in their home which is manifested in her attitude; She prevents her sons from going to parties, where they can blend in the new culture. Naz's father also supports his wife's decisions all along.

However, Islamophobia after 9/11 and the rise of racial discrimination against Muslims in western societies affect the Khans' integration. Integration strategy presented by Berry's model is possible when both the majority and minority cultures have equal status and power (Berry, "Acculturation" 708; Bhatia and Ram, "Rethinking Acculturation" 13). In this sense, the choice of strategy depends on the individual as well as the societal norms. Despite instances of inequality, bias, and discrimination against the Khans which have been have mentioned earlier, Naz's parents try to integrate by cherishing partly American culture and to some extent Pakistani heritage. Still, choosing such strategy is impossible because the host country after 9/11 attacks views all people from Pakistan as terrorists and after each crisis (Andrea's murder) reminds them about their belief.

Having failed in integration, Mr. and Mrs. Khan use another strategy which is separation. Naz's parents are a cab driver and a saleswoman who works with Pakistanis. Based on Berry's model, their attitude, separation, can be justified since they want to avoid cultural conflict (Berry, "Acculturation" 708). It is shown in the TV series that in times of crises, they have no friend or family to ask for help. Preventing the cultural conflicts, they detach socially from Americans. Although

the couple appreciate the cultural products of the motherland at home, they do not appeal for the aid from their Pakistani acquaintances who can be allegedly or actually in connection with terrorist groups. Because of the similar restrictions against their country, they have never returned there and mention this repeatedly as a defense in face of authorities who are charging Naz with murder. Unlike their sons who are socially interacting with the mainstream at school, it is undemanding for Naz's parents to adopt separation there being not actively involved in the country's institutions.

Naz employs assimilation to blend in the American mainstream on several occasions throughout narration. Naz's assimilation as Berry and Sam suggested arises from the need to fit in the new context (Berry and Sam 299). By utilizing assimilation according to Berry, Naz, an immigrant, tries to resemble the behavioral norms of the dominant group which entails various operations (Berry, "Acculturation" 708).

Being assimilated structurally to the educational system of the mainstream is one of the measures taken by Naz so as to blend in the United States. He is a student in the American education system and needs to be assimilated structurally to the greater community besides his parents. He is a good student and tutors basketball players in college team. During the testimonies at court, it is revealed that he sells drugs to his classmates at school which can be considered an attempt to become popular among them. It seems that he is relatively successful since he is invited to their party.

Naz seeks strong ties of social acquaintances by becoming friends with African-American friends; among them he feels less marked as non-white. In doing so, he changes his attitude and closes, mimics their accents and listens to hip-hop music. The same behavior pattern can be traced in Naz's interactions in jail. He joins Freddy's gang and mimics them in order to survive. At prison he becomes assimilated with the gang and looks like them after a while. Having spent time at prison, the skinny scared boy at the police station turns to a muscular man who walks with a head held high at court.

One of the actions done by Naz for less visibility and assimilation in the American culture is avoiding his Pakistani sounding name, i.e. Nasir. Nasir prefers to be called Naz because its pronunciation is easier by the non-Pakistanis and he can become less visible in the mainstream. Thus, he tries to assimilate by disconnecting himself free from any association with Pakistan and the negative connotations it has among the Americans.

Naz by violating his Pakistani values tries to assimilate in America. Spending

night with Andrea, having premarital sex, drinking alcohol, and abusing drugs are all considered renouncing the Pakistani Islamic heritage. When Naz is asked about his night with Andrea, he mentions it was fun to be with someone who is not similar to my conservative Pakistani community.

Despite Naz's efforts in assimilation, this strategy is not an option for a Pakistani-American person. Naz cannot get rid of his Pakistani roots given that he lives in a post 9/11 era when the Pakistanis are discriminated and believed to be threats and murderers. The comfortable fit of assimilation or integration in the mainstream cannot occur for the South Asian Muslims after 9/11 and they should oscillate among the strategies to survive (Bhatia and Ram, "Theorizing Identity" 148). Therefore, Naz's acculturation is a continuous process.

Naz utilizes separation as one of his strategies in the acculturation process in face of distress. According to Berry, sometimes acculturation experiences create conflicts which cannot be solved and results in the withdrawal (separation) and marginalization of the immigrants ("Immigration" 12). At the police station when Naz is arrested for killing Andrea, under pressures of the Police to confess to plead guilty, he says: "I want to go home." Home does not mean only a place to live in, a house, but a concept carrying with many connotations such as a feeling of belonging to a group of people, to a family and friends as well as traditions. Although he distances himself from his Pakistani culture by assimilation, he seeks a shelter like home and moves toward the same culture by adopting separation.

In the end, Naz who cannot overcome the conflicts occured, resorts to marginalization. According to Berry, "marginalization is often associated with major heritage culture loss and appearance of a number of dysfunctional and deviant behaviors (such as delinquency)" ("Acculturation" 708). Minorities in this case are rejected and discriminated and show their irritation towards the members of the larger society (Berry, "Immigration" 29). Naz has no disciplines to follow either as a Pakistani or an American individual. After the trial, he realizes that he can not be an American citizen. Naz not only stops trying to become assimilated, but also he detaches himself from his own family who were almost convinced that he killed Andrea. Thus, he is alienated from American culture as well as his own Pakistani roots. This exclusion is depicted in the last scene in which he takes drugs alone at the beach. Spending time in prison with convicted felons, he turns into an addict and someone who is likely to be tempted into a life of crime.

Conclusion

This study on the miniseries *The Night Of* illustrats how stereotyping is part of

everyday experience of Pakistani Muslim immigrants in the United States in the post 9/11 era. The Khans who has immigrated from Pakistan to America encounter harassments and stereotypes by the institutions of the mainstream (education, media, police, and judicial system) due to the Pakistan's association with terrorism. It is shown how such stereotypes thrust Naz into being charged guilty for killing Andrea. Moreover, by discussing the contradictory values of the society of settlement (United States) and society of origin (Pakistan), the cultural and the intergenerational conflicts created for the immigrants are discussed. Thus, trying to fulfill norms at two opposite poles, Pakistani values and American culture, the Khans experience acculturative stress.

In order to survive the anxiety of acculturation, the Khans use acculturation strategies. Naz's parents try to integrate both American and Pakistani cultures; however, it is impossible because after 9/11, the mainstream does not accept their Pakistani background and associates them with terrorism. Thus, hoping for integration, Naz's parents adopt separation by having the least interaction with American society and watching Pakistani movies at home. Although being targeted as terrorist and enemy of the United States in the post 9/11 era, Naz tries different strategies to fit and assimilate at school, in society, and among friends. The series shows how Naz stripped himself off his Pakistani traditions and instead melted into the other way of life overtly and recklessly by drinking alcohol, consuming drugs, and having sex with a stranger. Yet, as it is shown vividly during Andrea's trial, he cannot get away from his Pakistani background and the stereotypes against him as a threat to the nation. Naz also oscillates when his assimilation does not work. Firstly, he utilizes separation and then marginalization from both cultures when his own parents do not believe his innocence. Hence, having criminal record and no direction to obey, he becomes an addict and a potential delinquent.

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A German Literary Paradigm of Friendship in the Irish Short Story, "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy Goes Home" (1919)

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Abstract This article highlights features in Daniel Corkery's short story, "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy Goes Home" (1919) which foreshadow characteristics outlined by Rachel Freudenburg in her argument for the fiction of friendship in 20th century German first-person narratives. In line with Freudenburg's argument as she applies it to Günter Grass's *Cat and Mouse* (1961), Corkery's narrator can ultimately be said to engage in acts of passive aggression toward the Colonel in an attempt to acquire from the site of his friend the desired if ultimately unattainable identity of hero. This discussion raises two questions. Could Corkery's portrayal of the friend as a site upon which the narrator unsuccessfully attempts to project his idealized identity, have at its root the nature of the Irish War of Independence where the concept of hero was far from clean-cut? If "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" falls into a paradigm of friendship common in 20th century German narratives, can the story's facilitation of such an alternative interpretation rescue it from the stigma of didactic propaganda?

Key words Irish; Daniel Corkery; Günter Grass; Friendship; Freudenburg

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Introduction

"The narrator […] is supposed to be a man of action, but he shows no distinctive personality at all; he is a nullity onto whom the reader is expected to project his own

patriotic emotions."[1] It is on this banal excuse for a narrator in Daniel Corkery's "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy Goes Home" (1919)[2] that the following discussion hinges. The argument raises two questions. Firstly, if the disillusioned climate of the years after World War II made difficult the portrayal of a male friend as hero in German literature,[3] could the nature of the Irish War of Independence have made similarly problematic the portrayal of heroic male friend for Corkery?[4] Secondly, if "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" falls into a paradigm of friendship common in 20th century German narratives, can the story's facilitation of such an alternative reading rescue it from the stigma of didactic propaganda?[5]

1 Patrick Maume makes this remark in reference to "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" (1919) in conjunction with several other stories from *The Hounds of Banba* (1919) (*'Life that is exile': Daniel Corkery and the Search for Ireland* 67). Maume also remarks that "some critics denounce *The Hounds of Banba* as a betrayal of art for propaganda". Maume considers this unjust (68). Seán Ó Tuama considered Corkery "an undeserving casualty of ideological warfare" ("Daniel Corkery, Cultural Philosopher, Literary Critic: A Memoir" 247). Helen Laird agrees with this to some extent ("Preface" in *Daniel Corkery's Cultural Criticism* ix).

2 The title of the story will hitherto be abbreviated to "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …".

3 According to Rachel Freudenburg: "Especially after World War II, which ended with Germany's unconditional surrender and an acknowledgment that the war itself was unjust, the war hero and camaraderie all but disappear from [*German*] literature …". See: Rachel Freudenburg's *Fictions of Friendship in Twentieth-Century German Literature: Mann's Doktor Faustus, Grass's Katz und Maus, Bernhard's Wittgensteins Neffe and Der Untergeher, and Wolf's Nachdenken* ü*ber Christa T.* (Diss. Harvard University, 1995) 109-110, 177.

4 I am speaking of Corkery's portrayal of the heroic male friend in literature and not of his own relationships. It is clear from the obituary Corkery wrote for Terence MacSwiney, as outlined by Maume (72), along with opinions Corkery expressed in his private correspondence, that one man would stand forever a hero to him: "We know that he [*Terence MacSwiney*] was almost superhumanely perfect—not only as a patriot, but as a man—and history will never have such a glut of men in its pages as to confuse him with the average hero of whom we must accept both good and bad" (MacSwiney Papers, Corkery to Anne, 11/1/1921, p48c/3/36).

5 George Brandon Saul considered *The Hounds of Banba* to be Corkery's "most disappointing set of stories." He did not stop there: "Interesting enough as a memorialization of guerrilla activities by a people pathetically self-sacrificing in their fixed hatred of the English, this book of an almost juvenile patriotism does not wholly escape a suggestion of strain in the writing" ("The Short Stories of Daniel Corkery" 120). Meanwhile, Paul Delaney considers most of the stories in *The Hounds of Banba* to be "propagandist in scope, content, and ambition, and too didactic to work successfully as examples of short fiction" ("Nobody Now Knows Which…": Transition and Piety in Daniel Corkery's Short Fiction" 102). Stephen Gwynn suggests that *The Hounds of Banba* portrays an exclusively Sinn Féin perspective ("A Book of the Moment: Gaelic Poetry under the Penal Laws" 183). The discussion is confined to an analysis of the story, "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" and its literary worth. Has the baby been thrown out with the bath water?

In her dissertation on fictions of friendship in 20th century German literature, Rachel Freudenburg maintains that "friendships are manipulated and exploited to produce a unified and regal self even while the person behind this image is developing a theory of self-fragmentation" (5). She applies her theory on the fiction of friendship to several German narratives including Mann's *Doktor Faustus,* Grass's *Katz und Maus*, Bernhard's *Wittgensteins Neffe,* and Wolf's *Nachdenken* ü*ber Christa T.* In order to demonstrate how her theory opens up Corkery's text, I will draw parallels between elements of her theory as she outlines them in Günter Grass's *Cat and Mouse* (1961) and similar features evident in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …."[1]

Application of Freudenburg's theory illustrates how Corkery's narrator, like Grass's Pilenz, can be seen to vainly hanker after the impossible, that is, the unattainable identity of hero.[2] I intend to illustrate how the narrator's presentation of Colonel Mac Gillicuddy as mad constitutes an act of aggression which culminates in the elimination of the Colonel as the narrator attempts to assume the desired identity for the self. However, as Freudenburg puts it: "Just as Narcissus may never kiss his own reflection without losing it, the narrator, in his attempt to access the mirror, ends up destroying the reflector" (63). The desired identity is ultimately unattainable.

According to Freudenburg, in *Cat and Mouse*, Günter Grass confronts his readers with the death of the hero and national icon.[3] However, at the same time, Pilenz, in telling the story of Mahlke, demonstrates a desire or "nostalgia for what has died, for the whole, meaningful, monumental friend" (177); a desire for the

1 Freudenburg's theory in relation to Mann's *Doctor Faustus* deals with the idealized identity of a genius and not that of war hero. Application of Nietzschean thought to "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" in parallel with Mann's *Doctor Faustus* may open a very different discussion.

2 According to Benedict Kiely, Corkery's attitude in his stories "is primarily contemplative and his writing has always been happier in dealing not with the aggravations of controversy, but with the cloistral, candle-lit places of the soul" (2). I maintain that Corkery's rendition of the narrator in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" shows him to have been also contemplative in his approach to the portrayal of the "heroic" friend. That said, Patrick Delaney's analysis of Corkery's characters still holds true for him; the narrator is neither allowed to "adapt to change or to find immunity in the past" (""Nobody Now Knows Which …": Transitions and Piety in Daniel Corkery's Short Fiction" 110).

3 According to Grass in an interview with John Reddick in 1966: "Mahlkes Fall decouvriert Kirche, Schule, Heldenwesen—die ganze Gesellschaft. Alles schlägt mit ihm fehl" (Alexander Ritter Ed., *Erläuterungen und Dokumente* 88). "Mahlke's case reveals (the character of) the church, the village council and the approach to heroism—the whole society. Everything he does is destined to fail" (Trans. Kerstin Precht).

unattainable identity of hero.[1] Ireland's protracted history as British colony and the subsequent complications this brought to the Irish War of Independence in which violence was often directed not just against British oppressor but also against local Irish people, may, likewise, have made difficult the literary portrayal of hero for Corkery.[2] Could this explain why his portrayal of friendship in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" falls into a paradigm discernible in *Cat and Mouse*?

In line with Freudenburg's argument as she applies it to *Cat and Mouse* (129-178), this discussion emphasizes the following idiosyncrasies in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …." Firstly, the friendship portrayed is a dyadic one. Secondly, the friend is dead. Thirdly, the narrator praises the absent friend while simultaneously painting the lauded friend in a negative light; this, according to Freudenburg, can be seen as an act of aggression toward the friend (51). Finally, a tell-tale sign of the narrator's attempt to "erase" the friend in an all-be-it impossible effort to assume the desired identity from the mirror of the friend manifests itself in a mixing of the

1 I will quote Freudenburg frequently in discussing *Cat and Mouse,* because it is her argument in relation to the desired identity of war hero projected onto the site of the friend that I am emphasizing. However, James C. Bruce's analysis of Pilenz's narrative in, "The Equivocating Narrator in Günter Grass's "Katz und Maus"" throws useful light on the relationship between Pilenz and Mahlke (139-149).

2 In some cases, fighters in the Irish War of Independence had to execute locals condemned as informers or traitors. The following testimonies offer an insight into the backdrop against which Corkery was writing. The impact of such executions on small communities must have been devastating and made any attempted portrayal of an Irish war hero in literature far from clear-cut. I.R.A. Intelligence Officer, Robert C. Ahern gave the following description of an I.R.A execution of a local man: "Finbar O'Sullivan … joined the Black and Tans. When he returned to his home one evening he was taken prisoner there and removed outside the city, where on the instructions of the brigade he was executed by shooting. The date was 21st February, 1921" (Robert C. Ahern "Statement by Witness" 8).

Meanwhile, Sean Scully's comment on the R.I.C. men who raided his house for arms during the War of Independence also throws light on the liminal line between local friend and local foe in the struggle: "Many of them [*R.I.C. men*], driven by circumstances into a situation unforeseen, did not deserve the deaths they got. Neither were we 'hard men' nor 'gun men' nor 'killers', as our reputation built itself up under the circumstances" (8-9).

two identities (Freudenburg 50-51).[1] Freudenburg's theory exposes the friendship between Pilenz and his dead friend, Mahlke in *Cat and Mouse,* as a fiction. I argue that the same fiction of friendship is at play in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …"[2].

Different Stories, Same Fiction of Friendship

While the ancients may have lauded friendship,[3] Nietzsche is thus quoted in many modern discussions: "Friends, there are no friends" (Nietzsche I, 644-645).[4] Derrida describes the single friend as lack, as that which can never be acquired ("The Politics of Friendship" 636). However, David Webb describes friends as those with whom "we share the practice of becoming who we are" (120). Friedrich Tenbruch maintains that in the modern world friendship can offer the individual stabilization, each friend keeping always before him a reassuring image of the other ("Freundschaft" 441). Freudenburg draws on Tenbruck among others in support of her hypothesis that "friendship is one of our major blind spots precisely because it supplies us with a myth of unified identity which although fictional, offers relief from the fragmentation of modernity"(4). In both "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" and *Cat and Mouse* a narrator tells the story of an absent/deceased friend. On one level the similarities end there.

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1 While Freudenburg confines her discussion to German works of the 20th century, stressing how the myth of friendship offers "relief from the fragmentation of modernity"(4), I perceive traces of her friendship paradigm in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Des Vetters Eckfenster* (1822) and Franz Grillparzer's *Der Arme Spielmann* (1847). Her theory on friendship also offers interesting reading of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Alain Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes,* Grass's inspirations for *Cat and Mouse. See:* Julian Preece, *The Life and Work of Günter Grass: Literature, History, Politics* (50). See also: Ruth Gross's "The Narrator as Demon in Grass and Alain-Fournier" (625-639). Application of Freudenburg's theory also opens up an interesting interpretation of the relationship between narrator and brother in Korean writer, Yi Chong-jun's "The Wounded"(1984).

2 "… the Irishman who would write of his own people has to begin by trying to forget what he has learnt …" (Corkery *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature*, 15). This discussion is not attempting to ironically imply that Corkery, with his guard up against the entrapment of the Irish psyche in English culture, literature, and language, actually fell under German influences. However, the narrator in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" is reading Mügge's *Life of Nietzsche*! Given Corkery's opinions as expressed in "Russian Models for Irish Litterateurs" one might have expected to find him engaged with Russian thinkers.

3 C.S. Lewis. "Friendship." *The Four Loves*. (London: Geoffrey Gles, 1960), 69.

4 According to Robert C. Miner in "Nietzsche on Friendship", Nietzsche actually took "superior friendship to be possible but rare" (47). Meanwhile, drawing from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and other sources, Anne Marie Dziob draws parallels between Aristotelian and Nietzschean friendship in her PhD dissertation, *The Nature of Friendship: Aristotle and Nietzsche* (iv).

In *Cat and Mouse*, Pilenz, at the suggestion of his confessor, Father Alban, begins to write about his relationship with former school friend, Joachim Mahlke who deserted the army after being awarded the prized Knight's Cross. Pilenz feels haunted by Mahlke who is missing, presumed dead, and undertakes the narrative in an attempt to find healing and closure. However, Pilenz's description of their relationship and the events leading up to Mahlke's disappearance, reveal a sadomasochistic relationship far from friendly (Freudenburg 8,149).[1] Pilenz's writing, instead of bringing him closure, only reimplicates him in the neglect if not murder of his friend.

In "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" a notice in the paper regarding the cancellation of the Colonel's proposed lecture on Oliver Cromwell is the first indication the narrator receives that his long-absent friend has returned to Ireland. He subsequently receives a short note and a postcard from Colonel Mac Gillicuddy saying that he intends to spend three further weeks in Drogheda "studying on the spot the details of Cromwell's massacre in that town …" (Corkery 111) and asking the narrator if he has seen Tate's book on Kitchener in Africa or Syed Ameer Khaldoun's book on India (111). When Mac Gillicuddy finally visits him, the narrator finds his friend much changed. He is concerned about the Colonel's preoccupation with Cromwell and while wanting to offer his friend support, finds himself instead overwhelmed into inaction. A subsequent message the narrator receives from Mac Gillicuddy in Kerry clearly illustrates that the Colonel is unwell. Out of concern, the narrator rushes to his friend's side. In Ballyferriter, he is woken in the middle of the night by Mac Gillicuddy, trembling at the cries he hears in the distance. However, the narrator realizes that the sounds are only the squall of distant birds. Ultimately, the narrator is unable to rescue Colonel Mac Gillicuddy from, what would seem to be, a path of self-destruction. The British war hero meets his death when he runs in protest at a patrolling vehicle in the town square, leaving the narrator to hope that his own life will "soon again begin to flow into its old channels" (136). At face level, this narrative has little in common with that of Pilenz's in *Cat and Mouse.* However, it is this peculiar introductory comment which opens up the interpretation that, like Pilenz, this narrator too had an investment in the elimination of his friend.[2]

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1 In regard to sado-masochism see also: "Günter Grass: 'Cat and Mouse'" by Robert H. Spaethling (146-147).

2 This discussion maintains that the narrator craves the identity of hero. I would argue that it is coincidental that the mirror onto which he projects his idealized identity, Colonel Mac Gillicuddy, is in the British army.

A Dyadic Friendship

According to Freudenburg, much writing about friendship rotates around a pair (6). In *Cat and Mouse* even when Mahlke is fighting at the front, back at the Labor Service camp as far as Pilenz is concerned, it is still just Mahlke and himself: "For while I relieved myself, you gave me and my eyes no peace: loudly and in breathless repetition, a painstakingly incised text called attention to Mahlke, whatever I might decide to whistle in opposition ..." (Grass 98-99). Meanwhile, both Freudenburg (145) and Rimmon-Kenan (181) refer to the scene in *Cat and Mouse* when Father Gusewski, expressing concern for Mahlke who has deserted the army, is told by Pilenz to keep out of things. "Don't worry, Father. I'll take care of him … you'd better keep out of it, Father" (Grass 114). Two's company; three's a crowd. However, Mahlke subsequently dies. As Rimmon-Kenan points out "Pilenz has a strange way of taking care of his friend" (181). In "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" the narrator, despite not having heard from Mac Gillicuddy in years, seems immediately to be sucked into a mental vacuum in which there is but himself and the Colonel. On receiving Mac Gillicuddy's note: "Have you seen Tate's book on "Kitchener in Africa?"" (138) he becomes preoccupied with the horrors his friend must have experienced first-hand:

> … Mac himself must have witnessed some terrible slayings in his time, perhaps even taken a hand in them! […] And yet there was nothing like a definite thought in my mind — nothing, only the sense of a far-off background that I was afraid to examine, a background of outrage and blood and horizon-flames tonguing the distant skies; and against this background I would see, all the time, Mac Gillicuddy's brooding face, his top-heavy brow, his pursed lips, his gloomy eyes! (138)

The narrator assumes the responsibility of saving Colonel MacGillicuddy (from himself), rushing to Kerry to help his friend whom he perceives to be mentally unsound.

> "Every sentence in the letter, all but two, was quite intelligible, but as a whole it was without sequence: it was no more to be understood than the broken phrases a soldier, after a day of battle, flings from him in his restless sleep. It happened that I had just been reading Mügge's *Life of Nietzsche*, and I recollected how he tells that the incoherency of the philosopher's letters were

> the first hint his friends had of his approaching madness. I grew suddenly afraid. I picked up a timetable, and in less than an hour I was journeying towards Dingle, which is the nearest station to Ballyferriter. (141)

However, as we shall see, although the narrator throws himself into the role of friend to the rescue, like Pilenz, his endeavors prove far from helpful.

The Best Friends are Dead Ones

The best friends are dead ones. According to Freudenburg, "it is only after the friend — with the power to disrupt the image of unity — is gone that the narrator commences writing" (5). Thus, the death or absence of Mahlke provides Pilenz with an opportunity to finally write his desired identity onto the site of the absent Mahlke (177). However, because Mahlke is dead, "the image of self-unity generated through [*him*] is innately false, it is not the actual identity of a person, but the desired identity projected upon a dead body, by a storyteller — it is a fiction" (5). Thus, on the one hand, Pilenz attempts to portray Mahlke, winner of the Knight's Cross, as a monumental hero. However, seeping through the narrative, are his attempts to undermine and destroy his friend. Freudenburg emphasizes Rimmon-Kenan's interpretation (147) that Pilenz not only had a hand in his friend's death but that his "narration kills Mahlke yet again" (Rimmon-Kenan 179). When Pilenz discovered that Mahlke had missed his train back to the front he advised Mahlke to concoct a story about his ailing mother or aunt. However, Mahlke refused to follow his advice, and Pilenz became frustrated. Pilenz's "help," subsequently, took on a more sinister nature. He refused to hide Mahlke in his own house. He suggested instead the "Kahn" and ended up rowing Mahlke to his death. With Mahlke out of the way, Pilenz is free to tell the story of Mahlke. "Pilenz (unwittingly?) tells one story in order to conceal another, and it is the other story that returns in the very act of narration. Rather than confessing the (figurative and probably also literal) killing of Mahlke, Pilenz's narration kills Mahlke yet again" (Rimmon-Kenan 179).

A similar dynamic is at play in "Captain Mac Gillicuddy …". We are likewise presented with a narrator telling the story of a dead friend. In *Cat and Mouse*, Pilenz, undertook writing at the request of Father Alban in an attempt to achieve

some type of healing or closure after the death of Mahlke.[1] However, unlike Pilenz, the narrator in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …," from the very outset gives the impression that the friendship and its baggage is already behind him. "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy having been now laid to rest with his Gaelic ancestors in Muckross Abbey, my life, I trust, will soon again begin to flow into its old channels" (136). From the first sentence, we get the impression that whatever is to follow is already a completed affair, a closed case. However, something does not sit right with this. It is peculiar that the narrator, after the death of his friend, could naively envisage his life soon returning to normal. It was, after all, Ireland of 1919. As the narrator himself points out early on in his narration: "the nerves of all Ireland were strained almost to the breaking point!"(137). Freudenburg stresses Pilenz's "omission of the end of the war and the holocaust" (172).[2] She interprets this as Pilenz's inability or unwillingness to let go of his desired identity of monumental friend/war hero in postfascist times (177). I would argue that like Pilenz, the narrator of "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" may also be guilty of a certain blinkered view of the struggle for Irish independence going on around him: "The whole country, as everybody knows, was disturbed at the time by groups of armed men raiding in the nights. I grew timid" (145). The turbulent times are an intimidating backdrop to his rendition of the deterioration of his friend's mental health and subsequent death. However, once his friend the Colonel is laid to rest, they have faded completely into inconsequence and he trusts his own life will soon be back to normal (136). In the middle of a war of independence attempting to end 800 years of British occupation, this would

1 "Who will supply me with an ending?" (Grass 126), Pilenz asks toward the end of his story, but there seems to be no end to Mahlke's haunting of Pilenz. This point is emphasized by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan in "Narration as Repetition" (185). Rimmon-Kenan while agreeing that narration-as-repetition may lead to a working through and an overcoming of issues, also claims that it can "imprison the narrative in a kind of textual neurosis, an issueless re-enactment of the traumatic events it narrates and conceals" (178). According to Rimmon-Kenan, Pilenz instead of reaching closure through the telling of his story, only becomes entrapped in the story: "In the act of narration Pilenz manages to evade or attenuate his guilt, and the narration consequently becomes a repetition of the same behaviour that made it necessary" (Rimmon-Kenan 179).

2 Freudenburg argues that only Pilenz's dead brother is discussed, and, like Mahlke, he seems only to have inspired envy in Pilenz (172). "If I today occasionally miss my elder brother Klaus, whom I scarcely knew, what I felt at the time was mostly jealousy on account of that altar …" (Grass 115).

indicate denial of the highest order.[1] Mahlke's decision to desert the army after winning the Knight's Cross frustrated Pilenz for whom he functioned as a type of mirror onto which Pilenz projected his own idealized identity of hero (Freudenburg 156). However, Mahlke's subsequent death should, at least in principle, have made him a less troublesome mirror for Pilenz's projected identity. In a similar way, in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" the Colonel, mirror of the narrator's idealized identity of hero, also rocked the boat for the narrator when he attempted to switch sides. The returning British Colonel, wounded at the Somme, had become obsessed with Cromwell's atrocities in Ireland and gone to the Sinn Féin headquarters to lay "certain plans before them for the wrecking of the British Empire" (150). Given the Colonel's Irish ancestry and his first-hand experience of the wider British Empire, this might seem a logical enough sequence of events. However, for the narrator, the Colonel's actions signify, not a belated awakening to the yoke of colonialism, but mental deterioration from which he needs rescuing. "He was whining, squealing like a young puppy in its first illness; but I didn't mind; I could cure him" (144). The narrator thus steps in to "help" his friend but, at every turn, his attempts are thwarted by circumstances. He is ultimately unable to divert the Colonel from his apparent path of self-destruction. Like Pilenz, the narrator is with his friend right up until the end. "There in the middle of the moonlight, lay Mac Gillicuddy, dead, with his secrets" (150). As in the case of Pilenz and Mahlke, the narrator's close proximity to Mac Gillicuddy before his death enables the narrator to lay the Colonel's death at the Colonel's own door; it was a consequence of his own insane actions: "He [*Mac Gillicuddy*] leaped at the car, crying out — I know not what. A succession of revolver shots rang out ..." (150).

The Friend as Opposite

Many unreliable narrators "construct their tales around opposites: one friend is spectacular, the other normal, one is dead, the other alive; one is a failure, the other a success" (Freudenburg 50). Why does the narrator portray the friend as the opposite of the self? This binary structure is actually the narrator's attempt to

1 "We should not assume that works which deal with the fantasy of a single friend are necessarily proposing, without any reflection or irony whatsoever, a self-unified identity. Much more, twentieth-century texts show a very strong ambivalence toward this model of identity" (Freudenburg 7). The narrator in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" tells us his friend's death is behind him. However, in telling his friend's story he murders him again in a way similar to Pilenz's murder of Mahlke as outlined by Rimmon-Kenan (176-185).

eliminate the friend by imagining the friend as the self (Freudenburg 50).[1] In *Cat and Mouse*, Mahlke is the eventual earner of the Ritterkreuz medal for his deeds at the front. However, even as a schoolboy he set himself apart from others. When the lieutenant commander visited the school, Mahlke was one of the few who could keep up with him on the gymnasium swing, as Pilenz grudgingly admits: "Apart from Hotten Sonntag only Mahlke could compete, but so execrable were his swing and split—his knees were bent and he was all tensed up—that none of us could bear to watch him" (Grass 64). Freudenburg highlights how Pilenz presents Mahlke as a larger than life character in this way (148). In "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" the narrator follows a similar pattern in the portrayal of his friend. At the beginning of the story his reference to the Colonel's burial place establishes that the Colonel had been a man of standing: "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy having been now laid to rest with his Gaelic ancestors in Muckross Abbey …" (p. 136). Meanwhile, although deafeningly silent on his own background and political leaning, the narrator is quick to establish the Colonel's heroic war record. "He had been wounded at the battle of the Somme, and these wounds, I knew, had unfitted him for further active service; I also knew that he had since then been put in charge of some commissariat department in India, and that he had had to make frequent journeys into the very heart of that vast land, as well as into Mesopotamia; but beyond this I knew nothing" (136).

Thus, like Pilenz, on one level the narrator appears to be presenting us with a hero.

The Object of the Narrator's Aggression

For Freudenburg, rare are the narrators who in some way support the friend or try to avert their death. Thus the Other, and opposite, is eliminated during the process in which the story of the self is being written (51). In turn, the site of the dead friend becomes the narrator's new mirror for his desired identity. While friends can be seen as an "autonomous version of identity which is admired, they also represent the objects of the narrators' aggression," some narrators even participating in the

1 Drawing on Weber (*Return to Freud …* 14), Freudenburg maintains that the friendships portrayed in certain 20th century German first-person narratives represent "heteroreflective relationship(s) turned into […] auto-reflective one(s)". Although the friendship novels may appear "to be bipolar because there are two main characters, from a hermeneutic standpoint, they are monopolar" (Freudenburg 76). "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" is all about the narrator.

murder of their friend (Freudenburg 51).[1] To support this point, Freudenburg refers to Rimmon-Kenan's interpretation of *Cat and Mouse*. Pilenz, having rejected Father Gusewski's offer of help for Mahlke, steps into the role of Mahlke's sole rescuer and lifeline. However, as Rimmon-Kenan outlines:

> Pilenz has a strange way of taking care of his friend, rejecting every escape possibility Mahlke suggests, including the cellar at Pilenz's house, deceitfully insisting that the military police have already come looking for him, and suggesting that Mahlke hide in the ruined ship … Mahlke dives with his food cans, but the opener, we learn to our shock, has remained with Pilenz, and only when it is too late does Pilenz shout to the vanished Mahlke to come up and retrieve the opener. (181)

The narrator in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" is also, I would argue, guilty of passive-aggressive behavior toward Colonel Mac Gillicuddy if not a hand in the Colonel's death. Like Pilenz, without hesitation, he steps up to the role of protector/rescuer of the Colonel, but in a questionable manner. His frantic rush to Kerry with the intention of aiding his friend whom he believes mentally unstable, culminates, on his arrival, in an anti-climatic scene: "While eating the plain fare, the homemade bread, that had been put before me, I noticed that his face was becoming more and more haggard: the invisible fingers of a fixed idea were dragging at his cheeks" (141). The narrator does little more than look helplessly at the Colonel across the table. His rush to Kerry has culminated in inaction. Later that night when Colonel Mac Gillicuddy, alarmed at the cries he hears in the distance, enters the narrator's room, the narrator's response is peculiar:

> But he was trying to speak, and I thought it was the word 'cries' I again heard.
>
> 'Rather inadequate,' I flung out peevishly, thinking, perhaps, to break the spell that was on him; the cries of the sea-birds just then were very far away, and indeed, not unpleasant in the still night. How could anyone mix them up with the wild screaming of a massacre? (143)

1 "So hat man denn den Schlüssel des Krankheitsbildes in der Hand, indem man die Selbstvorwürfe als Vorwürfe gegen ein Liebesobjekt erkennt, die von diesem Weg auf das eigene Ich gewälzt sind" (Freud "Trauer" 202). Freud interpreted many self-reproaches as allegations against a love object, which ended up directed against the own ego. Using Freud to support her argument, Freudenburg maintains that self-derogatory acts on the part of the narrator are in fact "accusations against the lost love object"(65).

"Rather inadequate," would seem, by any standards, a strange choice of words to offer someone in the delusional throws of post-traumatic stress. Unsurprisingly, they further unhinge the Colonel:

> 'Inadequate! inadequate! That's just it.' He spoke as if the problem of his life had been solved.
>
> 'Inadequate! Laughable! Laughable, when you think of the horror of it! It is that that makes one reckless in such businesses. Wild, inhuman' (how he was glaring at me!) –delighted to give the edge of the sword on a grey pate, or a soft breast, or a child!— "I will make them squeal," you say, you can't help saying it when the passion of slaughter is upon you, but you… you can't make them squeal – loud enough! And then, and then… my God! My God! Shut it! shut it! The curtains. Those also– Oh! my God! my God!' (143)

Next day when they are on the road from Ballyferriter to Dingle, the narrator grips the Colonel's arm to stop him jumping out of the car and talking to the dark figures passing by that the Colonel believes to be Sinn Féiners. "'Halt awhile, driver,' he [*Mac Gillicuddy*] said, 'I want to see these men; I won't be long.' He was just leaping from the car, when the driver, with some magic word he had, set the horse prancing. I caught the Colonel's arm"(145). Thus, the narrator yet again presents himself in the role of Colonel Mac Gillicuddy's protector. He catches the Colonel's arm and prevents him from descending among fellows who would, as the driver put it, "destroy you, and the likes of them clothes on your back!" (145). However, in fact, it was actually the driver's quick thinking and not the narrator's intervention that delivered the Colonel from the perceived harm. Meanwhile, the narrator has resolved to cure the Colonel's madness by reminding him of the glory as well as the shame of the British Empire. "Since he was haunted by the vision of the reverse of the British Empire I would speak of its obverse. After all, one could make out a case for it. Had it not spread Christianity, I would say, into those wild lands, throwing some certain share of its wealth and its choicest children into the work?" (145). However, even this pathetic excuse for a remedy circumstances conveniently prevent him from administering to the patient:

> Soon afterwards a crowd of English soldiers, very tired-looking, armed to the teeth, got into our carriage, and I thought I saw the Colonel shudder. To start with a Colonel a discussion on the two sides, the glory and the shame

> of the British Empire in a carriage full of soldiers might lead to the most unimaginable results as things were just then, so I was forced to hold my peace. (146)

It is dark when they finally arrive back at the city. However, after looking at the evening paper the Colonel excuses himself: "'Pardon', he said carelessly, and went out, the paper still in his hand" (147). He spoke so calmly that the narrator thought it peculiar and meant to question him as soon as he returned. However, the Colonel did not return. "For three hours I [*narrator*] dived hither and thither through wide and narrow streets — through squares lit by arc-lamps and through filthy passages where there were no lamps of any kind" (147). The narrator spends a frantic three hours searching unsuccessfully for his friend. Here again, however, his failed rescue culminates at the table:

> 'My friend has not returned?'
> 'No, sir; there is no trace of him. Johnny, here, saw him going out.'
> 'Well, send in whatever you have; I'm fainting.'
> 'Yes, sir; and there's the paper.'
> I had little mind for it, but as it lay there on the table, I saw in scare headlines:
> MASSACRE AT AMRITSAR!
> 2,000 INDIANS SHOT DOWN BY THE ENGLISH
> 500 KILLED OUTRIGHT. (148)

On seeing the headlines, the narrator realizes what has triggered his friend to make such a hasty exit:

> … the shock those three lines of print had given me had called out those reserves of spirit that in such moments so dominate the mere body.
>
> 'I must find him,' I said. I swallowed some cups of tea, one after another, and rose up to make again for the streets. (148)

The shock of the headlines has called out the narrator's reserves of spirit, and he is determined to find his friend, … but he still dallies drinking tea. Later after Mac Gillicuddy's return, both he and the narrator stand side by side at the window watching the antics of the armored car tearing around the square (149).

> "We saw two young heads rise above it. They laughed. They spoke. If Mac

> Gillicuddy caught the words, I did not; but he raced from the room as if struck by a whip. I leaped after him. I flew down the stairs. He banged through the glass doors. I opened them. I saw him making headlong for the car. The two heads turned towards him. Then down they went. He leaped at the car, crying out — I know not what. A succession of revolver shots rang out, seemed to fly everywhere. Then the car blew a cloud of smoke and moved. He was all limbs, right in front of it. I could see nothing for a moment only a lifting cloud. Then in, beneath, that little cloud I saw a figure crawling slowly on all fours, like a beast, stupidly, heavily — a most ridiculous posture. It only went a little way, when down it flopped, kissing the ground. And all the time the car circled the square. It swerved to escape the bundle that now lay in its path, and then shot swiftly out of sight by the side street it had entered from. There, in the middle of the moonlight, lay Mac Gillicuddy, dead, with his secrets. (149-150)

While the narrator flew down the stairs in what would prove to be yet another vain attempt to save Mac Gillicuddy, he seems to have stopped flying, if not come to a complete halt, by the time he gets to the glass doors. Was he afraid of the revolver shots ringing out from everywhere? Yet, he did not duck his head. He is able to give us a detailed account of his friend's assault on the armored car and subsequent degeneration from a human to a beastlike creature to a pathetic dead bundle (150). "No, you were just beyond help," Pilenz says to the absent Mahlke (Grass 69). However, these words might just as easily be addressed retrospectively by Corkery's narrator to the deceased Colonel Mac Gillicuddy. His lame efforts to "rescue" the Colonel seem more an excuse to say as much than a genuine effort to help his friend.

Even before the narrator rushes to Kerry, his support of his friend is suspiciously minimal: "I was really glad when, at two in the morning, he rose to go. I felt I should accompany him, for his ardour of mind was such that he might easily go astray or walk into the river, yet this I could not bring myself to do: he had exhausted my powers" (139). The narrator subsequently, rushes to Kerry out of worry for his friend, yet on this particular night, assessing the Colonel to be capable of walking into a river, he is too exhausted to accompany him home. Thus, it is my contention that while the narrator may appear to esteem Colonel Mac Gillicuddy by highlighting his heroic war record, by obsessing about his welfare, and by considering his story worth telling, in a similar vein to Pilenz in *Cat and Mouse*, the narrator also engages in acts of neglect and passive aggression towards his friend. In keeping with Freudenburg's argument, while the Colonel does represent an

autonomous version of hero which is admired, he is also an object of aggression (50).

A Mixing of Identities

Although the narrator at times appears to be taking pains to highlight the differences between himself and the friend, the process of the elimination of the other may also manifest itself in a mixing of the roles of esteemed friend and humble narrator (Freudenburg 51). Freudenburg draws on Rimmon-Kenan's analysis of *Cat and Mouse* to demonstrate how Pilenz and Mahlke's identities seem at times to be interchangeable: "… cat-and mouse can be understood as an emblem for each of them, for they both seem to thrive on pursuit and on playing the role of the victimized victimizer" (149).[1] Meanwhile, Freudenburg emphasizes how, paradoxically, Pilenz seems empowered when war hero, Mahlke deserts and has hit rock bottom: "Let us all three celebrate the sacrament, once more and forever: You kneel, I *[Pilenz]* stand behind dry skin. Sweat distends your pores" (Grass 114). She expands as follows:

> During the communion scene, Mahlke is at his lowest point, and Pilenz is quite aware of the fact that he somehow thrives on the warrior's defeats because these offer him a chance to "help," or simply feel superior. … In other words, Pilenz thrives on knowing his friend's guilt, his weakness, because this gives him power over the friend. (Freudenburg 145)

Like Pilenz, the narrator in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" also seems peculiarly assertive and self-assured when Colonel Mac Gillicuddy, hero of the Somme, is at his most vulnerable:

> With confidence I bent my eyes on the bed. He was whining, squealing like a young puppy in its first illness; but I didn't mind; I could cure him! Now he was still, quite still, seeming as if he were listening to things far away—that sense of strain, I noticed, never once went from him, asleep or awake. (144)

However, in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" a similar mixing of identities is also at play when it comes to the issue of mental health. The narrator while concerned with his friend's mental stability often seems barely mentally sound himself. Take for example his initial reunion with the war-weathered Colonel:

I could feel that he had somehow come on new standards and that he was now

1 Ruth V. Gross stresses Pilenz more than Mahlke in the role of cat and stalker (637).

judging the world by them; at such times I would halt midway in a sentence, hoping he would not guess the conclusion I had intended! And often, until his whole face looked distorted, his right eyebrow would climb up his forehead, slowly, slowly; and the eye itself, so exposed, would then glare mercilessly into one's very brain! His very appearance disturbed me deeply. (139)

The narrator's reaction to the changed Colonel would seem more becoming an E.T.A. Hoffmann horror story.[1] One could be forgiven for wondering whether the narrator might not be the one becoming mentally unhinged. When the Colonel leaves at two in the morning, the narrator seems barely in control of his own mental stability: "… I kept my eyes in the clutch of my left hand… After a long spell of this artificially nurtured coma, as it were, I sprang up suddenly, caught up Tate's book on Kitchener and hurled it into the fire, for an insidious, morbid craving to dip again into its horrors had begun to form itself in my quietening spirit" (140).[2] Understandably, the Colonel may have been mentally unhinged by his war experiences at the Somme, etc. However, the narrator while repelled by his own desire to continue reading Tate's book, would seem mentally unfit to cope with even looking at the battle-seasoned Colonel. His description of the sea-fowl crying in the distance on the night Colonel Mac Gillicuddy enters his room in Kerry is also peculiar. At first he says: "Yet the only sounds to be heard from outside were some sea-fowl quarrelling above a school of sprats (as I took it) in the mouth of the bay—sharp cries or melancholy, long-drawn and wailing. Was it these cries that were playing havoc with him [*the Colonel*]?" (143). He appears to be questioning whether mere sea-fowl quarrelling could have triggered the Colonel's unstable mental state. However, in the same breath, he betrays the susceptibility of his own peace of mind to the same bird sounds: "I felt my own ears greedily gathering them in, I felt myself yielding to them, I found them taking on some strange hurry and wildness. Bah! I shook myself" (143). Thus, a subtle mixing of the identities of narrator and Colonel is detectible. The narrator, while concerned for his friend's mental health, seems, at times, barely in command of his own.

Madness

1 See: Maria M. Tatar's "Mesmerism, Madness, and Death in E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Der goldne Topf"" in *Studies in Romanticism* 14.4 (Boston: Boston University, Fall 1975), 365-389.

2 The identities of both narrator and Colonel Mac Gillicuddy are also similar in so far as both seem to be academics of a sort; in his initial short note to the author, the Colonel mentions that he will spend three more weeks in Drogheda "studying on the spot the details of Cromwell's massacre in that town!"(111). Meanwhile, the narrator has been reading Mügge's *Life of* Nietzsche and wastes no time on starting Tate's book on Kitchener in Africa at the Colonel's recommendation (111).

Gerry Smyth argues that the violence of colonialism and decolonization is one of the major reasons for the reoccurrence of madness as a theme in Irish fiction. According to Smyth, the decolonizing subject, should he attempt to resist the colonial logic of the Manichean allegory[1] or mimesis, becomes in danger of alienation and may slip into a madness which only cements the opposition between (rational) colonizer and (irrational) colonized. Smyth calls on both the arguments of Ashis Nandy[2] and Franz Fanon to emphasize 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.[3] While Smyth's thesis may offer an interesting interpretation of the narrator's mentally unstable portrayal of Colonel Mac Gillicuddy, it is my contention that the Colonel is not as mentally unhinged as the narrator might wish. It is the narrator, quaking at the sight of both British troops and Sinn Féiners alike (145-146), with the more complex psychological baggage to sort. On the stage of Ireland, 1919, both the narrator and Colonel Mac Gillicuddy are subjects in the process of decolonizing. In light of his Irish Mac Gillicuddy ancestors, the Colonel could be interpreted as having been playing a mimetic role; he has served as loyal mimic-man supporter of the Empire, perhaps in the wake of generations of his ancestors. However, now as the colonial stability of Empire quakes beneath him, his colonial blinkers come off and he is awake to the horrors the colonizer has and is visiting on others along with his own people. Consequently, he attempts to join Sinn Féin. This would seem a logical enough development, given his experiences in the wider Empire. Such logic, however, escapes the narrator. He interprets the Colonel's attempts to contact Sinn Féin not as bravery or heroism but lunacy. The Colonel's running at the armored

1 Abdul R. JanMohamed argues that the dominant model of power relations in colonial communities is the Manichean opposition between the superiority of the European and the supposed inferiority of the native. See: "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature." *Race, Writing and Difference*. Ed. Louis Young Gates (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), 84.

2 In *The Intimate Enemy* Ashis Nandy describes colonialism as a psychological state rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both colonized and colonizer. He maintains that in the colonial culture, "identification with the aggressor bound the rulers along with the ruled in an unbreakable binary relationship" (7).

3 Gerry Smyth. *The Novel and the Nation* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), 48-50.

vehicle is not an act of heroism but madness.[1] Where another might have seen a hero sacrificing himself in a final act of resistance against the oppressor, the narrator sees "a figure crawling slowly on all fours, like a beast" (149). In line with Smyth, it is my contention that the narrator's own entrapment within the colonialist logic of self and Other causes him to interpret as lunacy the Colonel's attempt to throw his lot in with Sinn Féin. This entrapment likewise explains his delusional opinion that on the death of his friend his own life will soon flow into its usual channels (136).

Conclusion

According to Freudenburg, the central textual ambiguity in *Cat and Mouse* not only deconstructs the myth of the singular hero but also generates interpretations which replicate it (130). Can the same be said of Corkery's "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …"? Like other narrators of Post World War II German friendship literature, Pilenz, in telling the story of Mahlke, is really demonstrating "nostalgia for what has died, for the whole, meaningful, monumental friend" (Freudenburg 177). Unable to make the transition to a postfascist mentality, right up to the end, Pilenz is still trying "to find and present to the reader his monumental friend" (177). The textual ambiguity in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" follows a similar, if more subtle, vein to that of the ambiguity in *Cat and Mouse.* Julia Eichenberg in her article "Paramilitary Violence in Ireland and Poland after the First World War" emphasizes how the War of Independence in Ireland was fought "not only against the officials, but also against anyone connected to them; wives and families became the objects of threats and attacks. People were often suspected of treason, of passing on information, of betraying their home country just as it was finally about to become independent" (237). Could such a background have instigated Corkery to deconstruct the myth

1 According to Foucault, the production of discourse in every society is controlled, selected, organized, and circulated according to procedures whose function it is to avert the powers and dangers of discourse. That is to say, societal structures tend to nurture a discourse which maintains the status quo while curbing any discourse that threatens it. Consequently, the dominant discourses in society may fringe discourses which they cannot assimilate into the category of madness (51-53). In light of this theory, the narrator's interpretation of Mac Gillicuddy's interest in supporting Sinn Féin as madness could be read as a sign that within the dominating societal discourse of the time, it was inconceivable that a Colonel in the British army (even one with Irish ancestors) would do so. Foucault also points out that the madman's speech may have the power of uttering a hidden truth, or of perceiving in naivety, what another in wisdom cannot see (51-53). Mac Gillicuddy throwing his lot in behind Sinn Féin on his arrival home into a revolutionary climate is far from illogical or indeed unprecedented. The narrator's description of the Colonel as mentally unsound could thus be seen as an attempt to corral an unpopular discourse into the category of madness.

of heroic friend in "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …"?[1] The parallels here outlined between "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" and *Cat and Mouse* indicate a literary argument for such a possibility. While I agree with George Brandon Saul that there is "a suggestion of strain in the writing" (120), to say the story might be "too didactic to work successfully" (Delaney 102) is to deny the possibility of an ironic interpretation. Freudenburg describes a post-Freudian text as one that forces us "to look skeptically at the trust placed in interpretation" (75). "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" certainly requires this of us. "Readers tend to bring their areas of expertise to the text without seeing the limitations these expectations place upon the narrative" (Freudenburg 74). Thus, while for George Brandon Saul "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" might be "interesting enough as a memorialization of guerilla activities" (120), for me the story is one example in Irish literature of friendship portrayed as the doomed battleground upon which the struggle for the desired identity of hero is lost.

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1 In speaking of *The Hounds of Banba* in which "Colonel Mac Gillicuddy …" first appeared, Patricia Hutchins notes: "Throughout these stories there runs the pity of the man who can understand the motives behind violence but can never be wholly with it" ("Daniel Corkery, Poet of Weather and Place" 44).

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Alice Walker Defies Mainstream History: *Meridian* and Historiographic Metafiction

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Abstract The present paper seeks to apply Linda Hutcheon's theory of historiographic metafiction to *Meridian* (1967) by Alice Walker. Hutcheon coined the term historiographic metafiction to refer to the tendency of literary texts to combine literature with history in order to highlight the literariness of history and the historicity of literature. Alice Walker, in her *Meridian*, yokes the idea of identity crisis to the crisis in grand narratives of history. Walker's novel adds the dimension of race to the aforementioned crisis and demonstrates how race is also an artificial narrative knitted into the texture of mainstream history. The fact that an African American novelist writes about the oppression of a female protagonist who has to endure the atrocities of a patriarchal world is the final aspect by means of which the fictionality of history is laid bare. In other words, feminine narratives in a patriarchal discourse serve as alternate possibilities to the orthodox history.

Keywords Narrative; Historicity; Postmodernism; Patriarchal Discourse; Linda Hutcheon

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Introduction

In *Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon defines historiographic metafiction as "those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 5). Historiographic metafiction, therefore, draws attention to its own artificiality. Hutcheon continues to note the narrative that goes into the making of historiographic metafiction incorporates literature or literary narrative, history or historical narrative and theory or theoretical narrative. Hutcheon refuses to use the term postmodernism for contemporary metafiction because, she believes, it is too inclusive (*Narcissistic Narrative* 3). Her defense of the specifically literary aspect of postmodernism is expressed mainly through technical discussions of postmodern novels, one instance of which she calls historiographic metafiction.

Historiographic metafiction uses theory to comment on history. At the same time, the narrative aspect of both history and theory are highlighted. It moves on the line that divides the three modes of expression and partakes of all. It adopts the conventions used either by history, theory or literature for two purposes: on the one hand, it aims to reproduce them in order to create a structure narrative; on the other hand, it sets out to disclose the artificiality of that mode of expression and dismantle it. That is why historiographic metafiction borrows from literature, theory and history without being a subcategory of any of the three. It is not literature in that it uses actual historical data and theoretical commentary. It is not theory in that it explicitly uses narrative elements within it. It is not history since it blurs the distinction between historical fact and fiction. Historiographic metafiction manages to "problematize both the nature of the referent and its relation to the real, historical world by its paradoxical combination of metafictional self-reflexivity with historical subject matter" (Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* 19). Historiographic metafiction serves the purposes of postmodernism. It seeks to propagate the standards of relativity and tolerance in the realm of culture and history. Historiographic metafiction deals with different truths, all of which it accepts in favor of a plurality of worlds and words:

> It does not so much deny as contest the "truths" of reality and fiction—the human constructs by which we manage to live in our world. Fiction does not mirror reality; nor does it reproduce it. It cannot. There is no pretense of simplistic mimesis in historiographic metafiction. Instead, fiction is offered as another of the discourses by which we construct our versions of reality,

> and both the construction and the need for it are what are foregrounded in the postmodernist novel. (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 40)

To deny certain truths means to have other truths at hand to which postmodernism might resort. However, it is the very notion of one truth that postmodernism seeks to refute. Therefore, the truth offered by conventional history is not denied. It is problematized through offering a series of other truths that might be true under other circumstances and conditions. Fiction does not claim to 'mirror' the ultimate reality that theory pretends to have access to. Instead, it offers numerous realities that are conditional and relative. Historiographic metafiction does not claim to offer the final judgment about everything, yet it does intend to appear one, among many, of possible interpretations of reality and truth. It foregrounds its own discursive nature through showing to the reader how it has been constructed, what materials it has used and what purposes it seeks to achieve. To put it in a nutshell, historiographic metafiction shows how novels occur and is interested in foregrounding the process, while at the same time it "remains fundamentally contradictory, offering only questions, never final answers" (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 43). Hence, historiographic metafiction questions the strictly defined borders between fiction and history not so as to privilege one over the other, but "in order to reveal both the limits and powers of historical knowledge" (223).

Metafictional novel has been criticized as being removed from life. Jameson and other critics believe that what they call the postmodern novel, fails to reflect the concerns and complications of real life, instead busying itself with textual complexities and insubstantial ideas that are specific to a late capitalist culture. Hutcheon argues, instead, that metafiction represents a different kind of reality, one that has recently emerged. This new postmodern kind of reality requires, therefore, a new medium, form and content in order to be expressed. This type of narrative "is sterile, that it has nothing to do with 'life.' The implied reduction of 'life' to a mere product level that ignores process is what this book aims to counteract" (Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative* 5). The postmodern era has distanced itself from mere concern with the final product (realism) and has become oriented toward the process by means of which a product is created. This process, which accounts for the self-reflexivity of metafictional novels, has two main focuses: "the first is on its linguistic and narrative structures, and the second is on the role of the reader" (6).

The first focus—concerned with narrative and language—is achieved through the metafictional aspect of the novel. The novel highlights the fact that it has been fashioned through the medium of words and that it enjoys the facilitating effects

of a narrative structure. The second focus—awareness of the reader—is achieved through contents that highlight the either the role of the reader in completing the fictional world, or the artificiality of the world and the discourses surrounding the reader. The most extreme form of such metafictional structure is "an explicit thematization—through plot allegory, narrative metaphor, or even narratorial commentary" (Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative* 23). In other words, the novel overtly directs reader's attention toward the process of its own creation. This attempt at shattering the long-held beliefs about narrative structure and offering new formal and thematic elements is not totally new though.

Patricia Waugh uses the linguistic terminology of Saussure in order to discuss the metafictional novel. According to Waugh, "each metafictional novel self-consciously sets its individual parole against the langue (the codes and conventions) of the novel tradition" (11). This definition is significant in that it does not exclude metafiction from the spectrum of fiction and novel, but considers it at a continuation, an offshoot or a reworking of traditional novelistic material into something new that reflects recent social, political and economic concerns. She goes so much as to call metafiction "not so much a subgenre of the novel as a tendency within the novel which operates through exaggeration of the tensions and oppositions inherent in all novels: of frame and frame-break, of technique and counter-technique, of construction and deconstruction of illusion" (Waugh 14). In other words, metafiction does not coin new terms, techniques and methods, but takes the previously used techniques and re-appropriates them for the world of postmodernism.

Meridian and the Postmodern Historiography

The present article investigates the novel *Meridian* (1976) by Alice Walker in the context of historiographic metafiction. Although the paper does not seek to be a biographical analysis of Walker, an approach that takes certain highlights of her life into account can reveal the specific meaning of words such as history and literature at the time of writing the novel. Moreover, it emphasizes how Walker passed through the veneer of traditional definitions of such concepts before redefining them. The two most important elements that have long influenced her understanding of the phenomena around her are her gender and her race. Being marginalized on account of these two, she gains access to an outsider's perspective on official history and literature. Second, the relation between her other works/ theories and the revision of history can yield a fresh outlook upon the concept. Womanism, a term coined by Walker to refer to her specific brand of feminism, illustrates her struggle to challenge the oppressions of bother racism and sexism.

Alice Walker's Second Sight

Alice Walker's childhood and certain life events provided her with the double consciousness in an American context which yields one "no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world" (Du Bois 8). Du Bois maintains that in such an environment "one ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (8).

Walker's position within the aforementioned context can serve two constructive purposes for her despite its undeniable painful and destructive effects: on the one hand, it offers her the outsider position through which she can revise the inherited narratives of history through her novels and arrive recount what has been silenced and left unsaid by official history. On the other hand, and on a related note, she gains access to creativity through her newly found outsider's position and is able to express the unsaid in influential ways. The idea of womanism, which results from both positions, is the notion that radicalizes Walker's fiction and bestows upon them a revisionary perspective on history.

Womanism

In *The World Has Changed: Conversations with Alice Walker* (2011), Walker maintains that womanism is first of all "feminist, but it is feminist from a culture of color. So there's no attempt to evade the name 'feminism,' which is honorable" (260). Walker added that she has inherited the term from her African American culture "because when you did something really bold and outrageous and audacious as a little girl, our parents would say, 'You're acting womanish'" (260). As a result, and opposed to the white culture, "womanism affirms that whole spectrum of being which includes being outrageous and angry and standing up for yourself, and speaking your word and all of that" (260).

Womanism, in other words, is an attempt to correct the essentialist aspects of feminism as a discourse traditionally voicing the problems of white, middle class, European women. A womanist analysis takes into account all the ways through which women of color live, communicates, create and interact with the world. Womanism seeks to dwell upon the positive ways through which women and men contribute to a healthy society. It also concentrates on the oppressions women struggle against.

This paper uses the term womanism as an anti-foundational aspect of feminism.

In other words, it aims at investigating the correlation between *Meridian*, a novel that "weaves together civil rights, feminist, and religion-and-literature discourses" (Wingard 98), and history by focusing both on the idea of metafiction and through detecting womanism as the element which enables the writer to offer an alternative version of history. Womanism here is against feminism in two senses: first, unlike the word feminism which (as Walker makes clear) comes from a French root, Womanism openly uses the word "woman" as its title. This both shatters the taboo of bringing women before public eyes and disrupts the technical aura implicit in the word feminism which can alienate illiterate, marginalized women. Clenora Hudson-Weems discusses another aspect of the difference between womanism and feminism by noting the ambiguous nature of the latter: "The term 'woman', and by extension 'womanism,' is far more appropriate than 'female' ('feminism') because of one major distinction—only a female of the human race can be a woman. 'Female', on the other hand, can refer to a member of the animal or plant kingdom as well as to a member of the human race" (cited in Phillips 46).

Womanism is, thus, more capable of offering a more fluid definition of women of color. As Paula Gunn Allen says about American Indian culture, "American Indians are not merely doomed victims of western imperialism or progress; they are also the carriers of the dream that most activist movements in the Americas claim to be seeking" (17). Similar to American Indian culture, African American culture is more than a tragic history of slavery and domination. Meridian, which Walker would later on call a womanist novel, "combines the black consciousness and feminist consciousness that grew out of the Civil Rights Movement" (Hendrickson 113).

History/ Literature in Walker's Novels

Memory and history have a liberating *emotional affect* attached to them that is heightened in the process of writing. However, one should be aware of the sense that history is used by Alice Walker in her writings. Walker adopts a large-scale view of history, in the sense that her version is not one of specific facts and events related to specific periods and epochs. Her history, as she asserts, is a general record of past experience, from the most ancient times to the present; from the most personal concerns to the most public ones:

> You have to take the very long view of history. If, in fact, the first people were Africans, if all of us are Africans, and if, in fact, worship is innate, and if, in fact, the ancient people were just as clever as the modern people, and if, in fact, you can say the woman's body, in the way that it gives birth and replenishes

> people, is a sort of symbolic earth in that the earth also gives birth and peoples the world with trees and flowers—they're connected, I think, in the psyche, in the ancient psyche. (Walker, *The World Has Changed* 383)

Walker's ancient, archetypal psyche highly resembles Jung's collective unconscious. In this sense, we can argue that what happens to a black, female protagonist in one of Walker's novels is on a par with what has happened to the archetypal black female all through the centuries, from the most ancient civilization of Egypt to modern Africa. Walker's version of history is synonymous with 'the ancient psyche' of the black race, which keeps manifesting itself via several forms in civilization. There is yet another difference between Walker's history and mainstream history.

While mainstream history consists of the official record of what has happened to the victorious throughout the ages and omits the voice of the underdog, the history that is told through the pages of Walker's novels is the unofficial account of the voiceless whose narrative has so far been left untold. *Meridian* opens with a quotation from *Black Elk Speaks* that highlights the importance of untold history: "I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now… I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young" (1). Anne M. Downey contends that one of the defining aspects of the intertextual relation between the two works is the "image of a history being murdered" (44).

The voice speaks about looking back on the past that has formerly been unavailable to him (I did not know then how much was ended) and finds new significance in it. History, in this sense, consists of re-encountering events that has befallen one and regarding them through the new light of the knowledge of the present. The history that goes into the making of *Meridian* is of this kind. The writer adopts the history of a certain period with the intention of shedding light in the marginalized aspects of that period. It tells the story (or the stories) of a revolutionary period through a novel perspective: neither that of the official culture and government which opposed the revolutionary tendencies of the nonconformists, nor the mainstream revolutionaries who had adopted the policy of total antagonism toward the existing order. Her account is that of a black woman that is twice marginalized and banished. On the one hand, she is rejected by the official society because she belongs to the revolutionary ideology, and on the other hand she does not fit into the ideology of the freedom fighters. Here is another spot where Walker's womanist perspective finds voice and outlet through the character of Meridian.

Walker offers a series of definitions for the word Meridian that are divided into

nouns and adjectives. Among the numerous definitions offered, what is most fitting to the protagonist of the novel is the concept of loftiness and high altitude (both figurative and literal) that is common to most of the definitions. *Meridian*, represents the radical, ambitious character of Meridian Hill that moves against the grain of any mainstream trend. This radical quality along with the outsider position of Meridian turns her into a defragmented subject with a split identity.

The Split Identity: Alice Walker and Defragmentation of History

It is noteworthy that the notion of the fragmented self and the split identity enters Walker's writings through her personal, direct encounter with the world. Melanie L. Harris maintains that Walker's endless quest in the world of fiction as well as in the real world is a reflection of her inner search for a unified, whole self: "Walker explains that her constant search for wholeness as an adult is directly tied to the sense of fragmentation that she experienced as a child. Answering her mother's question about why she so often travels back to the South, after having explored different parts of the world, and what exactly she is looking for, Walker replies, 'a wholeness'" (61).

Here again, the remarkable role of history and past experiences in shaping the present is highlighted. Fed up with conventional interpretations of historical events and disappointed with failed sporadic attempts to offer a comprehensive view of the past, Walker seeks to write her way out of a fragmented world. The 'holeness' she is looking for is not found, of course, which is why the search never stops. The gap that she finds in the inherited tradition ("history, literature and people" (61)) needs to be filled with the silenced voices of people who are able to come up with alternative, liberating versions of history. This is what Walker attempts to carry out through her characters, plot structure and themes. Harris maintains that "Walker demonstrates her awareness of how racist ideology renders the history and stories of black people invisible (63).

The history that has been rendered 'invisible' comes to the fore in Walker's writings and turns into the reliable account that has the capacity to turn down the formerly acceptable accounts. A writer, in Walker's opinion, is one who is capable of identifying the unheard voices within the mainstream history through a totally human glance that can observe the narrative of those who have been forced to remain silent.

The narrative of *Meridian* focuses on the life of a marginal yet controversial character. Such a debatable theme is coupled with certain narrative and fictional techniques and figures that can disrupt traditional process of narration. Such

techniques, most of which associated with postmodernism, defamiliarize the genre as well as the process of literary comprehension, thereby allowing the reader to understand the perspective of the silenced more fully.

Meridian and Metafiction

It can be argued that Alice Walker's fiction is the account of the silenced voices throughout history. Her plots, consisting of marginalized characters and events, shed light on darker corners of history and enable the reader to see recorded, mainstream history from a new aspect. In other words, Walker sets out, consciously and intentionally, to create unconventional narratives that disrupts the taken-for-granted order of events and offer alternative versions of history. This does not happen by manipulating or changing the actual historical facts in any way, but via telling history from the point of view of those who have mainly been either victimized or neglected.

The writing style and the method that go into the making of a liberating narrative function on two levels: content and form. At the level of content, the novel's protagonist and the time period in which she has been situated are chosen in a way so as to underline the marginality and voicelessness of certain people and political inclinations. Meridian Hill, the protagonist of the novel, is alienated from her contemporary mainstream society in several ways. First, she is a black person in a white society. This works toward widening the gap between her and the society. Secondly, Meridian is a woman in a patriarchal, masculine society. In other words, Meridian has to absorb and accept the patriarchal ideology of her time that dictates her to accept her position as a minor member and be content with serving the men. Thirdly, and due to the previous two points, Meridian is even estranged from her own community since she leads a bohemian unconventional life. Finally, Meridian fails to be inducted into the field of the Civil Rights Movement since she refuses to attach her worldview to the pro-violence policies that are beginning to sprout especially toward women; instead, "her only rebellious recourse is silence" (Pifer 51).

In this final sense, Meridian Hill serves as a perfect example of Walker's womanist criteria. As Nah Dove asserts, "from antiquity, as spiritual, military, and political leaders, women's roles have been critical in the effort to take control of lands, resources, and energies from alien occupation. Not surprisingly, few scholars have brought this to light" (532). And *Meridian* is an attempt at offering a revised version of this history and rewriting it in a way that "points out that the Civil Rights Movement often reflected the oppressiveness of patriarchal capitalism" (Stein 130). Far from being a one-way indictment of the white society in favor of an angelic

black community, writers such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison also speak of how "the physical and mental abuse of African women is condoned not only by European women and men but also by African women and men" (Dove 534). The revisionary historiographic aspect of the novel gains significance in a protagonist who is marginalized and outcast from all communities around her. Such a position allows her not to fall into the trap of being enamored with any group or movement and instead gives her the capability to detect the shortcomings of the group with which she is affiliated.

On the level of form, *Meridian* achieves singularity and independence through resorting to techniques of postmodern literature and metafiction. Janelle Collins opines that "the nonlinear structure and fragmented narrative reflect and refract the multiple discourses which inform the novel" (161-162). The protagonist "is introduced to the reader as a focused personality at the end of her quest. The flashbacks that give the novel its particular rhythm show Meridian beginning her journey on the periphery of the road, attracted to the distractions, unaware of any pattern to her life" (Brown 21). Moreover, the novel defamiliarizes the genre of the novel and attracts the audience's attention toward the fictionality of the text they are reading. In other words, in an attempt to foreground the textual nature of official history (and consequently its lack of access to absolute truths), *Meridian* sets out to divulge its own artificiality.

One way by means of which *Meridian* distances itself from a conventional narrative and draws attention to its fictional nature is the way it constantly flouts the boundaries between genres and offers a unique version of various genres such as poetry, fiction and drama. At various stages throughout the novel, we are offered short poems that both serve as shedding light on the action of the characters and, in some cases, function as independent chapters by themselves. The following short poem that starts a chapter called "the driven snow" recapitulates what the chapter narrates through prose in a poetic manner: "We are chaste and pure as/ The driven snow./ We watch our manners, speech/ And dress just so:/ And in our hearts we carry our/ Greatest fame/ That we are blessed to perpetuate/ The Saxon name! (Walker 89).

The chapter begins with how Meridian finds a discrepancy between the pureness and beauty of Saxon and the ugliness and sin that she hides in her heart. Yet as she becomes more and more familiar with her new life and surroundings she realizes that the contrast she had found earlier is, in fact, a harmony. The poem begins with an assertion that 'we' are as innocent as snow. The next two lines ironically question the innocence of the first two lines. In other words, they

highlight how voices of the poem have to 'watch' their appearance and align it with their inner purity. Their chastity is dependent upon their appearance that has to be monitored carefully. The fifth and the sixth lines further underline the discrepancy that might exist between the appearance and the heart. The poem ends with 'the Saxon name'. The reader is led to believe that it is a name worthy of maintaining and upholding. However, the hints at contrasts that exist between the appearance and inner heart are brought into the open through the chapter: "Meridian, the former wife and mother, already felt herself to be flying false colors as an 'innocent' Saxon student. The scenes she personally witnessed in the Atlanta streets, combined with this, caused the majority of her waking moments to seem fragmented, surreal" (92).

What Meridian had perceived as a contrast between her guilty self and the innocent atmosphere surrounding her was not contradictory at all. Atlanta streets are just as mean, depraved and guilt-ridden as Meridian believes herself to be. On a deeper level, the contrast is reasserted. This time, however, Meridian and Saxon change places. While Meridian's conscience is moral enough to make her feel guilty, the community where she has entered is characterized by no such thing as conscience. Poems that appear at several places throughout the novel reiterate the narrative told through the prose, yet give it a second, deeper level which is characterized by poetical defamiliarization. This serves to distance the novel from a merely conventional, realistic rendering of a series of events and turns it into a combination of different texts, genres and modes of writing.

Another formal feature that serves to blur the generic boundaries is that in some parts of the novel, the text resembles more and more that of a play. One point that directs us to this conclusion is the fact that dialogues abound in the novel. A large portion of the process of characterization and plot development occurs through dialogues between characters. Dialogues in themselves cannot adequately disrupt one genre in favor of another. Therefore, extra factors are needed in order to prove that the genre of the novel has been disrupted through adoption of dramatic techniques and conventions. In *Meridian,* certain parts closely resemble stage description common in dramatic works:

> *Lynne:* She is sitting on the porch steps of a battered wooden house and black children all around her. They look, from a distance, like a gigantic flower with revolving human petals. Lynne is the center. Nearer to them Truman notices the children are taking turns combing her hair. Her hair—to them lovely because it is easy to comb—shines, held up behind by black and brown hands as if it is a train. (127)

While the present tense, along with the matter of fact manner of describing the scene, serves to turn the paragraph into a dramatic stage description, there are elements that do not allow a new genre to take over a previous one. Here, for instance, some of the descriptions are highly poetic (like a gigantic flower with revolving human petals), unlike what is normally found in stage descriptions of plays. Certain other sentences (the part on Truman or children's feelings when watching Lynne) offer information unavailable to the objective glance in a stage description.

Intertextuality, defined by Julia Kristeva as "the transposition of one or more systems of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position" (15), is another feature of *Meridian* that gives it a postmodern, metafictional aspect. The mixture of different systems of signs occurs first through the combination of various genres (as discussed above) and, secondly, through the combination of various texts. One example is the chapter called "The Recurring Dream" which begins in a manner that reminds one of is reminiscent of the famous public speech, "I have a dream", which was given by Martin Luther King, Jr. that called for terminating racism in the United States. The beginning of the chapter is metafictional since it foregrounds the process and the act of writing and creating fiction: "She dreamed that she was a character in a novel and that her existence presented an insoluble problem, one that would be solved only by her death at the end" (Walker, *Meridian* 115). This beginning short paragraph, which is repeated three times, reminds one of Luther King's speech where several paragraphs begins with the phrase "I have a dream". This rhetorical device which is called Anaphora is used to attach emphasis to a certain concept, sentence or structure. In *Meridian*, however, it has been used to direct attention toward the application of such a technique and structure in another important text about freedom and racism. Reference to the process of reading and writing novels and fiction is again found after the three identical paragraphs, when the audience is informed that "even when she gave up reading novels that encouraged such a solution—and Nearly all of the them did—the dream did not cease" (115). Here again, we can detect a remote intertextual reference to Emma Bovary and her reading of novels. Several other instances of intertextuality can be found in the novel. In fact, one of the factors that turn the novel into a metafiction is the abundance of such references that serve to undermine the authority found in and expected of classic, realistic novels. Here, we encounter a text that is greatly dependent upon the cultural, political, historical and ideological context from which it has sprung. Another chapter called "Truman

Held" consists only of a poem by Anna Akhmatova, the famous Russian poet:

> The Last Toast
> I drink to our ruined house,
> To the dolor of my life,
> To our loneliness together:
> And to you I raise my glass,
> To lying lips that have betrayed us,
> To dead-cold, pitiless eyes,
> And to the hard realities:
> That the world is brutal and coarse,
> That God in fact has not saved us. (Walker, *Meridian* 125)

Another factor that undermines the conventions of realism and turns the novel into a meta-text is the fragmentary nature of several chapters. The plot of the novel is far from being a direct rendering of its story. Instead, the reader is presented with numerous digressions that shed light on the history of the times and provide glimpses into the lives of minor characters and offer descriptions of locations that have played significant roles in central historical upheavals. The chapter called "Gold", for instance, highlights the conventional nature of the value system that governs the society. Beginning with an account of how Meridian, as a child, finds a piece of precious metal, the chapter goes on to show how what is considered unimaginably priceless in one culture, may turn out to be of little or no value in another. The chunk of gold is covered with dirt to the extent that its shiny surface cannot be detected at the beginning. The piece of gold is, therefore, found in a state of neglect. Meridian cleans the piece of gold and shows it to her family:

> But her mother was not impressed. Neither was her father or her brothers. She took her bar of gold and filed all the rust off it until it shone like a huge tooth. She put it in a shoe box and buried it under the magnolia tree that grew in the yard. About once a week she dug it up to look at it. Then she dug it up less and less… until finally she forgot to dig it up. Her mind turned to other things. (Walker 43)

The conventionality of social norms and criteria is revealed in this short chapter. Gold is not precious in itself, but it is regarded as valuable only because people treat it as so. When Meridian realizes that her family does not care about the gold and

does not attach any significance to it, she begins to treat it as something worthless and finally "her mind turned to other things."

One final factor that turns the novel into a metafictional rendering of the historical period of the Civil Rights Movement is the criticism of media and the discrepancy between reality and fiction. In *Meridian*, Walker "enacts a literary analysis of the *interaction* between the media and the public as dramatized through the character of Meridian Hill" (Barker 134). On several occasions during the novel, the reliability and centrality of official media is pitted against the minor narratives of marginal characters who reject their authority. In a brilliant criticism of conventional and traditional outlooks upon women, the novel shows how media actually reproduce such beliefs and ideas rather than attempting to undermine and reject them:

> She read *Seppia, Tan, True Confessions, Real Romances* and *Jet*. According to these magazines, Woman was a mindless body, a sex creature, something to hang false hair and nails on. Still, they helped her know her marriage was breaking up. Yet the break, when it came, was not—as she had feared and sometimes hoped—cataclysmic. In fact, in a way she hardly noticed it. It did not come at once, with a heated argument, fighting, packing or slamming doors. It came in pieces, some larger or smaller than others. (Walker, *Meridian* 65)

The beginning of the excerpt shows how clichéd understanding of women is encouraged in mass media. Woman, far from being a complex human being with complex needs, is something "to hang false hair and nails on". The next sentence seems, initially, to reaffirm the reliability of mass medial after having rejected them as baseless and false. However, at a closer inspection, it becomes clear that the purpose of the sentence is not to confirm the validity of media, but to show their central role in and influence upon the lives of the masses. The next sentence sets out, again, to undermine the acceptability of media. Meridian whose idea of a divorce has been shaped and distorted by images given to her through media, realizes, through her own divorce, the discrepancy between reality and what the media shows to its audiences. While she expects slamming of doors, shouts and insults before the breakup occurs, she realizes that it resembles more a process than a sudden and violent revolution. Mainstream media exerts a powerful influence on the lives of people in the novel, nonetheless:

> Years ago when he was dating the white exchange students she had asked him, the words blurted out in so thick a shame he knew she intended to forget she'd ever asked—"But what do you *see* in them?"
>
> And he had replied cruelly, thoughtlessly, in a way designed to make her despise the confines of her own provincial mind:
>
> "They read The New York Times." (Walker, *Meridian* 141)

What the narrator calls 'the confines of her own provincial mind' is pitted against those who "read *The New York Times*." Meridian is compared, and compares herself, with more modern students who read fashionable newspapers and possess cosmopolitan minds. Yet the tone of the paragraph is highly derogatory which directs the reader toward the undertones of criticism toward the mass media.

Meridian and Revision of History

As mentioned earlier, Walker's fiction is a response to the exclusiveness of mainstream history that remove from the general picture the suffering and vicissitudes of the disadvantaged. According to Harris, Walker, "notes how racist ideology can be sewn into college and university curriculums simply by ignoring or not teaching the history, literature, and work of marginalized peoples, including writers of African descent" (65). Thus, racism is not restricted to taking military action against the people of color. Walker's discussion of universities is significant in this regard. As centers of knowledge that have the responsibility to propagate knowledge, universities are presumably the objective, impartial circulators of knowledge.

Yet in the process of implicitly attaching value to the white culture while ignoring the black one, they serve the purposes of racist ideology. What she calls 'true' history is not what is found with history books and records, but what can be found between the lines of folk songs, stories and anecdotes. The idea of superior knowledge is rejected on the basis that it neglects the achievements of women, blacks and any other group or community that is simply situated beyond the borders of the mainstream society. Therefore, Walker's own narratives turn into anti-histories that provide a more accurate account of history. The brilliance of *Meridian* is that it focuses the narration on a female black activist who is doubly banished from the society. In other words, Meridian Hill is a marginalized figure who is even banished from the margins to which she originally belongs. In an exchange between Meridian's mother and her father, Indians occupy center stage and turn into the topic of the conversation. Yet the reader sees how irreconcilable the ideas of two equally

marginalized people (Meridian's mother and father) on a single issue can be:

> "The Indians were living right here, in Georgia," said her father, "They had a town, an alphabet, a newspaper. They were going about their business, enjoying life… it was the same with them all over the country, and in Mexico, South America… doesn't this say anything to you?"
>
> "No," her mother would say.
>
> "And the women had babies and made pottery. And the men sewed moccasins and made drums out of hides and hollow logs."
>
> […]
>
> "It was a life, ruled by its own spirits."
>
> "That's what you claim, anyway."
>
> "And where is it now?"
>
> Her mother sighed, fanning herself with a fan from the funeral home. "I never worry myself about those things. There's such a thing as progress. I didn't invent it, but I'm not going to argue with it either. As far as I'm concerned those people and how they kept off mosquitoes hasn't got a thing to do with me." (Walker, *Meridian* 16)

Meridian's father attempts to show how impressive the Indian civilization was before it was eradicated by Europeans. He shows that the Indians had everything that has been considered as valuable by the western civilization, while they also had something more; a life 'ruled by its own spirits'. In other words, the father attempts to reject the absolute validity of western civilization at the same time as showing how equally valid can the civilization of the Indians be. When mentions the special spirit of the Indian civilization, he is hinting at how relative and flexible words such as civilization can be. He attempts to say that although the Indian civilization might have been different from the western, European civilization, it was nonetheless valid in its own right and deserved to be respected and realized.

Another factor that turns *Meridian* into a revisionary history is its constant allusion to historical characters and incidents. The characters and events that have been inserted in the text of the novel serve two purposes: first, they provide the necessary background for the action and motivation of the characters. Secondly, the sum of such historical references creates a second, deeper layer that turns the novel into a critical commentary on a history of injustice: "Why, Che Guevara," she said dreamily, then blinked her eyes. "Truman?" He had popped up too often in her life for her to be surprised. "You look like Che Guevara. Not," she began, and caught

her breath, "not by accident I'm sure." She was referring to his olive-brown skin, his black eyes, and the neatly trimmed beard and moustache he'd grown since the last time she saw him (Walker, *Meridian* 10).

When Meridian Hill finds similarities between Truman Held and Che Guevara, she is bestowing upon her certain roles that she expects him to live up to him. However, as the novel shows about every character, narrative line or historical fact, the gap between expectation and reality is too wide to be bridged.

The fragmentary nature of the novel that was described in the previous section appears here to, pursue a different purpose. A book that includes an official record of the history of any era is consistent and reliable and starts from point A and moves to point B in an order (usually chronological) that serve the purpose of making the discourse the writer advocates seem valid. The structure of *Meridian*, however, is far from consistent and direct. In the novel, the revolutionary era is depicted through a series of seemingly irrelevant chapters that describe certain events or characters. While they are unrelated to the main storyline on the surface, however, on a second deeper level, they represent the fate of the revolution and the revolutionary forces at the time. In other words, if these scattered characters and events are put together like the pieces of a giant puzzle, the result will be a huge panorama of narratives that have all been left out from the mainstream history books. The chapter called "The Wild Child" is one such example that ends as follows: "The next morning, while Meridian phoned schools for special children and then homes for unwed mothers—only to find there were none that would accept Wile Chile—The Wild Child escaped. Running heavily across a street, her stomach the largest part of her, she was hit by a speeder and killed" (Walker, *Meridian* 25).

Here, Wile Chile represents the third position the best representative of which is Meridian herself. "Schools for special children and […] homes for unwed mothers" (28) comprise the safe, closely defined margins that the official power structures have allowed to exist. Such places, however, does not accept Wile Chile whose nature is too revolutionary and ground-breaking to be included in them. The fate of Wile Chile is determined by her extremely radical nature. Similar to rare marginalized figures who did not feel at home in neither pole (neither the extreme belonging to the activists of the Civil Rights Movement nor the white America); Wile Chile has no choice but to be altogether eliminated from the scene. Her sin is that she cannot be defined by any criteria whatsoever. So she must be killed in order for the scene to continue undisturbed. *Meridian*, however, revises history by foregrounding exactly such characters who have been altogether removed from any account.

Conclusion

The present paper investigates the power of narrative in Alice Walker's *Meridian* to study its endeavor to unveil the truth hidden beneath historical facts. While history turns into an official account that silences or leaves out minor accounts in favor of the bigger picture, the kind of fiction Alice Walker writes—especially in *Meridian*—focuses on the minor cases and the omitted historical characters and events: "In her own country in West Africa she had been raised in a family whose sole responsibility was the weaving of intricate tales with which to entrap people who hoped to get away with murder" (31).

Just as the tales woven by native African had the power to 'entrap' the wrongdoers, the tale woven by Alice Walker in *Meridian* sets out to give voice to the real victims left out from the pages of mainstream history. As a revision of history, *Meridian* manages, both through the special use of postmodern and metafictional narrative techniques, and through an unprecedented encounter with historical material, to retell the history of a specific era that focuses on the silenced margins. As Lauren S. Cardon states in her study of the Jewish character Lynne Rabinowitz, *Meridian* is not limited to the concerns of the African American women, but it celebrates all the efforts by ethno-racial groups and movements who "publication, had initiated nationalist movements to advocate for civil rights, foster cultural awareness and pride, and resist dominant culture conformity" (159).

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Mumbo Jumbo as a Counter-Ideological Novel: An Anti-Althusserian Reading

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Abstract The relationship between literature and power structures has been at the center of attention and discussion. While Louis Althusser considers literature an ideological entity, Franz Fanon see its liberating force. Althusser's insertion of literature in "Ideological State Apparatuses" is in contrast to Fanon's "combat literature." This paper adopts Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* as a touchstone to evaluate the applicability of Althusser and Fanon's understanding of literature to an African American novel. This undertaking is also concerned with literary theory, using literature to discuss the applicability of literary theory. It applies Althusserian key terms to study *Mumbo Jumbo* and expose the historical, cultural and religious inconsistencies in Althusser's definitions. Since Althusser emphasizes that dominant powers inundate history with illusion to present a favored version of the past, this study reveals how Reed de-illusions history to present a distinctive African American one. Regarding culture, it discusses how Reed is self-conscious about literature as an ISA and how he through expositions changes his literature into an anti-ideological entity. Regarding religion, *Mumbo Jumbo* is full of expositions of white Christianity as a religious ISA in the hands of the dominant powers. Such investigations come to the conclusion that *Mumbo Jumbo* is more inclined to Fanon's "combat literature" than Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses. It is possible to apply Althusserian philosophy to paradoxically detect the inconsistencies in it. Moreover, it is possible to conclude that Althusser has an inclusive approach to literature and does not take particularities into consideration and that his classification

is not complete.

Key words *Mumbo Jumbo*; ideology; counter-ideology; state apparatuses; combat literature

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Introduction

When Althusser in *Lenin and Philosophy* (1968) classified literature as an "ideological state apparatus" (137), he incited various critical responses. As one of such forays, the present study aims at investigating such a labeling in overtly political writings as those of African American literature, with a focus on Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*.

Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* has a hybrid nature in which historical, social, and political elements are interspersed with fictional devices. The fact that Reed refers to such historical events as the United States' subjugation of Haiti, whites' attempted suppression of jazz music, and the ubiquitous conviction that president Warren Harding had a black lineage indicates the novelist's intention of going beyond merely writing a creative work. Also, because Reed includes PaPa LaBas in the novel as a figure who searches for black identity, the novel can be called a resisting entity against white hegemony.

Reed proves to be self-conscious about topical issues when makes connections between different epochs: "I wanted to write about a time like the present, or to use the past to prophesy about the future—a process that our ancestors called 'Necromancy.' I chose the 20's because [that period was] very similar to [what was] happening [in the late 1960s–early 1970s]" (qtd. in Werlock 934). Emphasizing Reed's solicitude for his time, Roxanne Harde remarks "*Mumbo Jumbo* is a tightly controlled allegory that draws from modernism its weapons, from postmodernism its tools, and negotiates, within the form, a hermeneutic of reverence for language's spiritual impulse" (Harde 362). W. Lawrence Hogue enumerates three strategies

adopted by Reed that contribute to cessation with tradition: first, "Reed violates the conventional reader's expectations by juxtaposing many texts and genres not traditionally associated with the novel"; second, "*Mumbo Jumbo* constantly challenges the reader through exaggeration, as a way of undermining the notion of an absolute truth"; and third, "an undermining of linearity" (94-95). All such comments reveal that Reed's novel can act as a proper touchstone for evaluating Althusser's insertion of literature as an ISA.

Mumbo Jumbo and the Question of History

Althusser has repeatedly referred to the workings of history in the hands of the ruling power. Like alluding to all "realities," when the ruling class alludes to history, it taints it with hints of "illusion" (Ferretter 79). Thus, what we receive as "history" is a construct made by the power discourse, removed from the harsh realities of societies. This fake and ideologically stricken narrative, which in Althusserian term is nothing but an ideology or an "Ideological State Apparatus," is frequently attacked by neo-Marxists like Althusser who try to rewrite history from other points of view. Such an attempt can be properly seen as an anti-ideology, an attempt clearly detectable in *Mumbo Jumbo*.

One of the most prominent reasons why Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* refuses not to be read as an ideological apparatus is its intention to rewrite history. In fact, the novelist seems to be conscious that the history that has been bequeathed is tainted with power-based illusions and disregards such marginalized people as African Americans. As a result, he tries to give a differently unique version of American history in his novel. This issue is well-observed by Reginald Martin who believes:

> Reed's point is that 'facts' from history are often fabricated or too biased or incredible to be believed. Fact overlaps with fiction, and only when the two are juxtaposed can one see the similarities. Further, as in the case with religion, one believes what one wants to believe, regardless of the facts. One man's fiction is another man's fact, and who is to say which is which and whose fact or fiction is more valid? (Martin 90)

Reed's consciousness of history is soon established by setting the novel in the 1920s, a very complex and controversial stage in American history: "1920. CHARLIE PARKER, THE houngan (a word derived from *n'gana gana*) for whom there was no master adept enough to award him the Asson, is born. 1920-1930. That 1 decade which doesn't seem so much a part of American history as the hidden After-Hours

of America struggling to jam. To get through" (17). This "1 decade" is a time of political struggle for power where ideological and anti-ideological discourses where simultaneously present. In such an upheaval, the novel communicates the idea that creative works, which are taken ideological by Althusser, is more influential for change than non-creatives ones: "the nursery rhyme and the book of Science Fiction might be more revolutionary than any number of tracts, pamphlets, manifestoes of the political realm" (18). The fact that Reed prefers fiction to non-fiction, including political writings, lies in his lack of confidence in all political parties, even those that seem to be favoring African Americans. According to Lee Hubbard,

Reed believes that these 'talented tenthers,' led by Harvard University Professor Henry Louis Gates, have set up a black Vichy regime. (The French Vichy government collaborated with the Nazis during World War II.) 'These blacks-Vichy-regime intellectuals don't and won't support black writers with viewpoints that differ from their own, such as black nationalist, multiculturalist and anyone who makes white people feel uneasy. It's time for African-American writers to end the slave-master relationship.' (27)

Contrary to Althusser, Reed seems to be believing that philosophical and political tracts do not lead us to real state of affairs and finally to black emancipation. Rather, they are apparatuses at the service of political, not public, ends. In Reed's view, it is literature that acts as a popular genre and as an agency for African American liberation. This belief led to a popular rewriting of American history at a time in 1920s when Warren Harding was the president of the United States. In addition to the abundant references to Harding, Reed points to the preceding and succeeding presidents, Woodrow Wilson and Calvin Coolidge.

President Harding is present in *Mumbo Jumbo* most probably because of his "total lack of racial prejudice in a highly intolerant era," because of being "devoid of racial or religious prejudices," and because of proposing "an anti-lynching bill and an interracial commission to recommend ways to improve race relations" (Anthony, qtd. in Bishop 20). Since "the White House urgently suppresses stories of President Harding's black ancestry" (Young 83), Reed's novel resurfaces the issue and sheds light on it. In an explicit allusion, the novel informs readers that "Race Riots Between Whites and Negroes. The Whole Reflecting an Unhappy Country when Harding Became Its President" (24). In fact, the novel tries to indicate that the "Race President" does nothing to uphold negro ideals of emancipation:

> I…I…How do you think that this Harding election will affect the Negroes, W.W.? Hinckle says in an attempt to change the subject.

> Why…it's funny that you should mention it, sir, they all call him the Race President. (96)

In his attempts at rewriting history, Reed insinuates the idea that the issue of race and the president associated with it is nothing but an ideological apparatus. Reed suggests that associating Harding with race is nothing but a specious attempt to interpellate negroes into American political ISA. This process of subjectification, through which individuals change into subjects, is a question that Reed asks in the novel: "when he was quoted as saying, 'The Negro should be the Negro and not an imitation White man,' what did he mean by that? Was that some kind of code he was giving to Blacks?" (181). Though occupying one of the most powerful positions in the world, the hybrid-race Harding turns out to be "merely a puppet president, his only acts of agency defined as black" (Harde 363). When Harding is finally assassinated by the Atonists, who finds his claims of race intolerable, in the course of "what has become known to historians as 'Harding's mysterious journey West'" (182), the whole majesty of American Presidency is questioned, because it turned out to be a position dominated by ulterior powers. The undermining of America's political system goes to the extent that the novel attacks Western political ISA and regards all the existing parties to be subservient to an absolutist power:

> We weren't only a political cause but a cause that went to the very heart of Western Civilization. You see, there are many types of Atonists. Politically they can be "Left," "Right," "Middle," but they are all together on the sacredness of Western Civilization and its mission. They merely disagree on the ways of sustaining it. If a radio show began touting the achievements of Western Civilization over civilizations of others there would barely be a letter to the station from anyone, anarchist or Calvin Coolidge Republican. (167)

Mumbo Jumbo suggests that such seemingly democratic parties as left and right are nothing but an ideological apparatus established and controlled by the state power. This keeps in line with Althusser's political ISA in which membership to these parties produces nothing but a spurious consent. In the words of Antony C. Sutton "[such] discussion and funding is always towards more state power, use of state power and away from individual rights" (Sutton 35). Thus, Reed informs readers that the seemingly political participation is not only a practice of individual rights, but also participation in the very process of state interpellation.

Mumbo Jumbo and the Cultural ISA

In addition to exposing the workings of history as an apparatus serving the ruling class, *Mumbo Jumbo* is highly self-conscious of the ideological workings of art. This attitude is soon established in the novel in the opening pages of the novel in a ground-breaking commentary by the narrator: "Europe can no longer guard the 'fetishes' of civilizations which were placed in the various Centers of Art Detention, located in New York City" (15). The use of the term "fetish" for art, which refers to the institutional workings of art for the dominant ideologies, insinuates Reed's attitude to the present state of the phenomenon in the contemporary world. Reed is quick in asserting that this matter has a history behind it, an assertion referred by some modern critics such as Walter Benjamin.

Benjamin argues that "the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual-first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of *art* with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function" (223-24). The "ritual function" Benjamin refers to is in fact equivalent to what Althusser sees as the material existence of ideology and its embodiment "in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (*Lenin and Philosophy* 112). It all its forms, the question that is important about art is to see what broader institution it serves: whether the ritual is at the service of nation or state. This question finds a historical answer in *Mumbo Jumbo*: "in Egypt at the time of Osiris every man was an artist and every artist a priest; it wasn't until later that Art became attached to the State to do with it what it pleased" (200). Reed informs his readers that in ancient civilizations art contained codes of ethics serving humanity, while later serving the ideological desires of the State. Reed later emphasizes that this plague began with the conversion of Europe into Christianity: "Dionysus taught the Greeks the Osirian Art which lasted until the Atonists in the late 4th century B.C. convinced the Emperor Constantine to co-sign for the Cross" (204).

Reed obviously interprets art as a materially ritualistic presence that serves religion, which by itself is an ISA in the hands of the State. This general view of art is specifically narrowed down to refer to the state of African American literature when Reed satirizes the "secret societies" which contains existing publishing houses that situate "Black writers [...] under literary colonialism" (Hubbard 27). In the eyes of Reed, literary colonialism is so important that it can be equalized with other sorts of incursion: "Well the White man came into China, exploited our lands, raped our women, plundered our art" (102). While Reed rebukes white exploitation of art, he also criticizes people's lack of taste for art:

> Have you ever seen people line up outside a Van Gogh exhibit? When they get inside there are so many they can't even see the paintings, they just pass by like sheep or like mourners passing the tomb of a fallen hero, a bier, with the same solemnity. And the extent of their knowledge concerning Van Gogh is that he "cut off his ear." Man, it's religion they make it into. (104-105)

Apparently, *Mumbo Jumbo* self-consciously refers to art as a cultural ISA and considers people as passive agents who keep the ideological functioning going. In addition, Reed refers to the institutionalized nature of literary studies when he inserts a journal, entitled *Benign Monster*, in the novel whose board is sarcastically described as "an art director who likes Aubrey Beardsley, a flagpole sitter whose record is 10 days, 10 hours, 10 minutes, and 10 seconds, people whose feet fall asleep, 3 or 4 inside dopes, and muckrakers of Tammany Hall. The staff of the *Benign Monster*" (87). Reed's emphasis on the propagation of colonial values in white literary journals remind Étienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey's contention in "On Literature as an Ideological Form" about the transformation of aesthetic values of literature into domination effects in what Althusser calls "Ideological State Apparatuses," which is here schools and universities (Resch 215).

Mumbo Jumbo describes the ideological nature of art institutions. Furthermore, it demonstrates that they are managed by the agents of "Repressive State Apparatus." In one of such resisting expositions, the novel apprises readers of management of the Center of Art Detention:

> Biff Musclewhite has reduced his status from Police Commissioner to Consultant to the Metropolitan Police in the precinct in Yorktown in order to take a job as Curator of the Center of Art Detention. (More pay.) He is sitting with 1 of his old colleagues, Schlitz "the Sarge of Yorktown," nicknamed affectionately by the police station he so often visited over the years. (48)

The policy adopted for the Center of Art Detention keeps in line with Althusser's argument that in modern societies Repressive State Apparatus are mostly held out of sight because the State does its best to attain the consent of its citizens through ideological apparatuses. When *Mumbo Jumbo* exposes that Biff Musclewhite, the former RSA agent, is not an ISA agent, it exposes how ISA and RSA are interrelated in societies, and aim at upholding the interests of the State. Remarkably, this unified agency does not lead to a genuine understanding of social mechanism; rather,

it holds individuals from the truth, even when they are exposed to a salvaging entity like art. The custody of Art Detention by an RSA agent deprives art from its true function. In the words of Harde, "With the detention centers, *Mumbo Jumbo* allegorizes the Western preoccupation with cataloguing fine art and hiding it safely away from the masses" (366).

Reed's exposition of literature and literary journals in the hands of Western cultural ISA is an attempt to undermine the very hierarchical order on which the West, under the guise of science and rationality, is founded. This challenge is not directed at art and literature *per se*; rather, it is directed at their embodiment in Western cultural ISAs. This distinction is best communicated in the novel when it is claimed "We will make our own future Text. A future generation of young artists will accomplish this" (243). Such a claim of an idiosyncratic Text contains the belief that there are texts and each is a narrative dominated by a system of ideas. After exposing and undermining the Western narrative, Reed is after presenting his own typical narrative which is an anti-ideological, anti-Western discourse aimed at upholding the ideals of African American race.

Reed, as a result, makes art an apparatus that caters for the causes of marginalized races. For this cause, *Mumbo Jumbo* contains references to indigenous folk cultures and events such as HooDoo which refers to a combination of various African religious practices generated by enslaved Africans in the New World (Katz-Hyman and Rice 170). This culture becomes an ideal that anti-ideological characters search for: "Yes, I want to learn more, pop. I'm thinking about going to New Orleans and Haiti, Brazil and all over the South studying our ancient cultures, our HooDoo cultures" (245). Consequently, seeking HooDoo popular culture, which is seen as "a survival of an era untouched by the atonizing, alienating effects of popular Western culture" (Harde 371) is a resolution to establish a counter-ideological discourse to oppose Western cultural ISA.

Mumbo Jumbo adopts a counter-discourse to revive and rescue the very art that is now an apparatus in the hands of Western institutionalization. The attempt for this revival is repeated throughout the novel. In a very conspicuous effort, Reed designates Yellow Jack to compel Berbelang to "remember the vow, Berbelang, we are just going to return the things, not pick up their habits of razing peoples' art. It isn't Goya nor is it the painting's fault that it's used by Atonists as a worship" (131). This act of remembrance is in fact indicative of new view of art as a salvaging phenomenon than an institutionalizing presence. According to Linda Hutcheon, "On the one hand, [Reed] offers another totalizing system to counter that of white western culture: that of voodoo. And, on the other hand, he appears to believe

strongly in certain humanist concepts, such as the ultimately free individual artist in opposition to the political forces of oppression" (197-98). Reed, in fact, struggles to invest art with another function to "represent African American culture to different racial audiences" (Young 83). This appropriation of art for humanistic and salvaging purposes is in stark contrast to Althusser's account of art as classified as a cultural ISA.

Mumbo Jumbo and the Religious ISA

Undoubtedly, one of the most ubiquitous elements in *Mumbo Jumbo* is religion. While religion is an ideological apparatus in Althusser's philosophy leading to the interpellation of individuals, Reed seems to preserve a conscious stance against it by exposing its ideological functions. The workings of religious ISA are powerfully revealed through Atonists who worship the sun god, Ra, of Egyptian heritage; Atonists are those who follow the religion of Akhenaten. In addition, the novel explicitly alludes to the religions of the world. In another historical approach, Reed associates them all genealogically:

> The Koran was revealed to Muhammed by Gabriel the angel of the Christian apocalypse. Prophets in the Koran: Abraham Isaac and Moses were Christian prophets; each condemns the Jewish people for abandoning the faith; realizing that there has always been a pantheistic contingent among the "chosen people" not reluctant to revere other gods. The Virgin Mary figures in the Koran as well as in the Bible. (41)

Such allusions do not consider religions as heavenly phenomena; rather, they finally refer to their institutional workings. According to Theodore O. Mason, Jr., Reed "wishes to loosen the stranglehold of the Judeo-Christian tradition on the cultural patterns of black people everywhere" (97). This is why the Jesus he describes differs highly from that bequeathed by the colonial discourse: "Nowhere is there an account or portrait of Christ laughing. Like the Marxists who secularized his doctrine, he is always stern, serious and as gloomy as a prison guard" (114). In fact, Reed struggles to disentangle his fellow people from the colonial Christ figure because "this burdensome archetype […] afflicted the Afro-American soul" (114). Well-aware of the discriminatory and exploitative grip of white religion in African American society, Reed in *Mumbo Jumbo* exclaims:

> Your Christendom was for serfs, for underlings and the peasants. You, the pope

> and the king, were allowed to practice ceremonies which "deviated" from the rules of us as your flunkies. "Flatfoots," you used to call us behind our backs … You arrested us but some of us escaped. I came to America where I have been able to hold our little band together now scattered all over the globe waiting for this day … this day when you would be forced to remit your errors. And now it has arrived. (79)

Reed's assertion in this excerpt contains both an interpretation of Christianity and a revolutionary call in response to it. He avowedly indicates that Christianity is an unnatural religion for African American people. Since Christianity is a collection of imposed codes of ethics, the novel implies that it is nothing but an Ideological State Apparatus, solidifying the white dominance over colored people. That is why the novel associates rigid figures with practitioners of religious ISA: "You are no different from the Christians you imitate. Atonists Christians and Muslims don't tolerate those who refuse to accept their modes" (41). Through such associations, Reed seems to be communicating the idea that religions are not vehicles of salvation and freedom; rather, they are apparatuses at the service of bondage and oppression. In his unique representation of history, Reed extends this view of religion to the whole Western history:

> THE MU'TAFIKAH ARE HOLDING a meeting in the basement of a 3-story building located at the edge of "Chinatown." Upstairs is a store which deals in religious articles. Above this is a gun store; at the top, an advertising firm which deals in soap accounts. If Western History were a 3-story building located in downtown Manhattan during the 1920s it would resemble this little architectural number. (97)

In this manner, Reed turns the "3-story building" into a microcosm through which a whole history is reflected. The "gun store" he refers to is in fact a symbol of the Repressive Apparatus in Western world that is justified and covered by religious ISA and advertisements, consumerism, and similar capitalist apparatuses. Reed also censures all who ignore the ideological workings of religion and act as protectors of the political institutions. For example, in another historical concern, Reed calls John Milton the "Atonist apologist extraordinary himself, [who] saw the coming of the minor geek and sorcerer Jesus Christ as a way of ending the cult of Osiris and Isis forever" (207). The novel emphasizes that Milton "worked for Cromwell, a man who banned theatre from England and was also a hero of Sigmund Freud"

(208). Reed's allusion to Freud is in fact another attack on the apologist workings of intellectuals who merely preserve the status quo: "Much later came another Atonist compromise, Sigmund Freud, who refined the rhetoric of the Church and eased the methods of dealing with the problem" (208).

The question of religion as an ISA is also reflected in one of the most important incidents of the novel, i.e. Papa LaBas's quest. As a central character of the novel, Papa LaBas is simultaneously a priest, a detective, and a reader who initiates a fairly mystical mission to discover a secret sacred text that reconsiders the wholeness of Western civilization through the perspective of the black experience. Following the search for the Book of Thoth during the course of *Mumbo Jumbo*, this middle-aged, black private detective finds out that the valuable Text of the Work has been ruined. The novel tries to suggest that the Atonists, who hold a powerful ideological stance, are responsible for such disappearance.

To present his unsettling and expository criticism, Reed assigns Papa LaBas the role of a detective to solve the mysteries. This expository role is significantly given to a priest of Cathedral and an evangelist who himself can have an ideological stance. Remarkably, Papa LaBas acts reversely and has in fact an anti-ideological presence in the novel. In his search for the "text," LaBas realizes that anthologies as the "work" of Jes Grew, disclosing a general view of affairs, tend to begin with the historical knowledge, which is always tainted with politically illusory facts. LaBas's foray into the detection of the "text" seems to be an archetypal mode analogous to the search for the Holy Grail, a search that is alluded in the opening of the third section of the book: "*EUROPE HAS ONCE MORE attempted to recover the Holy Grail*" (13). When the archetypal search is embodied in LaBas' struggle, his grail becomes "the Book [which presumably] was buried beneath the center of the Cotton Club" (227). This burial can be an anti-ideological exposition of the fact that Western Civilization knows nothing about history. Though the destiny of the Book remains enigmatic in Reed's novel, it keeps bearing significance all through:

> By the end of the novel, the sacred book has still not been recovered. In fact, it may be lost forever. But that doesn't mean that the Jes Grew is done for. The spirit of life suggested in the sacred Text will be preserved nevertheless. And it's this spirit which endows the black man with a heritage that the white man is without. It's this Neo-HooDooism which will save the black man, and save all of those who embrace it, from the spiritual wasteland which modem living is creating. (Boyer, 27)

One can claim the Book is an anti-ideological presence in the class struggle of whites and blacks within religious ISA. The presence of the Book is intertwined with the persistence of LaBas, who stands for an inquisitive African American. Though he remains busy with his work until the close of the novel, LaBas will, very similar to the Sacred Text, persist, because his investigation suggests that the Book is still present, and this very act of investigation ensures the ongoing process as Labas signifies. The fact that the Book is not found can have significance because of the emphasis on the oral aspect of African American identity. In an interview, Reed argues that "memory ends where writing begins" (Dick, 335). In fact, Reed refers to a resisting feature of African Americans: "by not writing down their language the people of West Africa were able to preserve their values and their religion" (Dick, 334). Reed's contention insinuates the fact that religion as a set of values and codes is to be felt and therefore cannot be internalized through a written system. This is emphasized in the novel when LaBas "discover[s] that the aesthetics is always changing and that its evolving form is integral to it" (Jablon 26). This emphasis on the oral tradition and the volatile nature of aesthetics is an attack on the institutional nature of religion.

In addition to questioning white religion in *Mumbo Jumbo*, Reed is critical of those fellow African Americans who directly and indirectly substantiate Christ in their writings. The substantiation in question refers to the Black Christ image that became popular among African Americans. By imagining this image, these people were coerced to attain "an unconditional affirmation of blackness" (Ware 51). Though this attempt was a black politics for opposing exploitation and otherness, Reed explicitly rebukes it in the novel:

The young poet Nathan Brown, LaBas felt, was serious about his Black Christ, however absurd that may sound, for Christ is so unlike African loas and Orishas, in so many essential ways, that this alien becomes a dangerous intruder in the Afro-American mind, an unwelcome gatecrasher into Ifé, home of the spirits. Yes, Brown was serious, but the rest were hucksters who had invented this Black Christ, this fraud, simply in order to avoid an honest day's sweat. (114)

In spite of the political workings of the assumption of a black Christ, Reed spurns the idea because it necessarily confirms the existence of Christ and Christianity. As he strongly challenges American religious ISA, he does not envisage any image of Christ in any form and for any purpose. This is the anti-ideological stance that he overtly adopts all through *Mumbo Jumbo*, making him and his production aloof from ideological discourse.

Universality of *Mumbo Jumbo*

So far, it has been argued that Reed's expository approach to Western tradition makes his fiction dissociate itself from Althusser's designation of art and literature as an "ideological state apparatus." By opposing Western history through his fiction, he demonstrates that Westerners' seemingly neutral account is nothing but a fiction. In the words of Mason, "Reed's sense of history devolves from an understanding that the historical 'facts' as we understand them are wholly fictions propagated by the masters of high Western culture" (98). While it can roughly undeniably be argued that Reed undermines Western claims of presenting a neutral account of events, i.e. history, the important question that arises is to figure out the extent of universality of Reed's undertaking.

As it was pointed out, *Mumbo Jumbo* furthers the ideals of African American people against white hegemony in American society. This interaction of the novel with the real world is a crucial point emphasized by Reed: "My reading leads me to believe that HooDoo—or, as they say in Haiti and other places, 'VooDoo' or 'Vodun'—was always open to the possibility of the real world and the psychic world intersecting. They have a principle for it: LegBa (in the U.S., 'LaBas')" (Dick 62). The insertion of these terms and figures in his storyline means that Reed attempts at connecting his fiction to "the real world" he mentions. Now it is time to know that the intended "real" encompasses humanity in general or revolves exclusively around African American experience.

Franz Fanon, a postcolonial critic who argues for the emancipatory nature of literature, argues that for the attainment of "combat literature," universal goals need to be extracted from native cultures. It is this stage that "rouse[s] the people" (*Wretched* 159). When LaBas is assigned the role of a black detective, *Mumbo Jumbo* proves to be explicitly concerned with native cultures. However, the novel seems to be going beyond indigenous concerns. The inclusion of Atonists as powerful ideological entities who have historical presence with no specific geographical signification gives the novel a universal aspect. In addition, such remonstrative attempts as the inclusion of "Partial Bibliography" in a fictional production, which in the words of Erik D. Curren "parodies both scholarly claims to authority and the literary use of cultural documentation" (145), indicate Reed's criticism of the whole tradition of ideological documentation. This claim is acknowledged by Harde's astute observation that calls Reed's production an "immutable Text" because of its allegorical iconoclasm (362)

Conclusion

Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* incorporates formalistic methods such as metafiction, an obvious expository voice in the text, an unrestricted practice of incredulity and comicality, as well as deconstruction of naturalizing tradition in writing. These disruptive devices are conducive to tendency for universalism, transforming the text from an "ideological state apparatus" to a "combat literature." The writer's voice is overtly present in the process of production to represent the voice of the marginalized, to rewrite history from a subversive perspective, and to expose and undermine the long-established Western cultural and religious ISA. Though Papa LaBas's expedition is in the first place African American in nature, it gains a universal aspect when it is found to be allegorical. Thus, *Mumbo Jumbo* can be taken not as an indigenous art, but as a text for all humanity which struggles to act as an anti-ideological discourse.

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Different Worldviews, Different World Literatures? The Contrasting Chronotopes of Ethnic Detective Fiction in *Pasado Perfecto* and *The Beggar's Opera*

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Abstract The present article discusses the nature of ethnic detective fiction from the comparative perspective of world literature by underscoring the divergent discourses that can hide under such a seemingly unified subgenre. In the context of our current understanding of world literature, both the Inspector Ramirez series by Canadian crime writer Peggy Blair and the Lieutenant Conde series by Cuban author Leonardo Padura can be categorized as multiethnic, international, minority, multicultural, cross-cultural or ethnic detective fiction, because of the series' focus on the Cuban crime scene. However, a comparison of the action-space, plot-space, and worldview chronotopes (i.e. time-space frames) of *The Beggar's Opera* and *Pasado perfecto* reveals that the focalizers of both novels adhere to opposite worldviews. *Pasado perfecto*'s Cuban worldview chronotope largely conforms to the premises of the original hardboiled paradigm, whereas the Canadian worldview of *The Beggar's Opera* appears to cross over from detective fiction into ethnographic travel fiction. In the end, it would seem the only thing holding both novels together is their shared label of ethnic detective fiction.

Key words Ethnic Detective Fiction; Hardboiled Crime Fiction; Cuban Detective Fiction; Canadian Detective Fiction; Chronotope

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"[Cuba] no es el infierno que dicen unos ni el paraíso que otros pretenden que sea. Es una especie de purgatorio."
— Padura

Goethe, the founding father of *Weltliteratur* as we know it today, first started lobbying for a unified world literature to counteract the destabilizing fragmentation underlying most of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century—a fragmentation to which we can relate today and that, probably, best explains our renewed interest in the concept of world literature. Goethe's world literature was to be a vehicle for the worldwide spread of humanist ideals and values. Even though he was heavily inspired by Ancient Greek and Latin sensibilities and aesthetics, his language of choice to achieve that kind of unifying, transnational literature was his own native German: a language and a culture that would "act as a sort of arbiter for the dissemination of work in foreign languages throughout Europe" (D'haen, *The Routledge Concise History of World Literature* 6). In the end, it was English—and not German—that became the lingua franca of world literature, but the Eurocentrism of Goethe's humanist enterprise remains as valid as ever. According to Marjori Perloff, the "essentializing of English" is inextricably intertwined with the concept of world literature because it "perpetuates the old notions of centers and margins which the new comparative literature model is supposedly countering" (178). Even though the upsurge in English translations of all kinds of ex-centric world literatures stems from a need to better understand the world in its entirety, i.e. beyond the borders of the Western hemisphere, today's synonymity of world literature with what Theo D'Haen refers to as "Anglophony" is telling of how neocolonialism is deeply engrained in that supposedly humanist concept (24, 144).

The present article questions the nature of the relationships that are created between detective novels when they are discussed from the comparative perspective of world literature. When analyzing a writer such as the Cuban Leonardo Padura without crossing any linguistic borders—that is to say in a Hispanic context—one rarely has to worry about possible accusations of neocolonialism (cf. Simpson; Stavans; Uxo). However, when taking into consideration how widely read—because widely translated—he is, comparisons with other internationally published crime writers of Cuban origin, such as the Canadian-based exile José Latour or Cuban-American Carolina García-Aguilera, are unavoidable (cf. Oakley). And what of his relationship with authors who write about the Cuban crime scene without being Cuban themselves, such as Canadian novelist Peggy Blair?[1] In the context of our current understanding of world literature, both Padura's and Blair's work can be

1 Blair's biographical blurb in *The Beggar's Opera* (2012) reads: "Peggy Blair has been a lawyer for more than thirty years. A recognized expert in Aboriginal law, she also worked as a criminal defense lawyer and prosecutor. Blair spent a Christmas in Old Havana, where she watched bored young policemen on street corners along the Malecón, visited Hemingway's favorite bars, and learned to make the perfect mojito."

labeled with the same polynomial, vague umbrella terms, such as "ethno-detective novels" (Erdmann 11); "multiethnic crime fiction" (Fischer-Hornung and Mueller); "international crime fiction" (Krajenbrink and Quinn); "'minority', 'multicultural', 'cross-cultural' and 'postcolonial'" or "'ethnic' detective fiction" (Matzke and Muehleisen 6–7).[1]

In *Investigating Identities: Questions of Identity in Contemporary International Crime Fiction*, editors Marieke Krajenbrink and Kate Quinn combine essays on Spanish, German, Russian, Dutch, Chilean etc. detective fiction in one volume. Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Monika Mueller, editors of *Sleuthing Ethnicity: The Detective in Multiethnic Crime Fiction*, consider Asian American, African American and Cuban American crime novels to be on an equal footing with German and French novels. It seems that in order to fall under the ambiguous category of ethnic detective fiction, it is enough for a work to either not be originally published in English or to somehow diverge from the straight, white, male paradigm of hardboiled detective fiction (cf. Reddy; Pepper). This categorization is complicated, however, by the debate on voice versus experience (cf. Ashley et al.; Bakhtin) or how crime writing by so-called "cultural outsiders" relates to the work of those who write "from an insider's perspective" (Fischer-Hornung and Mueller 13). According to Maureen Reddy, the reason behind the unpopularity of this debate is the demise of identity politics in academic theory in the 1980s and 1990s and its replacement with discussions of appropriation and commodification (156). In an academic environment where "the question of whether the race of the author impacts the authenticity of character" has become "moot" (ibid.), scholars of ethnic detective fiction tend to go about the issue as follows. Fischer-Hornung and Mueller claim that "cultural outsiders" will "carefully attempt to avoid stereotypical references to the ethnicities portrayed in their novels" (13). Christine Matzke and Susanne Muehleisen, on the other hand, ask the following rhetorical question:

> Do practitioners of 'ethnic' detective fiction need to be 'ethnic' themselves in order to be 'truly' representative […]? When are 'ethnic' investigators a genuine means for social or political commentary, when are they merely a means to add exotic 'colour', not unlike their colonial predecessors? (7)

Similarly, Ray Browne views American Indian crime fiction by non-natives as a win-win-situation. It is "an economical form of physical and cultural tourism" that benefits, both, mainstream readers in providing them with "inexpensive and

1 The preferred term in the present article is ethnic detective fiction, for the sake of simplicity.

enjoyable thrills" as well as the Native minorities themselves because "ethnic crime fiction becomes a kind of affirmative fiction," a way for "these Anglos" to pay "the Indians" back "for former commissions of injustice" (Browne 8–9). According to Browne, all American Indians want is "to be noticed with dignity," so, therefore, they "do not mind being treated realistically and truthfully but they want a fair account" (10).

The overall impression these contemporary analyses of ethnic detective fiction give is that, initially, the distinction between writers who are 'cultural insiders' and those who are 'cultural outsiders' seems difficult to ignore. However, Fischer-Hornung and Mueller do suggest that most outsiders are "ethnically correct" in their writings and that exceptions to this rule—i.e. novels that "still betray instances of inadvertent racism"—are quite rare (13). On the other hand, Reddy is quick to claim that nearly all insider writers shift away from the predominantly white, heterosexual and male consciousness that is so typical of hardboiled fiction, allowing for a counterdiscursive rewriting of the genre in question (9, 41). In tune with Reddy, Suchitra Mathur dubs the insiders who do not overtly rewrite and subvert the genre and whose protagonists barely differ from "the metropolitan detective" as "postcolonial *mimic* [detectives]" (Mathur 108; emphasis in the original). On both ends of this discursive spectrum, insiders and outsiders are made out to be what Graham Huggan ironically dubs "heroic agents of liberation" (7).

In the present article, I take issue with terms such as "ethno-detective novels" (Erdmann 11); "multiethnic crime fiction" (Fischer-Hornung and Mueller); "international crime fiction" (Krajenbrink and Quinn); "'minority', 'multicultural', 'cross-cultural' and 'postcolonial'" and "'ethnic' detective fiction (Matzke and Muehleisen 6–7) and their implication that all writing—be it by cultural insiders or outsiders—that appears to deviate from the straight, white, male sleuth somehow subverts the hardboiled detective genre. By comparing the action-space, plot-space, and worldview chronotopes (i.e. time-space frames) of *The Beggar's Opera*, i.e. the first novel of the Inspector Ramirez series by Canadian author Peggy Blair, with *Pasado perfecto*, i.e. the first novel of the Lieutenant Conde series by Cuban author Leonardo Padura, I question whether *The Beggar's Opera* and *Pasado perfecto* can be considered as belonging to the same subgenre of detective fiction.[1]

Bakhtinian Poetics versus Identity Politics

1 *Pasado perfecto* was translated in English as *Havana Blue*. I provide my own English translations of cited excerpts of *Pasado perfecto*, unless the English text of *Havana Blue* is more appropriate for the analysis at hand.

In the introductory passage of *Murder on the Reservation* (2004), Browne describes Native American ethnic detective fiction as follows:

> In the rapidly developing field of literature *by and about* Native Americans, ethnic crime fiction is a vigorous genre. In many ways this genre develops in the tradition of crime fiction in general, but it necessarily incorporates new materials and people in their own settings and cultures. Thus it is a new and different total environment for the age-old treatment of crime and punishment. (Browne 3; my emphasis)

Browne's assumption is that detective novels that deal with or emanate from a minority—in the sense of an ex-centric community within a Western country as well as an ex-centric world literature—almost automatically rewrite the genre in order to counteract the ideological viewpoint of the straight, white male that is so typical of hardboiled detective fiction (cf. Pepper; Reddy). As a matter of fact, according to Heta Pyrhönen there is a "phase of criticism" that "lends credence to these notions of ideology as an arena of contestation" (48). It views any detective novel that does not focus on straight, white, male detectives—such as "the feminist detective novel" or the "multicultural detective novel"—as containing an oppositional discourse that tackles "bitter racial, ethnic, class, and gender conflicts" head on (ibid.).

However, there are those who go against this propensity of seeing all (detective novels about) minorities as "heroic agents of liberation" (Huggan 7). For example, Reddy's intial premise in *Traces, Codes, and Clues: Reading Race in Crime Fiction* is that "racially progressive crime fiction that employs a reverse discourse and that deliberately stands against the white hegemony" must abound in the field of murder fiction (191). However, of the dozens of novels discussed in her book that present themselves to be "racially progressive," only a few remain standing after Reddy subjects their supposedly oppositional discourse to thorough analysis. Her conclusion is, therefore, a far cry from her original hypothesis:

> When I began writing this book, I hoped I would find something different from what I did in the end find. I imagined that the recent impact of writers of color on the genre was greater than I now see it actually has been, and I envisioned a book with a considerably more optimistic conclusion than this one. My greatest hope for detective fiction is that my work will be rapidly outdated by antiracist developments in the genre. (191-2)

D'haen, on the other hand, is less pessimistic about this apparent lack of a genuine reverse discourse in ethnic detective fiction. He contends that "contemporary multicultural high literature shows signs of essentialism because it tends to interpret all multicultural writing as countering the dominant discourse ("Samurai Sleuths and Detective Daughters: The American Way" 51). The question is, then, whether detective novels that do not deliberately stand against straight, white, male discourse should necessarily be rejected as lacking political engagement. In his analysis of several novels focusing on Chinese American and Japanese American sleuths, he argues that even though these protagonists do perpetuate certain stereotypes Western society imposes on them, they do not consistently go along with them. Their stance is one of double consciousness; these hybrid sleuths are aware of how the dominant cultural group perceives them and they play along with those clichés to prove that, despite their differences, they are fiercely and fearlessly independent Americans (50). The question D'haen asks is, then, whether minorities should be chastised for wanting to move away from the margins and reach for the coveted center? D'haen suggests that there is nothing wrong with wishing to "become American" because conforming to the norms and expectations of mainstream society will allow these minorities to climb the social ladder, which will eventually lead to a diversification of the traditional ruling classes by (51).

The other issue Browne inadvertently alludes to in his introduction is that literatures "by and about" so-called ethnic minorities belong to the same generic category (3). One might ascribe this to an innocent and benevolent desire to put an end to the canonizing practice of demarcating so-called minor literatures from more mainstream literatures (cf. Deleuze et al.). However, the use of terms such as (multi)ethnic, cross-cultural, postcolonial, multicultural or even international to refer to these emerging literatures betrays how comfortable contemporary critique is with the canon, since such labeling implies an immediate Othering of all those who do not fit the mainstream brief. This kind of terminology inevitably triggers an 'us versus them' discourse in literary analyses where these "new" Others and their fascinating "settings and cultures" are subjected to the neocolonizing gaze of the seemingly uninteresting and culture-less Western critic (Reddy 3). Such a practice assumes whiteness as a default position that does not need any kind of definition or labeling to refer to itself. Consequently, whiteness turns into "a screen through which the rest of the world is perceived" (Reddy 15).

Building on Reddy's and D'haen's abovementioned arguments, I contend that the chronotopes found in *The Beggar's Opera* by Canadian author Peggy Blair betray an implicit exoticization of Cuba. Additionally, I contest the assumption

that detective novels by non-mainstream writers necessarily subvert the detective fiction genre by demonstrating that in Leonardo Padura's *Pasado perfecto* the chronotopes go along with the conventions of the American hardboiled novel. The tendency so far has been to address questions of this nature by asking whether there is any merit to writing from an Other's point of view based on one's own personal experience, as opposed to artificially reproducing a voice as authentically as possible. This voice versus experience debate might have become unpopular because of "the demise of identity politics in academic discourse and theory in 1980s and 1990s," but it does not make it any less valid (Reddy 156). Why else is Padura never asked in interviews about the accuracy of his depiction of Cuba—even though such a question would not be misplaced, considering how controversial of a country it is—when Blair cannot go without justifying the authenticity of her work (e.g. Blair, *Peggy Blair on The Beggar's Opera*; Wiersema; Blair, *Q&A with Peggy Blair, Author of The Beggar's Opera and The Poisoned Pawn*)? This being said, the present article looks beyond the categories of voice and experience by performing a close reading of the agency behind the voice, namely the human imagination (Keunen 8).

In *Time and Imagination: Chronotopes in Western Narrative Culture*, Bart Keunen relies on Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope (i.e. a time-space frame) to chart certain invariants in narrative imagination. In fiction, the always biased images the writer has been mentally storing from the earliest moments of consciousness are assimilated in a series of narrative processes that result in the creation of fictional worlds-in-motion, a.k.a. chronotopes (5). What is of importance to my argument is that all of these images are invariably colored by value judgments:

> It seems that we perceive the value of an object together with its being, as one of its qualities; in the same way, for example, we sense the value of the sun together with its warmth and light. And thus all phenomena of being which surround us are fused together with our evaluations of them. (Voloshinov in Keunen 5)

By analyzing the worlds-in-motion (or chronotopes) created by Peggy Blair and Leonardo Padura in their respective narratives, I explore whether there are differences in value judgment between both novels and, if so, whether these differences allow for Blair and Padura to be placed in the same, supposedly counterdiscursive genre of ethnic detective fiction. Keunen's postclassical, chronotopic approach allows the text to speak for itself, instead of focusing on the

differences between the novels based on the background of their authors.

Classical narratology studies generally describe the textual invariants of a narrative, such as the chronology of a text or the narrator's perspective. On the other hand, postclassical narratology deals with the imaginal quality of narrative events and the possible worlds that can be communicated through these mental images (Herman and Vervaeck in Keunen 6). This development in narratology was largely inspired by Bakhtin's idea that all literary images are chronotopic, receiving order from time (*chronos*) and space (*topos*) simultaneously. Language, as a treasure-house of images, is therefore fundamentally chronotopic (Bakhtin in Keunen 7). Consequently, every narrative relies on chronotopes—in the sense of "imaginal [constructs] or [entities] representing a temporal process that occurs in a spatial situation"—as building blocks for the construction of its story (13).

Keunen contends that the chronotope stimulates the reader on three different levels, with the help of three different types of chronotopes. On the lowest level, there is the **action-space** chronotope where a specific, geographically defined event is visualized as occurring within a certain timeframe. On the second level, we find the **plot-space** chronotope. The conjunction of a particular time and space summons the image of an abstract, fictional world where an identifiable action develops over a certain amount of time. Finally, on the third and highest level, there is the **worldview chronotope**. On this level, "an abstract philosophical representation about the moral implications of the depicted events" is conveyed (9).[1]

Ramirez the Canadian

Perceiving a certain object or a photographic reproduction of that object is quite different from imagining the object. To conjure up its image in the mind's eye means to create a schematic form of it, far less defined than the actual, concrete object. Therefore, when a writer tries to convey a certain chronotopic image to the reader, the preferred approach will be one of *pars pro toto*: "a few meaningful segments of an object [in the broadest sense of the term] are sufficient to make us recognize and designate an image" (Keunen 17). The more "overlearned propositional information" the author shares with the reader about a certain image, the less time is spent on describing the object in question (Keunen 19). Common images are rarely described extensively because the reader's propositional information should

1 Bakhtin's, and Keunen's, differentiation between action-space and plot-space is somewhat reminiscent of the Russian Formalist's – and, later on, Tsvetan Todorov's – distinction between story and plot, or *fabula* and *sujet*. However, Bakhtin does not make the story subservient to the plot, since it is all the elements of the story considered together – i.e. the different action-spaces – that create the abstract time-space conjunction of which the plot-space consists.

be enough to conjure up a mental image based on the *pars pro toto*-process Keunen described earlier. However, in the case of objects that the author expects will be new and unusual for the reader, the descriptions will be more detailed.

Even though "schematization and reductionism" are essential parts of the mental processing on the level of the action-space chronotope, not all spatial objects can be represented in a text: that is where "the power of suggestion" comes into the picture (18). Bakhtin's claim that every mental image is built on the basis of the combination between a certain time *and* space means that every action-space chronotope where "the character is situated in this or that spatial environment […], moves around […], and reaches for objects" is interpreted as one, fluent matrix. Every element of that chronotope—the character, the space (s)he moves in, the object (s)he reaches for etc.—is related to every other element, so that they all help each other along in conjuring up a full and fully-functioning mental picture of that particular action-space chronotope. Telling stories is in other words a process of "modeling, and enabling others to model, an emergent constellation of spatially related entities" (Herman in Keunen 19). However, the reader will only consciously pay attention to the objects (in the broadest sense of the term) that are involved in a certain action—hence "action-space" chronotope. Just like the filmmaker expects the spectator to focus solely on a moving object/character and not on the immobile background, so too does the author expect the reader to pay attention to "moving characters" alone (24). It is crucial the author communicates a clear mental image of these moving characters to the reader. Detailed descriptions of the characters themselves do not suffice. Using "the power of suggestion," the author injects the above-mentioned "constellation of spatially related entities" that the active characters find themselves in—i.e. the objects surrounding them, their setting, their less active fellow characters—with an implied meaning that, eventually, reverberates back on the main, "moving" characters and gives them a crisper definition.

The omniscient narrator of *The Beggar's Opera* often relies on the power of suggestion. From the very beginning of the story, in the prologue, the narrator gives a hint of the exoticizing modus operandi of the rest of the novel. The reader is introduced to what would have been a classic, tragic scene; that of a little boy watching his beloved grandmother take her last breath. However, the narrator suggests this is not an ordinary boy nor an ordinary grandmother. And the scene does not take place in an ordinary hospital, nor in an ordinary country. The hospital room is described as smelling of "tobacco and anise, mixed with sweat"—not

exactly the regular smells one expects to encounter in a hospital (*BO* 1).[1] And the grandmother is presented as being quite a character. Far from the archetypal pie-baking grandmother, this woman is a prophet, who promises to pass on her "gift" to her grandson (ibid.). Before allowing the grandmother to explain what this "gift" is, the narrator adds a telltale detail to the description of the deathbed scene. It says: "She [the grandmother] released her grip and patted his [Ricky Ramirez's] cheek with her soft **brown** hand" (*BO* 1; my emphasis). That the narrator explicitly mentions the brown color of the grandmother's hand—as opposed to the common, pale hands the narrator seems to use as an implicit point of references—predicts that in this novel whiteness and, by extent, Western culture will be considered to be the norm. They will serve as "a screen through which the rest of the world [will be] perceived" (Reddy 15). As the brown hand of the grandmother is suggestive of her non-Western origins, the foreign words in her enigmatic explanation of what her gift to her grandson entails and the spiritual, 'ethnic' nature of that gift do not seem out of place: "Messengers from the other side. Eshu, the *orisha*, will send them to help you so you can help them. You will be a policeman, Ricky. I see it in your future. Threat them with respect, as they will you. But never forget this: Eshu is a trickster" (*BO* 1-2).

Soon, the reader learns more about the garbled prophecy of this *étrange* and *étrangère* grandmother. When Ramirez starts seeing the ghosts of the murder victims assigned to his team, he asks his friend and coworker, the brilliant coroner Hector Apira, whether ghosts are always hallucinations or if there is a small chance they might be real:

> "What about the *santeros*?" asked Ramirez. He pulled a stool over and sat down to steady his legs. "They claim to communicate with the dead. My grandmother was Vodun. On my father's side."
>
> Slave traders brought Ramirez's Yoruba ancestors from West Africa in the 1880s to harvest Cuban tobacco and sugar. The Yoruba followed their own religion, Vodun, as well as the Catholicism forced upon them by their owners.
>
> Or at least they pretended to. They cloaked their religion with Catholic rites, but never gave up their own practices. The resulting mix of Catholicism and Vodun—Santería, or Lukumi—included a belief in multiple gods, and regular and animated interaction with the spirit world.[6]
>
> Apiro nodded doubtfully. "Superstition, I think. […]." (*BO* 13)

1 For the sake of clarity, excerpts from *The Beggar's Opera* will be referred to as *BO*. The same goes for *Pasado perfecto* and *Havana Blue*, which will be referred to as *Pp* and *HB*.

That the narrator draws out two paragraphs to explain to the reader what Santería is suggests that neither the narrator nor the reader are expected to have much "propositional knowledge" about this particular object. This adds to the strange Otherness of, both, the characters and the settings the narrator is describing, since these kinds of explicit descriptions are only necessary for "new and unusual [things] for which the reader must generate an image [made up from scratch] in order to understand the narrative" (Nell in Keunen 19).

As a matter of fact, these ethnographic details seem to dominate the novel and almost push the actual investigation to the background. In traditional hardboiled detective novels, it is the dialogue between the investigator and his suspects that the narrator most focuses on. In *The Beggar's Opera*, however, the narrator slips these country-specific details into the dialogues, such as here:

> Ellis let out a deep breath. "Isn't Raúl Castro supposed to be more moderate?"
>
> The diplomat smiled slightly. "A lot of Batista's supporters were executed summarily after the revolution. Is Raúl more moderate? Rumour has it he pulled the trigger himself. Sure, as acting president, he may loosen up some things that annoy people currently. Like letting them have more access to the internet. He may even free a few political prisoners. But don't kid yourself, Fidel Castro's still in charge."
>
> "I can't believe they would execute a foreigner. […]." (*BO* 139)

The narration in between dialogues abounds with ethnographic information as well. These pieces of propositional knowledge range from Cuba's history ("Until the late 1800s, slaves were considered property, and birth certificates were never issued for them.") to Cuba's socialist policies ("The Cuban government provided free university education to all of its citizens.") and Cuba's, supposedly, odd laws ("It was not uncommon for members of citizen watch groups to call about crimes without identifying themselves. The use of a cellphone was unusual, however."), to name a few (*BO* 15, 103, 56).

What is also remarkable is that at least once in almost every chapter the narrator digresses from the main story to mention things that are not available in Cuba and situations that are not as they should be, suggesting there is a point of reference out there that does correspond to a perceived baseline. For example, Ramirez notices how Hector Apiro must make due with an improvised metal gurney

for his autopsies. "A *proper* table would have had runoff areas for blood and other fluids," but Apiro has no choice but to use metal buckets (*BO* 11; my emphasis). Similarly, Ramirez describes the decrepit buildings of Old Havana as looking like "slums" (*BO* 112). In these concrete action-space chronotopes where the police inspector watches Hector performing an autopsy, for example, or where he strolls the streets of Old Havana, Ramirez's observations point toward a certain double consciousness. It is odd, however, that Ramirez should know what a "proper" table looks like when he has never known anything else. And why would he describe the buildings of Old Havana as "slums" when the decaying state of these colonial houses is part of his day-to-day reality—a normal, negligible feature of his backdrop? It is almost as if he has the Havana of "before the embargo" in mind (*BO* 180). However, Ramirez is not likely to remember that era considering he was, most probably, born after the Revolution. His double consciousness makes more sense, however, when Blair's other two focalizers are added to the equation. Apart from Ramirez, there is also Mike Ellis, a Canadian police officer who is wrongly accused of murder while vacationing in Cuba, and fellow Canadian Celia Jones who is flown out to help her compatriot because she is the only lawyer of the Ottawa Police Department to speak fluent Spanish. When Ramirez is featured in *The Beggar's Opera*, he is usually interacting with Mike Ellis or Celia Jones. In English too, a language Ramirez was taught by his American mother. In this context, it could be argued that Ramirez' point of view runs parallel to that of Celia Jones or Mike Ellis.

Ramirez's awkward double consciousness relates to the overarching plot-space chronotope of the novel. The plot-space of a certain narrative is the world construct that emanates from the conjunction of all the action-space chronotopes of the novel. Incidentally, in *The Beggar's Opera*, these action-spaces rarely rely on propositional information because the characters, objects and settings are depicted as "new and unusual" (Nell in Keunen 19). In fact, Mike Ellis refers to Cuba at some point as "somewhere exotic" (*BO* 98). The narrator further enhances that sense of exotic novelty—as opposed to Western normalcy—by using focalizers with either a Western outlook, such as Celia Jones or Mike Ellis, or with a double consciousness, such as Inspector Ramirez. As Keunen explains, just like objects within a certain action-space (and action-spaces themselves), the literary plot-space is also open to reductionism and schematization (20). It would be very tedious for the reader if the narrator were to describe every detail of a certain plot-space. In order to avoid this, the narrator relies on implied contrasts, contained in the different action-spaces, to summon up the intended "storyworld" (Ryan in Keunen 20). In a romance, the basis of all detective fiction, a peaceful situation is disturbed by a conflict. The conflict is

fought against, resolved and, eventually, followed by a state of perfect bliss again. The default chronotope in that situation is "the wondrous space" (Bakhtin in Keunen 20). This type of description contains, on its own, hardly any visual referents. That is because the narrator trusts the reader will add "evaluations or connotations" to that bare description by marking out "a strange, perilous world against other images that suggest a more familiar, peaceful world" (ibid.). Consequently, in most narratives, and especially in narratives related to the adventure tale, such as the detective story, the plot-space consists of two contrasting spaces: "a space for the principal characters to feel at home in and a space in which to live their adventures (the alien world)" (21).

In *The Beggar's Opera*, the default plot-space chronotope associated with a homely, peaceful, wondrous space seems to be Canada, in particular, and the Western world, in general—as opposed to "strange" and "perilous" Cuba. Even though Cuba is the country where the entire action is taking place, both the narrator and the characters think it necessary to keep repeating over and over again that the story is taking place in Cuba, which stresses how unusual and eccentric/ex-centric of a setting that is (*BO* 68, 86, 170, 203). Although Inspector Ellis is a Cuban living in Cuba, the narrator keeps emphasizing his being Cuban:

> Inspector Ramirez planned to sleep in late on Christmas Day […]. Maybe listen to his Christmas gift […], a CD of the terrific **Cuban** soprano Lucy Provedo.
>
> […] Like most **Cubans**, Ramirez and his family had stayed up late on Christmas Eve. […]. Then they all walked to the Revolution Square along with hundreds of thousands of **other Cubans** […]. (*BO* 33; my emphasis)

What the narrator does in this plot-space is implicitly contrasting Cuba with Canada. In *The Beggar's Opera*, the many suggestive, exoticizing action-space chronotopes give rise to a plot-space chronotope where Canada is seen as the opposite of Cuba. That plot-space chronotope translates, "[a]t the tertiary stage of metaphorical abstraction," as a cultural model that consists, again, of "oppositional pairs of near/remote and inside/outside" that serve as "interpretational axes for judgments on social cohesion and social upheaval" (Keunen 21). In the end, *The Beggar's Opera* only enhances the "hegemony-maintaining" function that is associated with the

traditional hardboiled detective novel (Reddy 165).[1]

Conde the American

If the goal of Blair's narrator was to stress Cuba's oddities, the narrator of *Pasado perfecto* wishes to underline its almost boring commonness. The opening scene in *Pasado perfecto* does not suggest in any way that the protagonist of the detective story, Lieutenant Mario Conde, is any different from the regular hardboiled straight, white male. Additionally, the novel's Cuban setting is not highlighted, except perhaps in the telephone conversation between Mario Conde and his superior, major Rangel: "You know that chief executives at vice-ministerial rank don't go missing like that **in Cuba**" (*Pp* 15; my emphasis).

Padura's story is set in 1989-1990, the onset of the *período especial*, the severest economic crisis Cuba has ever known. However, Padura's narrator and his focalizer rarely comment on those hard times. Unlike Ramirez, who seems to perceive Cuba through the eyes of somebody who has either been abroad or has known Cuba before the Revolution, Conde has nothing with which to compare Cuba. Consequently, when he walks down "the main street in his neighborhood" and notices the "overflowing rubbish containers" and the "wrappings from late-night last-minute pizzas blowing in the wind," he ascribes that unkemptness to the decay of time (*HB* 6). When he reflects on the past, such as when he notices that the street where "he'd learned to play baseball" has turned into a "repository for junk generated by the repair shop on the corner" (*HB* 6), he yearns not for a more orderly, cleaner Cuba—a Cuba he has never known—but for his youth, asking: "Where do you learn to play baseball now?" (*HB* 6). Padura's narrator makes heavy use of propositional information that is readily understood by the reader. For example, in *The Beggar's Opera*, the narrator points out that Cuban buses transport Cubans, are oddly shaped, and extremely crowded:

> [The cars] stopped for a red light beside a *camello*, one of the oddly shaped buses made from truck parts and salvaged buses for which Havana was famous. For a second, the large bus, crowded with hundreds of weary Cubans, blocked out the sun. (*BO* 65; emphasis in the original)

1 In *Time and Imagination*, Keunen chooses not to elaborate on the political implications of the Bakhtinian worldview chronotope. However, his fellow Flemish narratologist Michel De Dobbeleer does expand on that idea in "From Older Testimony to World Literature." He demonstrates how three different testimonies on the fall of Constantinople based on different ideological visions can yield three different plot-spaces and, therefore, three different worldviews.

Padura's narrator, on the other hand, assumes the reader has enough propositional information about Cuba to know that the buses are usually overcrowded. When Padura's focalizer states that "[Conde] ran to catch an *unimaginable* almost empty bus," the use of "unimaginable" is enough to communicate to the reader that to find an empty bus is unusual and that, therefore, overcrowded buses are the norm (*HB* 8; my emphasis).

Thanks to the narrator's assumption that the reader will readily understand this type of propositional information, the distance between Padura's characters and the reader is much smaller than the distance Blair's narrator creates. This can be mainly attributed to the *ethnotexte* of *The Beggar's Opera*: its many extensive ethnographic descriptions. According to Lawrence Fontaine-Xavier, narrators who pay great attention to the *ethnotexte* tend to perceive their readers as "ignorant of the practices represented in the narrative" (125; my translation). The readers' actual knowledge on the matter is not really considered: they are simply "not supposed to be familiar with the practices at hand" (ibid.). Fontaine-Xavier therefore concludes that by assuming the role of "*pédagogue*" the narrator intends the *ethnotexte* to have an alienating effect on the readers (126). One might argue, of course, that Blair's largely Canadian reading public is less likely than Padura's initially Hispanic readership[1] to be aware of Cuban quirks and particularities. However, even in the English translation of *Pasado perfecto* there are no ethnographic descriptions of Cuba, no explanatory footnotes or, even, additions of italicized Spanish and/or typically Cuban words. Because of this approach, Padura's detective novel manages to steer away from turning into what Browne calls "an economical form of physical and cultural tourism, a trip to exotic societies and a meeting with strange people and ways of life, with exposure to but safety from danger" (8). However, although *Pasado perfecto* cannot be accused of economical tourism, the contrasting of world constructs on the level of the plot-space is still present. If, in Blair's novel, the default plot-space chronotope is Canada, as opposed to Cuba, in Padura's novel it is Cuba's supposedly proletarian society that is opposed to the privileged happy few. Conde's investigation might seem to center on the disappearance of the wealthy and high-placed Rafael Morín, but the plot's real focus is Morín's wife, the spoiled ambassador's daughter Tamara Valdemira. Contrary to Morín, who worked his way up, she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. And that is not the socialist way.

Pasado perfecto is as much a detective story as it is a romance since, during the course of the story, the sleuth falls in love all over again with the grieving wife

1 *Pasado perfecto* was first published in Mexico in 1991. It was published in Cuba in 1995. The reasons for this delay are unclear.

of his assigned victim. Much time is spent on flashbacks, where Conde relives his teenage infatuation with Tamara. As the title *Pasado perfecto* ironically suggests, his encounter with the grown-up Tamara forces him to reconsider his youth and to conclude that it was not so perfect after all—much like his present. When Mario Conde pays Tamara a visit to enquire about the details of her husband's disappearance, he cannot fail but notice how comfortably she lives, compared to the average struggling Cuban of the early nineties. Her grand, colonial house is "far beyond the reach of the average policeman" (*Pp* 40). And so is her lifestyle. When Conde discovers the many expensive gifts Morín brings back from his travels to his wife, his mistress and his mother—who, for example, received a bottle of Chanel N°5 on New Year's Eve (*Pp* 107)—he seems to be more appalled by their capitalistic attitudes than by the fact that these presents were, most probably, bought with embezzled money. When Tamara cannot stand Conde's socio-communist zeal or the preaching undertone of their conversation anymore, she bursts out: "Why are you so bitter? Why do you refer to yourself with so much self-pity, as if everybody else were a bastard, as if you were the poorest and purest of us all?" (*Pp* 91). This class struggle is the foundation of *Pasado perfecto*'s plot-space chronotope and, therefore, it influences the morality of Padura's worldview chronotope.

As Sean McCann explains in *Gumshoe America*, the hardboiled genre sprung up in 1930s America as a result of Roosevelt's New Deal policy. Setting themselves off against their former aggressively capitalistic model, Americans wanted to create "a common welfare" by putting an end to "heedless self-interest" and by bringing "private autocratic powers" into "subordination to the public's government"—goals that are somewhat reminiscent of Cuba's socio-communist tenets (McCann 5–6). The 1930s sleuthing hero fighting against societal corruption and the "limits of narrow institutions" was meant to inspire the Americans and call upon their civic sense—their "latent, collective spirit"—to solve society's crimes and abuses (6). Incidentally, this was also the objective of the revolutionary, rashly political Cuban *novelas policíacas* that started appearing from the 1970s onwards and to which Padura's work still belongs, to some extent (Acosta; Oakley). However, Padura himself admits to choosing to avoid any overt political discourse in his novels by emulating Dashiell Hammett—one of the founding fathers of hardboiled fiction (Oakley 31-35). Following the lead of writers like Hammett who promoted New Deal liberalism through their "re-familiarizing" narratives, Padura subtly express his support of the Cuban regime, while still allowing the detective story to take center stage. Padura's Lieutenant Conde thus demystifies and reiterates the power of Cuba's leaders and reaffirms the validity of the existing social order (cf. Pepper 2010).

Conclusion

The abovementioned analysis is case-specific and does not pretend to be able to formulate any concrete statements about the place of ethnic detective fiction in the field of world literature. However, the article does underscore the divergent discourses that can hide under a seemingly unified subgenre, dreamed up in the name of world literature. Taking the chronotopic line-up of Blair's and Padura's Cuban crimes and culprits into consideration, the question that remains to be answered is whether both novels can be seen as belonging to the vague category of ethnic detective fiction. As the analysis conducted in this article has shown, they cannot. On a purely generic level, both novels do follow the same hegemony-maintaining pattern that characterizes the traditional hardboiled novel. However, on a poetic level the differences are insurmountable. The chronotopic comparison of both novels demonstrates that Blair's action-space, plot-space and worldview chronotopes are the complete opposites of Padura's. Blair's goal is to condemn Cuba's dictatorship by implicitly opposing it to Canada's political system (*BO* 99). On the other hand, Padura's objective is to recriminate the *compañeros* who, like Morín, think they have the right "to gamble with what's mine and yours and the old man's who's selling newspapers and the woman's who's about to cross the road and who'll probably die of old age without knowing what it is to own a car, a nice house, to stroll around Barcelona or wear perfume worth a hundred dollars, and is probably off right now to queue for three hours to get a bag of potatoes" (*HB* 203-4). Neither Padura nor Blair subvert the basic tenets of the hardboiled detective genre, but their focalizers do express two opposite worldviews. *Pasado perfecto* conforms almost entirely to the premise of the original hardboiled novel, whereas *The Beggar's Opera* seems to move away from the detective novel into ethnographic travel fiction. In the end, it would seem the only thing holding both novels together is their shared label of multiethnic, international, minority, multicultural, cross-cultural, ethnic detective fiction.

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Alameddine's Appropriation of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

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Abstract This paper explores Lebanese Rabih Alameddine's novel *The Hakawati* (2008) as an appropriation of British James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), each of which is considered a *Künstlerroman* as its central character is a developing artist. The paper traces the lives of the two artists to be in the two novels: the developing poet, Stephen Dedalus, and the budding musician and hakawati, Osama Al-Kharrat. As it does so, it draws on the socio-political contexts in the two texts, which are religion, family, and the political conditions in the protagonists' countries, Lebanon and Ireland. The paper also tackles the spiritual and physical journeys of becomingness which the two characters go through as well as the hardships they encounter and reveals how Alameddine appropriates Joyce's journey and becomingness. The paper is divided into the following sections: childhood, obstacles, and becomingness. As it depicts the two characters' development, it draws on the resemblance between the two texts which are seemingly distant from each other. Moreover, it sheds light on their departure points and exposes how the journeys of both Stephen and Osama turn out to be ones of self-affirmation and self-actualization which are directed towards freedom of expression.

Key words appropriation; artist; becomingness; journey; *Künstlerroman*

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Introduction

> And then the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud
> was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.
> ——Anais Nin, Risk Poem.

Though painful and risky, flowers bloom and unlatch in order to be able to emerge and grow. They do so when the danger to remain unfolded becomes confining and more threatening. This also applies to artists who wish to emerge when threatened by their constraining buds, and hence, they flower and open in order to make it possible for them to grow. This paper studies Rabih Amameddine's *The Hakawati* (2008) as an appropriation of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). It traces the emergence and growth of the artist in the two novels. It compares between the two novels as they both depict the life of a would-be artist. It also approaches the obstacles which the two emerging artists face on their way to becomingness and shows how both of them overcome these obstacles. The focus of this study is on the socio-political context in the two texts. Comparing between two literary works which belong to different cultures and which were written in different times, the paper reveals how Alameddine appropriates Joyce's representation of the journey as well as the becomingness of the artist.

The protagonist in each one of the two novels grows up to become an artist despite the restraining social and political conditions. In Joyce's novel, Stephen Dedalus wishes to become a poet. He is raised in a strict religious family. He disregards his father's attempts to turn him into an Irish gentleman. He becomes a poet and flees from Ireland, where there is civil war. He ends up following the steps of his ancestor, the mythical Daedalus whose name he carries. Likewise, in Alameddine's novel, Osama Al-Kharrat wishes to become an artist, namely a musician. To satisfy the musician inside him, he neglects his father's continuous warnings and insists on leaving Lebanon, where there also happens to be civil war. He ends up becoming a hakawati, and it is important to take into account that hakawaties and musicians are placed on the same level in this novel. As both novels depict the journeys of becomingness which the two artists go through, they are considered *Künstlerromans*.

In "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms," the term *Künstlerroman* refers to a novel that "describes the formation of a young artist" (Baldick 27).

The term is also used in *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* to refer to "the artist's novel" (Moretti 271). Moreover, in the *"*Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* as *Künstlerroman*: The Politics of Art,*"* it is pointed out that a *Künstlerroman* is a *Bildüngsroman* that is "concerned with detailing the growth and self-discovery of the artist and his resultant conflict with society" (Lorsch 384). A *Künstlerroman* is a journey which the artist goes through and in which he faces some societal challenges and conflicts, matures, and accordingly forms himself by transforming into a different person who is able to give a voice to the real artist he has got within and to create something new. The resultant grown up who comes out of the journey is more powerful than the one who entered it in the first place. Undoubtedly, they are not one and the same.

As stated earlier, this study compares between two novels, the first of which was written by British James Joyce and was first published in 1916, and the second of which was written by Rabih Alameddine and was first published in 2008. Thus, the framework of the study is the comparative literature theory. The term comparative literature is defined as "the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country" (Stallknecht 3). Additionally, the same term refers to "any study of literature transcending the limits of one national literature" (Wellek 290). Hence, the comparative literature is what makes it possible for researchers to study and compare between two seemingly distant novels across different nationalities and time boundaries by shedding light on their meeting and departure points. It is also worth referring to the term World Literature here as this study draws a line between two works, one of which is from the West and the other one is from the Middle East. The term world literature is "multitemporal as well as multicultural" (Damrosch 16) for it consists of more than one work which belong to different times and cultures. Heather O'Dea illustrates that according to David Damrosch, world literature is deeper than literature that comprises of "writing from around the world" (O'Dea 281). She explains that for him, "a piece of literature changes when it stops being a national work and becomes an international work" (O'Dea 281). A work gains this feature of internationality when it is compared to another work from a different nationality as world literature places cultures together in the same bowl by drawing on the similarities or differences between works from different parts of the world.

The study highlights the resemblance between the two culturally distant texts and reveals how Alameddine appropriates Joyce's work. In *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders manifests that "adaptation and appropriation are inevitably involved in the performance of textual echo and allusion" (Sanders 4). She draws on the similarity between the creation of an appropriated text and "the

creation of collage by assembling found items to create a new aesthetic object" (Sanders 4). She indicates that appropriation is a feature of postmodern texts, as she refers to the postmodern culture as the "culture of borrowings and *bricolage*" (italics in original text, Sanders 34). She adds that appropriation does not always make clear relationships with named texts, for "the gesture towards the source text(s) can be wholly more shadowy" (Sanders 32). This, in a way, suggests that a text's linkage to another text should not necessarily be direct in order to be considered an appropriation of it. The act of "borrowing" from another text may simply be spotted by reading the two texts from a particular perspective.

Discussion

What unite the two works in this study are their thematic concerns. In both novels, the protagonist moves from one stage to another until he becomes the artist he desires to become. Hence, to trace the protagonists' development, the researchers have divided the study into the following major sections: childhood, obstacles, and becomingness.

Childhood

The childhood stage is illustrated as the starting phase that can be dealt with within the framework of Alameddine's appropriation of Joyce's novel. As children, both Stephen Dedalus and Osama Al-Kharrat are raised in constraining environments, and they both have artistic seeds. Whenever they attempt to voice their talents and to speak up their minds, they are both suppressed and muted by specific conditions, represented namely by family, religion, and politics. They are indoctrinated, and their artistic natures are hindered from surfacing in their childhood.

In Joyce's novel, the house in which Stephen is brought up is a religious one. As a child, he is portrayed as a believer in God. He prays before going to bed, for he "longed for the play and study and prayers to be over and to be in bed" (Joyce 11). Stephen never sleeps before saying his prayers, for he tells himself when being tired and yawning, "Night prayers and then bed" (Joyce 16). He prays "so that he might not go to hell when he died" (Joyce 11). At Christmas eve, and despite being the youngest among all the present people, Stephen is the one "to say the grace before the mea" (Joyce 32).

On the other hand, little Stephen's artistic tendency shows in the fertile imagination he possesses. When he is sick at school, he imagines himself writing a letter to his mom asking her to come and take him home (Joyce 24). Afterwards, he imagines his funeral and envisions himself saying farewell to his mother

before being buried "in the old churchyard" (Joyce 25). He describes the funeral as "beautiful and sad" (Joyce 25). This indicates that Stephen is able to observe the world around him with the eyes of a sensitive poet. As a child, he is not only capable of imagining but also of deeply feeling what he imagines. He also shows high sensitivity towards colors as he states:

> White roses and red roses: those were beautiful colours to think of. And the cards for first place and second place and third place were beautiful colours too: pink and cream and lavender. Lavender and cream and pink roses were beautiful to think of. (Joyce 10)

His wild imagination allows him to consider the possibility of finding a unique "green rose" (Joyce 10) one day in the world. Moreover, he is known for being good at writing as he gains a "reputation for essay writing" at school (Joyce 88).

However, Stephen's obvious artistic tendency is not watered the way it should. Having been brought up in a religious environment, he becomes known for his "quiet obedience" (Joyce 101). When his friend Heron gets annoyed because the teacher has sent a small boy to call Stephen and ask him to get dressed for the play he is taking part in, Stephen does not seem to be affected nor offended by this action. In his mind, he "hears the voices of his father and of his masters, urging him to be a gentleman above all things, and urging him to be a good catholic above all" (Joyce 101). He also hears "the voice of his comrades urging him to be a decent fellow, to shield others from blame or to beg them off and to do his best to get free days for the school" (Joyce 101).

Yet, little Stephen seems to always obey these voices by which he is haunted without questioning them. His unquestioning-of-orders nature leads to his political passivity as a child. In Joyce's novel, which is set during the Irish civil war, a period of growing nationalist feelings in Ireland, Stephen's father imposes pressure on his son as he tries to dominate his thoughts and tendencies through telling him exactly the type of a person he wishes he would be. Little Stephen is advised by his father to become a good Irishman as he recalls his old days with his decent fellows:

> But we were all gentlemen Stephen – at least I hope we were- and bloody good honest Irishmen too. That's the kind of fellows I want you to associate with, fellows of the right kidney. (Joyce 111)

Similarly, the pressure imposed on little Osama in Alameddine's novel is caused

by his family. Osama's mother tries to convince him of taking "piano lessons" (Alameddine 143) instead of oud lessons. She even tries to change the way he perceives oud through seeking Istez Camil's opinion in front of him and asking him, "Don't you think piano is better at his age?" (Alameddine 151). Moreover, when Osama's father knows about the stories which Osama used to hear from his grandfather, he calls his own father a "menace" (Alameddine 227) and a "loon" (Alameddine 227), which are two harsh words that mirror Osama's father's disapproval of his father's job and his son's choices. In other words, both Osama's father and mother try hard to impose restrictions on Osama and to control his actions and thoughts. However, the difference between little Stephen and little Osama is that the latter never obeys. He never changes his perception about oud, and he keeps telling the stories he was told by his grandfather until the end of the novel. Unlike Stephen, Osama's ever-questioning nature makes him a resistant child, not an obedient one. He persists to take oud lessons instead of piano lessons with Istez Camil as he tells his mother using the subject pronoun "I", "I don't like piano" (Alameddine 144) and "I want to play the oud" (Alameddine 148). Though young, he gives his will and his personal choices a priority over anyone else's choices or desires.

The childhood phase is the cornerstone of the formative years in the lives of both Stephen and Osama, and as it has been illustrated so far, both Stephen and Osama have pressures imposed on them as children, but the way each one of them deals with these pressures is different, for Stephen shows obedience whereas Osama shows resistance. On the other hand, what unites the two would-be artists in the two novels as children is the feeling of alienation and unbelongingness they experience in their countries.

At the Catholic Clongowes Wood College Stephen is sent to as a child, "all the boys seemed to him very strange" (Joyce 11). The only place he longed to be at as a child was "his mother's lap" (Joyce 11). Moreover, at a children's party he is invited to, he states that "the noise of children at play annoyed him and their silly voices made him feel, even more keenly than he had felt at Clongowes, that he was different from others" (Joyce 77). Likewise, Osama confesses to his sister, Lina, that his difference from other people in his homeland is not caused by his long stay in the States. It is something that has been there even before he left his country. He admits, using the past tense in a way to refer to his childhood, "I was different before I left here" (Joyce 29), and he adds when he compares himself to his cousin Hafez, "He was an insider, and I an outsider" (Joyce 33), which also manifests his difference from other people nearly at his age.

Little Stephen and Osama are done out their right to nurture their artistic natures as children. They both feel alienated from their surroundings. Stephen wishes to become a poet, and Osama wishes to become a musician. The task is not easy for any of them, for whenever they attempt to voice their talents, an obstacle emerges from nowhere as will be manifested in the following section.

Obstacles

The obstacles which Stephen and Osama face on their way to become artists are the socio-political contexts in the two novels, which are religion, family, and the political conditions in the protagonists' countries.

In both novels, the protagonist's father functions as his antagonist, for he opposes the development of his son, the artist, and hinders his growth in one way or another, which leads to both Stephen and Osama fighting, or resisting, the restraints imposed by their fathers on them. Stephen's father and masters at school contribute to placing religious and political pressures on him, for they want him to become a good catholic Irishman. To be considered a good catholic, Stephen is desired by the priest to remain a child. When Stephen makes his confessions, the priest addresses him as "my child" (Joyce 177). The use of the possessive determiner here is highly indicative, for the priest, who stands for religion, implicitly indicates that he wants Stephen to remain a child who does not own himself but is owned, instead, by him (i.e., by religion). The priest associates the child image with God's love. To show him his love for him, he calls him "a child, for God loved little children and suffered them to come to him" (Joyce 176). However, if Stephen remains a child, then how is he possibly going to be able to grow and to follow his dream?

Thus, Stephen's father's wish to turn him into a good catholic Irishman turns out to be the biggest obstacle on his way to becomingness. As Stephen feels guilty for having deviated from religion for some time, he asks God to forgive him for his sins, makes his confessions, and promises God not to be sinful again. However, when he is asked by the director of the school whether he has ever had "a vocation" (Joyce 194) and is invited "to join the order" (Joyce 194), Stephen comes to fully realize that his freedom is associated with his five senses to a great extent. Becoming a priest will deprive him of both his freedom as well as his five senses forever as he will be asked to "mortify his sense of sight" (Joyce 185), "his hearing" (Joyce 185), "his smell" (Joyce 185), "the taste" (Joyce 186), as well as the "touch" (Joyce 186). He recalls the "many years of order and obedience" (Joyce 199) which he spent at Clongowes. If he remains the obedient child and accepts the director's invitation, he will "end for ever, in time and in eternity, his freedom" (Joyce 199-

200). It is because of religion that he has come to be "weak of sight as he was shy of mind" (Joyce 206). To put it simply, Stephen comes to realize that a good catholic is not only a child of God, but also a weak and a senseless one. The obstacles transform the once-obedient Stephen into a questioning one as he figures out that sticking to the image which his father has chosen for him will make it impossible for him to become the artist he desires to become.

Likewise, Osama's father imposes restrictions on his son's tendencies and choices. Seeking a peaceful and quiet place to study and stay in, away from postwar Lebanon where there are bombings and fire shoots, Osama leaves to the States. However, he never seems to be at ease in the presence of his father. When interviewed by the dean at UCLA in the States, Osama asks the dean whether he can possibly "take music classes" (Alameddine 283) as he believes that music and math are related. His father instantly opposes and insists that Osama "has already studied enough music" (Alameddine 283). When Osama is asked by the dean to write an essay in a separate room, his father asks him not to mention the music-math theory in his essay. Nevertheless, the whole essay Osama writes when alone in the room is an elaboration of his "theory of combining math and music" (Alameddine 283). This incident reinforces that Osama has got a resisting spirit. He never surrenders to the obstacles his father places on his road.

Moreover, when Osama tells his father that he wants to buy a guitar, his father refuses and says, "no whining, and no guitar" (Alameddine 288). Nevertheless, upon the death of his uncle Jihad, Osama drives his father to the airport, makes sure he is in the jumbo jet in the air, and goes to the Guitar Center to buy a guitar using his American Express card, disregarding his father's refusal, and willingly neglecting the fact that his father will see the monthly report of his expenses. Again, he never allows his father's restrictions to stop him from chasing his dream. He seems to be in a continuous state of rebellion.

Osama witnesses "a falcon having a pigeon feast in Los Angeles" (Alameddine 449) in his father's first visit to him in the States, only two days after his father's arrival. The powerful falcon stands for Osama's father, and the pigeon stands for Osama, being caught, eaten, and prevented from flying and becoming what he wishes to become by his father. Perhaps this image is what urges Osama to resist his father's calls for him to return to his country having spent several years in the States; his dream to fly high is uncatchable, and by eating him, the falcon apparently clips the pigeon's wings. It is also interesting to find that a somehow similar image is used in Joyce's novel to depict how an obstacle can hinder a dream from coming true. On the relationship between Ireland and its people, Stephen comments

that "Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow" (Joyce 252). The image depicts Stephen's disapproval of the political situation of postwar Ireland. If he remains in Ireland, he is going to end up being eaten, and his dream is going to be killed by his own country. In both cases, the image of the powerful controlling/eating bird/animal sheds light on the obstacle which is placed on the artist's way and which prevents him from growing and emerging as an artist.

Alameddine's appropriation of Joyce's novel in this section shows in the fact that both Stephen and Osama oppose their fathers by refusing to follow the images they have drawn for them. The once-obedient Stephen and the ever-resisting Osama who were both alienated from others in their childhood are once again placed in the same boat in this stage due to the impediments they face when attempting to speak up and due to their reactions towards these impediments as will be illustrated in the following section.

Becomingness

When Stephen and Osama are to choose between surrendering to the obstacles on their way to becomingness and accordingly killing their dreams on one hand and taking the risk, resisting any forces, and finally blossoming like flowers on the other hand, they both choose the second option. They decide to detach themselves from their fathers and to associate themselves with their more appealing, dynamic, and "artistic" ancestors by giving way to their real selves, growing wings, and "becoming" real artists.

Stephen begins to question and to deviate step by step from any restraining forces he would be defined by, such as religion and his Irish identity, which are mainly the two criteria his father once wanted him to be defined by. At one time, Stephen is pandied by Father Dolan because he has broken his glasses and is found not writing his "theme" (Joyce 67). The incident of the broken glasses is highly indicative as it stands for Stephen's way of perception of others which has been totally broken and which needs to be replaced by a new perception. He finds it "unfair and cruel" (Joyce 61) to be pandied and called a schemer in front of his colleagues. The unfairness of Father Dolan contributes to changing Stephen's conception of religion as well as his view of priests as people who never abuse others. Accordingly, he starts wondering what Mr. Charles, who is his grand-uncle, "prayed for so seriously" (Joyce 73). At a later stage, Stephen considers the people who go to churches on Sundays hypocrites as he glances at them and then, unwillingly, "stoops to the evil of hypocrisy" (Joyce 127) with them. By changing his own spectacles through which he used to perceive religion and its people, he ends up

owning his own vision. Surprisingly enough, this incident turns out to be Stephen's eye-opener as it allows him to look at things differently.

Osama has two eye-openers. The first one is his grandfather, the *hakawati*, who reinforces the strong relationship between him and Osama as he draws on the connection between a storyteller and a musician. He introduces the word "bakhshi" (Alameddine 44) to him, which is an originally Chinese word that "means a player of the oud, singer, and storyteller" (Alameddine 44). He refers to their unity by saying, "I am a bakhshi, you are a bakhshi" (Alameddine 44). The word bakhshi is very important, for it unites Osama and his grandfather as his grandfather tells him that "the storytelling musicians of Khorasan in Iran think 'bakhshi' comes from 'bakhshande,' which means a bestower of gifts" (Alameddine 44), and these gifts are the songs and the stories they sing or tell. Hence, he wants him to believe in himself and to think highly of himself as one who is capable of giving gifts to people through his talent, and so he should not be a "reluctant performer" (Alameddine 43). He asks him to "sing a story" (Alameddine 44) for him using the oud, keeps reminding him that he is his "flesh and blood" (Alameddine 45), and calls him "my boy, my blood" (Alameddine 182) to reflect their inseparable bond. In one way or another, Osama seems to be haunted by his grandfather's voice, which has always told him bewitching stories that have been engraved in his mind. He never seems to escape him, as if his grandfather's soul has jumped into his body as he was once told by his grandfather about the Druze belief of a soul haunting another body after it dies (Alameddine 200). This makes Osama and his grandfather one and the same. He has, undoubtedly, taken the resisting soul from his grandfather, whose talent as a hakawati has also been rejected by Osama's father, and yet he never has quit. This indicates that Osama is willing to take the risk to become a musician, or a bakhshi, no matter what.

Osama's second eye opener is his uncle Jihad, who is Osama's "favorite storyteller" (Alameddine 90). Through the stories he narrates, he opens Osama's eyes to his abilities and potentials. He once tells Osama a story about the birth of "the best oud player in the world" (Alameddine 93). To enhance Osama's belief in his talent, he points out that Osama is "simply remembering how to play" (Alameddine 94), for he has been born with an undeniable talent. This empowers Osama and gives him strength to insist on playing the oud.

Both Osama's grandfather and his uncle help him give way to his talent, They boost his self-confidence and serve as the "torch" (Alameddine 73) which Fatima, the mythical slave figure in one of the stories narrated by Osama's grandfather, has needed most on her dark journey to freedom, for they have both seen and helped

him see and become the artist he has got within. They provide him with the strength he needs most to resist his father's dominance and to nurture his talent.

Like Osama, Stephen gains strength as he grows. As he insists on outgrowing his boyhood and refuses to be deprived of his senses by joining the order, he demands possessing and using his own senses. Instead of resisting the pleasures of life which are offered to him by his senses in the name of religion, he chooses to resist the restraining religion itself. He figures out that his growth goes in parallel with his deviation from religion, and this growth clearly shows in his art. He is accused by Mr. Tate of having "heresy" (Alameddine 95) in his essays, which he has put much effort in as he considers it to be "the chief labour of his week" (Alameddine 95). Additionally, the role he plays in the school's play is of high importance; when Stephen gets dressed for the play and puts on his wings, he not only transcends a stage in the life of the character he is playing on stage, but he also transcends the "boyhood" stage of his own life and matures.

In both the original and appropriated texts under discussion, both artists end up deciding to fight the restraining forces which deny the talents they possess and underestimate their right to freely express themselves on their way to becoming the writer/poet and the oud player. The difference is that Stephen has to fight these forces alone from the beginning. There is no one to help him except for his own self, his memories, and the situations he finds himself facing, whereas Osama is assisted by both his grandfather and his uncle Jihad.

Stephen ends up becoming neither catholic in belief nor Irish in principles. He highlights his becomingness in the end as he states, "I was someone else then" (Joyce 300) and "I was not myself as I am now, as I had to become" (Joyce 300). When asked by his friend Davin, who is an Irish nationalist, whether he was "Irish at all" (Joyce 250), he accuses his friend of being "a born sneerer" (Joyce 250). Stephen remarks that he is thought to be a "monster" (Joyce 251) and blames his country for this by stating that he is the product of "this race and this country and this life" (Joyce 251). In "Stephen Hero and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: Transforming the Nightmare of History," it is remarked that Stephen's conversation with Davin reveals his determination "not to accede to Irish pressures to conform" (Riquelme 107). Moreover, Stephen admits his failure at founding a relationship with God at the end of the novel as he states, "I tried to love God, he said at length. It seems now I failed. It is very difficult" (Joyce 301). The reason behind his failure is the fact that religion disallows him of expressing as well as of being himself. The change in his religious views also shows when he quarrels with his mom in the end as he rejects her wish to make his "easter duty" (Joyce 298). He admits that he has become a

non-believer as he "had lost the faith" (Joyce 305). He illustrates, "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church" (Joyce 309**).** Stephen insists on becoming the free artist by manifesting determination to express himself as he states, "I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can" (Joyce 309). Freedom, in that context, is the freedom of expression, which needs free senses, not confined ones, and which he can't find in his homeland, post-war catholic Ireland. He ends up setting a good example of a person who is a complete opposite to the one his father has wanted him to become. He becomes the embodiment of what a non-Irish and non-catholic person is by deviating from both his religion and his Irish nationality, both of which he considers to be restraining.

Similarly, Osama becomes the exemplar of what his father does not want him to become. He disregards the road chosen for him by his father and ends up paving his own way instead. Seeking a peaceful and a quiet place to study and to stay in, away from post-war Lebanon where there are bombings and fire shoots, Osama leaves to the States. In the presence of his father, Osama is prevented from expressing himself the way he wants as illustrated in the previous section. He can do things pertaining to music only when his father is absent by any means, and the means seem to gradually develop until the father is completely absent. They start with moving to another room and end with the father's death. To explain this, Osama writes the essay he wants only when he is left in a room other than the one where his father is. He buys the guitar when his father leaves to another country, and he ultimately becomes the hakawati, or the bakhshi that he once aspired to be, at the deathbed of his father. This, once again, highlights Osama's ever-resisting soul which drives him to become the artist he wishes to become. Following the death of his mother, Osama is asked by his father to return to Lebanon. His father tells him, "Your place is here" (Alameddine 460) and cruelly threatens to disown him. Nevertheless, Osama insists on not going back to his country. He only goes back to Lebanon in the end to see his "dying" father. By his final homecoming in the end, he would possibly aim to prove to his father that he has finally fulfilled his dream.

It is also worth being noted that both Stephen and Osama follow the steps of their ancestors whom they both believe to be free artists. Stephen is once called by his friends as "Stephanos Dedalos" (Joyce 208). This incident makes him consider and think about the meaning of his name:

> What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawk-like man flying sunward above the

> sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth. (Joyce 209)

Stephen imagines a hawk-like man flying. This flying man is a symbol for the great artist who creates something out of daily experience. He hopes to become that artist "as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful" (Joyce 210). He believes in his mission to create beauty, and so he follows his own belief. By the end of the novel, Stephen welcomes his life "Away! Away!" (Joyce 316) and asks his "old father, old artificer" (Joyce 317) to stand him "now and ever in good stead" (Joyce 317). Only by doing this, Stephen becomes able to transcend the world and the universe as he once wished to do in the Geography class about elements (Joyce 14). Commenting on Stephen's final fleeing to France, John Paul Riquelme reinforces that it is a "literal escape from the pressures to conform to Ireland" (Riquelme 107). Thus, to become an artist, Stephen has to leave his restraining country so that to run away from the pressures imposed on him.

Like Stephen Dedalus, Osama Al-Kharrat wishes to become an artist, mainly a hakawati, like his grandfather whose family name he carries. The word kharrat means a "fibster" (Alameddine 37), and it refers to one who makes up lies and tells false things. Moreover, the word hakawati is used to refer to one who entertains others by telling them "tales, myths, and fables" (Alameddine 36). Osama, like his grandfather, has fertile imagination. Other than being a talented oud player, in the story he tells his father in the end about how his grandfather came to be, he proves to be a gifted hakawati like his grandfather. He is able to create, for he comes out with a new character whose name is Shoushan and whom he was not told about by his grandfather. He becomes a creator, a hakawati, or as described by his grandfather, a bakhshi. He embraces his grandfather and unites with him when he retells and adds to the stories which he was told by him and which are engraved in his mind and soul, taking into account that "hakawatis and musicians" (Alameddine 81) are placed on the same level. He simply sings or plays a story in the end in his own way.

Conclusion

By appropriating Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* Alameddine's *The Hakawati* depicts the spiritual as well as the physical journey of the artist. Both Stephen and Osama embark on their own journeys of self-affirmation as artists. It is true that in their childhood, they differ from each other in the way they deal with

the pressures imposed on them; Stephen shows obedience whereas Osama shows resistance. However, later on, they both end up freeing themselves of the voices that underestimate their talents. They turn out to fight the restraints imposed on them by society. Moreover, the process of appropriation allows Alameddine to reflect on the effects of the civil war in Lebanon, which are similar to the effects of the civil war in Ireland. The related socio-political contexts in the two novels drive the two artists away from their postwar countries. The names they carry are significant, for they unveil their relationship with their ancestors. Their artistic nature helps them transcend the status quo and become the artists they have always wished to become. They both end up leaving their countries, where they have been hindered from becoming free artists. They seek a safe place beyond the universe to stay in as artists. Their journeys of development are directed towards freedom of expression.

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Symbolism and the Alienation of the Artist in *A Hunger Artist*

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Abstract The paper delves into the manner in which Franz Kafka utilizes the various symbolic representations to enhance the overall impact of the thematic content of the short story. While the author explores how artists can be alienated from the society and even misconstrued, he uses various symbols to highlight this matter. Also, the association of business and art is explored through the use of symbolism in this tale. The protagonist and his fasting also symbolize the thirst for appreciation and fame. The various symbolic representations not only enrich the text, but provide the tale with much more emotional appeal. The paper explores the impact of symbols like the cage, the clock, the act of fasting, hunger, the artist himself, the impresario, as well as the panther to bring out the true essence of the life and sacrifices of the hunger artist. The characteristics of the text that lead to the quintessence of literary appeal are explored in detail. Thus, the short story is analytically deciphered to understand the apt use of semiotics by Kafka. Finally, it is made conspicuous that the theme of the narrative along with the richness of the symbols has the capacity of leaving a lasting effect on the readers.

Key words symbolic representation; hunger artist; alienation

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Introduction

There can be no denial of the fact that Franz Kafka is one of the most significant literary artists in the entire history of world literature. The stalwart has used his

literary prowess and emotional appeal to reach out to the avid readers of the text with all the impetus. For instance, one can take the example of one of the most well-known works by Kafka titled, *A Hunger Artist*, that leaves no stone unturned to bring out the thematic content in front of the common readers with all the impact, thereby making a lasting impression on the innermost core of the hearts. What makes this particular narrative stand out with all the panache and affective appeal is the fact that the skilled author goes on to use the literary elements with utmost quintessence to highlight the theme. The perfect amalgamation of the content and the apt use of literary elements make this narrative reach its zenith with regard to the communication of the innate message to the readers. One should first identify the thematic content of the narrative to further delve into the manner in which the symbolic representations of the text corroborate and catapult the thematic content and appeal among the readers (Hoffmann 205). "In the universe of semioticians in which all entities are signs, all groups texts, and all experience interpretations-in which no self exists, except as the series without paradigm of its readings, and the vale of soul-making has been developed into the archive of soulmarking-Kafka's work would seem to occupy a privileged position because of the rigor with which it holds this view to be deranged" (Corngold 294). Artists are always alienated and separated from their societies, and they are often misunderstood by the common people, apart from being ill-used by the managers and businessmen. This specific artist shown in the text sacrifices himself to gain appreciation and respect.

The Cage

Now, the texts written by Kafka "do not need to be deconstructed, because they deconstruct themselves" (Sandbank 281). The short story by Kafka has tremendous impact on the reader's mind and perspective as the narrative goes on to show the troubled relationship of the hunger artist with all the spectators. While one might have believed that an artist is closely intertwined with the society and its people, the contextual narrative paints an entirely different picture in front of the readers. The notion of the close relationship between the society and the artist has been existent since ages in the human world, and Kafka shows the insight and courage to challenge this perspective with all the impetus to portray his own comprehension of the dynamics (Blyn 135). The author is very much instrumental in highlighting the fact that since the artist is existent apart from the larger society, he must be misconstrued. In the case of the hunger artist as portrayed in the contextual short story, being an individual refers to the act of entirely cutting one's own self off from the rest of the world around (Waterman 9). The short story shows this alienation in

the best possible manner through the use of various literary elements. One can say that the act of the conscious choice of the hunger artist to sequester his own self inside this cage can surely be seen as a vehement signifier of the fact that the artist is inclined toward alienating himself from the influences of the external world to give precedence to the domain of thoughts and individual vision.

One has to comprehend the fact that the act of physical separation executed by the hunger artist with his spectator goes on to actively mirror the essence of the spiritual segregation of the public will and the artistic ego of the individual. One can very well understand that this contextual gulf between the mindset paves the way for a very critical gap in comprehension. Over the course of the narrative, it becomes clear that since the hunger artist is separated from the rest of the society, he is able to construe the substantial importance of his own aims and accomplishments (Troscianko 335). He is the only one who realizes that he is not at all cheating. The narrative portrays how the contextual protagonist endeavors to tread on the path of being perfect. However, this journey on the path to perfection makes him move away further from the sea of people for whom he shows his performance. The author of the narrative goes on to establish that the individual artist would remain separated from the larger society as the very capacities or qualities that differentiate the individual as an "artist" and are identified as idiosyncrasies or individual skills are those that make sure that the artist himself would not be construed by the society.

In context of the discussion, one should reckon the fact that the cage portrayed by Kafka in this short story is one of the most significant symbols of the text which works in favor of catapulting the overall impact of the theme of the narrative in the minds of the readers (Reynolds 152). It should be comprehended that the cage that the hunger artist uses for his performance goes on to represent his personal alienation from the rest of the society. The hunger artist cannot be placed on the same plane as other people in the society owing to his psyche and perspective. However, the psyche and perspective of any individual are abstract in nature, with a symbolic representation embodies the abstraction with panache in a physical form. The cage performs this action, and helps in communicating the notion and impact of alienation among the readers of this short story. The readers can note that the contextual symbol of the story goes on to suggest the distinction between the spectacle and spectators and the impediment or barrier that thwarts the process of comprehension of the artist and his actions (Rubinstein 16). Thus, it is very intriguing to note how Kafka is instrumental in giving embodiment to the idea of alienation of the artist through a cage. It is as if the cage works as a barrier to

communication and comprehension, thereby making way for the gulf between the two sides in context.

The spectators are unable to comprehend the artistic quintessence of the hunger artist. While the hunger artist goes on to strive the contextual cage to achieve the state of perfection in his art, he is simply seen as this pathetic madman whom people think to be someone who might be cheating on his fast (Steinhauer 32). The hunger artist goes on to suggest that the position of the spectators outside the domain of the contextual cage impedes them from truly construing and appreciating the feat of the hunger artist. The author writes, "Everyone wanted to see the hunger artist at least daily. During the final days there were people with subscription tickets who sat all day in front of the small barred cage. And there were even viewing hours at night, their impact heightened by torchlight" (Kafka n.p.). The hunger artist was a sort of spectacle for the common audience. The readers of the narrative can associate with this perspective very well as the story advances. While the hunger artist might engage in lamentation about his separation from the rest of the society in the side of the contextual cage, it has to be noted that he himself had made the choice of isolating his own self from the rest of the world around by staying inside. The lack of comprehension and communication on the part of the hunger artist and the audience should be seen as an archetypal example, with the cage serving the greater function of symbolizing the barrier that comes into play while experiencing the work of an artist in the society. While the artist endeavors his very best to communicate and reach out to the masses through quintessence and efforts, the common people might not be in congruity with the very vision that the artist embodies and expresses through his act.

One cannot deny the fact that the contextual cage has a significant symbolic meaning for the relationship of the hunger artist with other people, apart from the hunger artist's disposition as well. It needs to be reckoned that this cage goes on to represent the body of the hunger artist with all the impact. He feels he is imprisoned in his body, and the audience can see him being imprisoned inside the cage. The physical self and the needs of his body can be termed as the paramount constraints to the artist's aim to go on fasting for an indefinite period of time. As such, his physical self is simply a prison to him. His ambition and effort to emancipate his own self from this prison can be identified to be a death wish. Through the act of fasting, the protagonist of the tale endeavors to be free from his mortal needs, and his act can surely be linked with both divinity as well as demise. Since the physical self is characterized by limitations, the hunger artist could only achieve his envisaged experience through giving up his temporal existence (Weller 781). It

can be said that this particular achievement on his part characterizes the notion of artistic perfection for the contextual protagonist of the narrative by Kafka.

The Clock

Another very significant symbol used by the skilled author is the clock that is present inside the cage of the hunger artist. The clock goes on to represent the biological clock of the male protagonist of the story. Also, the symbol is effectively utilized for the purpose of making the readers understand the fact that the protagonist has limitations due to the constraints posed by his physical self. The clock reminds the readers of the hunger artist's human existence that is bound by basic need of having food for sustenance. The symbol also illustrates the mental capacity and vision of the hunger artist as it become evident that he is inclined upon undermining his physical constraints as an individual over the course of time so that he can achieve perfection in his form of art. It is comprehensible that the man has to combat with his basic needs, which in turn can lead to major implications for his health and life in the course of time. The hunger artist comes across to be entirely convinced of the notion that the state of perfection in his individual art is truly a lasting as well as noble human milestone. He is driven by his vision that his capacity of starvation would exist for an eternal phase, undermining the physical constraints.

The effectiveness of the clock within the cage, however, has a major function in the course of the fictional narrative as it goes on to expose in front of the avid readers as well as the hunger artist himself that he is encompassed by delusions about perfection and greatness. He is vehemently reminded of the reality of existence and life through the clock in context. It is comprehensible to the readers through the symbolic representation that much in contrast to the ambition of the contextual male protagonist of the tale he is simply like any other animate being. He is subject to earthly as well as physical demands that include passage of time. In reality, it is totally impossible for a mortal individual with temporal existence to exist sans any food. A man would never be able to exist outside the domain of time. As such, the readers can very well relate the symbolism of the clock to the mockery of the hunger artist. The clock serves as a reminder of the fact that the resolute and inspired efforts of the artist to gain immortality would never come true. The symbol mocks the attempt on the part of the hunger artist, and thereby adds to the thematic content of the story by Kafka.

It is very true that the hunger artist is characterized by immense pride in his challenging art. It is this pride on the part of the hunger artist that goes on to enable him in the process of improving his fasting. However, it is noteworthy that the pride

ultimately impedes him from attaining his ambitions as it hurts the individual's connection with other people as well as his public appeal. The author is instrumental in highlighting this through portraying how the man looks on the emaciated frame of his body and the protruding ribcage with a sense of pride and vanity, in contrary to being worried about his own health and future. The hunger artist goes on to deem his physical condition to be the ultimate badges of his honor. The perspective of the hunger artist becomes clear when the author pens, "Those who understood knew well enough that during the period of fasting the hunger artist would never, under any circumstances, have eaten the slightest thing, not even if compelled by force. The honor of his art forbade it" (Kafka n.p.). It is intriguing to note that his body takes a grotesque shape over the course of time, and it ultimately goes on to repulse the females who initially wish to take him from the cage when his fast comes to an end. The process of fasting is surely a manifestation of the artist's pride in his own self. The starved body reminds him of his ultimate aim, but it also makes sure that he would never be admired or loved by the common people who come to see him. It is his immense pride as an artist that engages in turning the male protagonist away from the rest of the society. He gets alienated from his audience owing to his pride and physical appearance.

Hunger: The Artist's Craving for Recognition

What makes the readers wonder more about the psyche and perspective of the man is the fact that he engages in reinforcing his own isolation by the process of imprisoning his own self inside this cage. He goes on to meditate with utmost intensity while fasting as a mortal being. It is his pride that ensures that the hunger artist is encompassed by obscurity, and not transcendence and fame in any way. One needs to note that the grotesque body of the male protagonist of this narrative does not only signify the physical hunger of the person in context. While it is true that the protagonist endeavors his best to undermine his own physical need of having food through his act of intense meditation, his resolution for fasting is also characterized by his need for being recognized and acknowledged for his act. He wants the other people to understand his sacrifice. He wants the audience to consider him as someone who has the capacity to challenge the basic need of food consumption through the strength of his mind and ultimate resolution of character (Dünnhaupt 34). It is comprehensible that hunger in itself works as a symbol in the course of the fictional narrative with the author using this symbolic representation to portray the state of mind, needs, and expectations of the hunger artist who leaves no stone unturned to refrain from giving in to his basic need of food intake to satiate his

hunger for fame and accolades from the common people of the society who come to see him staying inside the cage.

All through the story in context, the hunger artist can be found to truly relish his own hunger. He goes on to relish his hunger with the hope that this act would finally pave the way for his spiritual satisfaction as an individual. However, by the end of the narrative, it becomes clear to the readers that his fasting has left him in a state of emptiness both spiritually as well as physically. The narrative shows how the hunger artist goes on to refuses food. However, the self-denial goes on to reveal his requirement for an entirely different sort of nourishment as an individual. He longs for artistic perfection and public recognition as an individual. The readers can note that hunger is the very subject of his individual performance with regard to his physical as well as spiritual aspects. The male protagonist longs for something that the audience is not able to provide him. For the man in context, the act of fasting emerges to be the most favorable thing in the entire world. The narrative explicates, "For he was also so skeletal out of dissatisfaction with himself, because he alone knew something that even initiates didn't know—how easy it was to fast. It was the easiest thing in the world" (Kafka n.p.). However, it is the immense wish for attaining the spiritual nourishment that drives the man forward. The author pens, "Generally he couldn't sleep at all, and he could always doze under any lighting and at any hour, even in an overcrowded, noisy auditorium" (Kafka n.p.). Kafka adds, "With such observers, he was very happily prepared to spend the entire night without sleeping" (Kafka n.p.). Thus, one can comprehend the priority given by the hunger artist to the scope of being acknowledged by other people for his act. Nonetheless, this spiritual need never gets satiated in any way, and it remains out of the reach of the hunger artist all through the fictional narrative by Kafka.

Thus, the author does his best to symbolize the hunger of this man to add to the thematic content of the tale. The closely intertwined nature of physical and spiritual needs of the male protagonist of the short story goes on to catapult the overall effect of the representation on the keen readers who are left intrigued by the bizarre disposition of the hunger artist from the inception till the very end. However, the symbolism of hunger and its association with the innate message of the fictional narrative goes on to highlight the emotional appeal of the text in a substantial manner indeed. Thus, the skilled author makes it possible for the general readers of the narrative to gain an insight into the mind and psyche of the hunger artist. If the symbolism of hunger would not have been implemented with such aesthetic panache in the course of the narrative, it would not have been possible for the common readers of the narrative to understand how desperately the hunger artist

craved for recognition for his act (Mahony 361). The act of fasting is simply a way of endeavoring to find that acknowledgment and fame in the society for something that other people find very challenging in nature.

The Impresario

One should take into consideration the role of the impresario in the short story. This is a class of individuals who engage in exploitation of artists for the purpose of their personal gains. While it is noteworthy that the impresario is like a partner for the hunger artist in the process of gaining recognition, it is comprehensible that he goes on to behave mostly as a parasite. This man ensures his sustenance through the starvation of the hunger artist. So, one can very well say that the impresario engages in commoditizing the suffering of the hunger artist, while the artist simply aspired to be known for his achievements and efforts. One can further understand the parasitic nature of this man by shedding light on his career trajectory and practices with regard to the hunger artist. A parasite becomes most effective if it does not drain the host in totality. Likewise, the impresario becomes most successful by popularizing the fast of the hunger artist only to stop him at the brink of demise in case of all the performances. Ultimately, he simply abandons the host, the hunger artist, when, there is no nourishment available for him.

So, it would be right to opine that the motivations of the impresario to get associated with the hunger artist are driven by his self-centered nature. However, he does play a major role in fueling the aspirations of the artist in context. He goes on to take the responsibility of the physical requirements of the hunger artist. He is seen to force-feed him so that he can survive for more acts. Also, this man is able to perceive the major disconnection between the death wish of the hunger artist and the requirement of being recognized by the common people of the society. He remains with the hunger artist till the time he can. Thus, one can also say that the impresario is a sort of partner and caretaker as well, apart from being parasitic when it comes to the case of commoditization of the art of the starving individual living in the cage.

The story portrays how the male protagonist engages in performing with the impresario. However, what stirs the readers is the fact that the hunger artist does not succeed in fasting for an indefinite period. It is this failure that goes on to result in his constant dissatisfaction as an individual. The hunger artist is unable to comprehend the fact that the very spiritual satisfaction for which he craves is reliant on the physical existence that he thinks of giving up. The protagonist is left incapable of attaining spiritual satisfaction as he goes on to renounce his claims on temporal life. The impresario is very significant in context of the narrative.

The symbol signifies the utter demand of the contextual protagonist to gain acknowledgment and fame. His act of fasting is simply left futile if people fail to understand the fact that this man is doing something that is not at all commonplace. The fact that people can understand and accept that the act of the hunger artist is a signifier of his greatness and commitment as an individual can only bring him the required fuel that would make him keeping going as an individual. In spite of the fact that the male protagonist is alienated from the rest of the society, it is the urge of the hunger artist to make people realize the aestheticism and resolution behind his act (Del Caro 42). However, his failure to do so would lead to the meaninglessness of all the efforts given in the act.

The impresario works as the bridge between the hunger artist and the common audience. As such, it is understandable to the readers of the story that the impresario has immense significance in context of the ultimate aim of the hunger artist that can never be satiated without the acknowledgment of the common people of the society. While the cage creates the distance and barrier between the common audience and the hunger artist, it is the impresario who goes on to provide the limelight to the male protagonist of the tale. The impresario is a sort of fuel for the male protagonist, and the symbolic representation shows the avid readers how the alienation of the hunger artist does not stop him from endeavoring to reach out to others. The author writes, “Much more to his taste were the watchers who sat close up to the bars, who were not content with the dim night lighting of the hall but focused him in the full glare of the electric pocket torch given them by the impresario” (Kafka n.p.) So, the impresario in context also represents the innate desire of the hunger artist to be watched, to be observed, and recognized for the act of fasting with utmost commitment and grit inside the cage in solitude.

The relationship between the general spectators and the hunger artist also comprises one of the most intriguing aspects of the narrative by Kafka. The artist never feels disturbed by the common audience who come to see him. However, it is the common people who come to see this man who have a problem with his grotesque physical appearance. Also, the common audience is often incredulous of the honesty of the act of fasting. The author shows how the hunger artist does not mind the powerful lights that thwart his sleep as he knows he is being watched by people of the society. The paradox of the narrative is that the hunger artist longs to be watched and understood, but finally ends up being misconstrued by the audience. Also, while he keeps on fasting to be famous and perfect, he denies the importance of his physical existence that is the only way in which he can be acknowledged and known by others. “It becomes impossible to construe a contradiction that the hero

registers within his conscious horizon as the collision between a fact and a mere surmise. Kafka's heroes are not, as is often said, forever tarrying in the domain of pure possibility" (Corngold 305). The paradoxical nature of the motivations and actions heighten the overall impact of the thematic content of the fictional tale by the stalwart literary artist.

It needs to be reckoned that the hunger artist is seen as spectacle by people. The common people see this man's act as a form of entertainment. The contextual occurrence goes on to point toward the fact that the society is impacted by mass culture with the people like the male protagonist of the contextual narrative being ruled by the people. As such, the very private act of going on a fast gets transformed into this spectacle, with the hunger artist craving for attention and approval of the common people of the society. While the man could have been satisfied by the fact that he has himself achieved the feat with all the resolution and strength of mind, he also needs to be sure that the audience believes that the act has not been performed by cheating in any way. Thus, the very knowledge of his personal achievement and greatness becomes meaningless to him as he can only be validated through the crowd's recognition of his act and efforts. The process of fasting becomes a powerful symbolic representation in the course of the narrative that signifies the commitment and grit of the individual. The readers also become aware that the act of fasting in itself is only ascribed proper meaning through dissemination of the news of his fasting and the credulity of the common people.

In a story that delves into the alienation of the principle character, it is very interesting to note how the skilled literary artist has explored the symbiotic relationship between the general audience and the hunger artist. While the general audience extracts entertainment from viewing this man who is starving himself to death, the man himself is so engrossed with the greatness and uniqueness of his act associates his success with the acknowledgment of his audience. It is true that the hunger artist is able to real in his achievement only through becoming a spectacle. The process of fasting is a matter of commitment, art, and expression of grit for the hunger artist. However, the same art is demeaned by the common audience by belittling his disposition to the state of being a spectacle. The utter reliance of the hunger artist on the spectators simply becomes the main reason behind his inability to break the fasting records while he is well-known as an individual. One needs to note the fact that the common people always forcibly put an end to the contextual spectacle after a span of forty days. It is through his endeavor to become associated with the circus that the hunger artist shows his interest in being alliance with a greater spectacle. However, this makes him fall out of the very limelight that he has

always craved for (Thiher 229). Although the man engages in fasting longer than ever before, he finds no sense of triumph in his feat as his final success is not in the public domain to be acknowledged and recognized.

Franz Kafka does the very best to bring out the importance of spectacle and the spectators with regard to the development of the plot of this narrative. The short story makes the common readers ponder about the primary importance of recognition in the life of an artist who does the best to make his or her act perfect. The hunger artist's perfection toward the end of the tale and the associated lack of sense of victory shows the importance of common audience for any artistic achievement. As such, one can very well note that the act of fasting, the hunger, and the show itself are closely linked to one another in the entire tale. The alienation of the hunger artist makes him keep a distance from the rest of the world, but the artist also feels the need to be accepted by others. One can say that the symbolic significance of the various representations substantiate the overall plot of this narrative to bring out the true impact of the tale on the common readers who can identify the specific literary elements used for enhancing the emotional appeal and meaning of the thematic content of the short story by Kafka.

The Jesus-Like Artist

One should reckon that the artist himself has symbolic significance in the story. The artist goes on to starve himself to gain acclaim and complete his act with perfection. In the process, the hunger artist is left to sustain in a body that exposes his ribs. People who watch the person inside the cage can understand that he is different from others. Also, the act of starvation demands a lot of mental strength from the male protagonist of the tale. "There is no doubt that the paradoxes in Kafka's work can be read in light of motifs from the Book of Job" (Liska 125). The artist himself has resemblance with Jesus owing to certain characteristics and dynamics. Just like Jesus, the hunger artist goes through physical suffering for a greater cause. However, the physical suffering never bothers the artist in any way. Jesus too was never bothered about the physical suffering that he had to go through owing to being caught and crucified. Jesus knew that his crucifixion was necessary so that the human kind could be forgiven for the sins caused. On the other hand, the tale depicts the character of the hunger artist who feels his act is necessary so that he can reach his final aim of transcendence. While the crucifixion of Jesus attracted many people to witness his pain and suffering, here one finds how the act of the hunger artist is seen as a spectacle by the general public.

Toward the end of the tale, the narrator describes, "The artist now submitted

completely; his head lolled on his breast as if it had landed there by chance; his body was hollowed out; his legs in a spasm of self-preservation clung close to each other at the knees, yet scraped on the ground as if it were not really solid ground" (Kafka n.p.). Thus, one can very well comprehend how the condition of this artist had deteriorated owing to the act of fasting. However, just like Jesus, he never gave in to the challenges of human pain and suffering so that his ultimate aim could be fulfilled with all the impetus. The artist makes one reminiscent of the sacrifices and life of Jesus who embraced demise for the greater cause. Also, Jesus wanted his preaching to be widely known among the common people. Likewise, the hunger artist too wants his acts to be appreciated and acknowledged by the common people with all their hearts.

The Panther

The readers come to see how the panther replaces the hunger artist in the cage at the end of the narrative. The panther can be found to have this raw energy. "Literary history could then take its bearings from the different views of Nietzsche and Kafka implied by the types of reversal enacted in their texts" (Corngold 140). Although the beast is trapped inside this cage, it does not seem to have any shortcomings as it does not require anything in essence. In comparison to the panther, the hunger artist meets with his demise having given up all that he had in his mind. He was unable to attain any of his ultimate goals by the end of his mortal existence. In stark contrast, the panther comes across to be a powerful symbol in the narrative indeed. The panther exudes liveliness and strength. It goes on to serve as the opposite of the starving, weak hunger artist. The hunger artist was powerless, and he finally had to embrace his death. All through his life, the hunger artist endeavored to achieve the state of spiritual satisfaction through his committed act (Beaney 61). However, after his demise, he is replaced by this panther that stands for the ultimate uninhibited energy of this physical world of existence.

Kafka describes the panther saying, "The panther was all right. The food he liked was brought to him without hesitation by the attendants; he seemed not even to miss his freedom; his noble body, furnished almost to the bursting point with all that it needed, seemed to carry freedom around with it too" (Kafka n.p.). So, one can understand that the hunger artist had lived in this condition of a constant want for recognition as well as food. In contrast, this panther has no such wants like the hunger artist. It should be noted that this short story "exists as an unstable struggle between the reading of the story that asserts that hungering is an art with that which makes art only the subterfuge of hunger. This struggle rages in the hero: he is the

arena of contesting interpretations of the metaphor, influenced by past and present spectators" (Goldcorn 95). On the other hand, in spite of being caged, the panther is very comfortable inside the cage and it goes on to project this aura of emancipation.

The narrator of the story goes on to claim that the freedom of this beast can be comprehended to be lurking somewhere in the jaws. This suggests that the traits of hunting and consuming food make this beast an embodiment that represents absence of any conflict. The panther is symbolic of the grace and power that can be attained by engaging with the world around. Also, the cage gets crowded by people when the panther is kept in it, thereby signifying the interest of the common audience to see this beast. The aura of the panther makes it stand out as a marvelous being. The hunger artist could be found to be unable to win over the crowd's recognition as he lacked vitality. On the contrary, this beast is the epitome of vitality and power. The vitality of the panther represents the opposite traits of the hunger artist, making the avid readers of the tale understand the futility of the efforts and ambitions of the hunger artist all the more. Thus, this particular symbol does the best to enhance the appeal of the text, and makes the readers think deeply about the life and ambitions of the hunger artist.

One should understand that the hunger artist is portrayed to be a professional faster in this narrative by Kafka. He wants to dedicate his life in the process of perfecting his art of fasting so that he can achieve what no one has ever done before. The man goes on to endure the pain and suffering of his hunger willfully. It is understandable that this choice made by the hunger artist signifies his vocation of being on a fast apart from his craving for being able to defy the parameters of human nature and existence. While the rest of mankind embraces the requirement of being nourished on a regular basis, Kafka weaves a character that chooses to live in a state of self-denial. He engages in forsaking any kind of companionship, comfort, as well as intake of food, thereby undermining the fundamental things needed for human survival in the society and the world of temporal existence. So, there is no scope of denying the fact that the hunger artist is extremely devoted to his own art. The refusal to accept the need for food intake might be seen as a signifier of his death wish as well. He is clearly unwilling to accept the needs that he has as a mortal being (Sheppard 224). As such, death becomes the culmination of the committed work of his life as an artist.

Surely, the man in context is doomed to remain unhappy all through his career as a hunger artist as he entirely depends on the comprehension of other people. His requirement of validation for his performance as an artist cripples him in a way. While he does feel disdain for the various people who come to see him,

he has to seek acceptance of the same people whom he wants to evade. One can understand that the hunger artist remains as a misfit in the position of this showman. His hunger for being acclaimed is more destructive for him as it never lets him feel happy. On the other hand, his refusal to eat takes a toll on his physical health (Neumarkt 115). Through the representation of the panther, the author also exposes the incompleteness of the hunger artist who fails to exude strength. He neither gets physical strength due to the kind of art he pursues, nor does he remain mentally blissful as he keeps on seeking the approval of spectators who fail to realize the philosophy behind the act performed by the hunger artist.

At a time when the hunger artist goes on to experience any kind of cynicism or suspicion from the audience, it reflects on his state of him. He is also affected if the spectators remain indifferent to him and his act. It is clear that the male protagonist is not able to gauge that the identity of an artist and his disposition are often characterized by a sort of alienation from the rest of the society (Cesaretti 305). It is only at the end of his mortal life that this man seems to tread toward the path of comprehending the paramount paradox that characterizes his very existence as an artist. However, the readers can note that he is no longer in a position to do anything about the matter. He no longer feels that the society is cheating him of the deserved reward for his sacrifice and efforts as an artist. Rather, it becomes clear to him that his personal aspirations and visions could never get fulfilled or rewarded in the domain in which he survives. Thus, "Kafka remains the poet of the ungraspable and the unresolved", and can be describe as one "whose belief in the immovable barrier separating the wish from its realization is at the heart of his excruciating visions of defeat" (Myers 53).

Conclusion

Thus, one can reckon how the symbols have been used by Franz Kafka to highlight the message of the text. The thematic content of the short story in itself very stirring as it creates the ambiance of exploration of the human mind through the representation of the principle character and other instances. "A definition of Expressionism that excluded Kafka's distinctive features would be severely privative" (Corngold 250). The various symbolic representations enrich the textual narrative all the more, and make this story very memorable to the readers. The characterization of the narrative is also weaved in a manner that works as symbolic representations in front of the readers. It is the quintessence of Kafka that gets communicated to the readers as they understand the motivations of the main character (Spurr 180). Also, the perspective of the world around this protagonist is

highlighted with excellence through the use of certain symbols.

Hence, one can end by saying that Franz Kafka's iconic literary work titled, *A Hunger Artist*, has been rightly immortalized in the pages of world literary history. The story is a commentary on human nature. The psyche and perspective of the hunger artist represents the thirst of artists who delve into the apotheosis of their art. The short story has remained extremely popular even after so many decades of its initial publication, and the narrative has also gained immense scholastic importance over the course of time. The apt use of semiotics by Kafka has inspired many literary artists. The text proves that literary elements have the capacity of heightening the appeal and significance of the story in a substantial manner.

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Analysis of Literary Techniques Employed in *The Revelation*: Flashback in Focus

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Abstract This study mainly focused on a critical analysis of flashback employed in the novel *The Revelation*. The researcher employed descriptive research design with qualitative data analysis approach. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the novel under scrutiny. In addition, the researcher used document analysis as data gathering tool. The novelist employed different past events in the novel to narrate different life lessons or experiences. This helped the leading character Blen to learn various life experiences; for instance, she shared the wedding tradition of her grandparents, what traditions they were practicing, the life journey of her parents and this, in turn, helped her to be conscious about her stand, especially on her education. It also helped Blen to know her parents' and grandparents' background very well. Inculcating the past events in the novel had, in short, motivated Blen to be dynamic in everything. In addition, the author inserted these past events to create tension in the readers mind especially when Hiwot narrated how her husband or father of Blen, Alemayehu escaped from death and left his homeland to a new country. Finally, conclusions and recommendations have been drawn.

Key words Literature; Novel; Literary Technique; Flashback

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Introduction

In a piece of literary work, writers employ different literary devices so as to make their works effective and meaningful. Among literary devices, narrative techniques or literary techniques are vital devices. Some of them are flashback and foreshadowing. Let us see what flashback is and its functions in literature.

A flashback, according to J. A. Cuddon (2013), is a term which probably derives from the cinema, and which is now also used to describe any scene or episode in a play, novel, story or poem which is inserted to show events that happened at an earlier time. It is, on the other hand, an interruption in the present of a vivid memory set in the past. There are a variety of things that can cause a flashback to occur, which include songs, food, people, places, or similar events to those in the past. Through flashbacks, we are able to reflect upon experiences we have had in life, both positive and negative, and apply them to the present. A flashback is an interruption in the chronological narrative of a literary work to relate events from an earlier time.

Cuddon (1979) adds that flashback reminds the reader of past events; reveals and develops themes of a text; and supplies background information of characters and events. Mafela (1997) also supports it as flashback is the technique mostly used by authors to supply background information of characters and events. The author waits until things are moving and then goes back to fill in the necessary background information. According to Mafela (1997) and Baldick (1990) flashback infers the narrator's interruption of the chronological sequence of events in a literary work. By inserting past events while facing new ones, the narrator relates both sets of events.

Authors use flashbacks to give readers necessary background information or to create tension or contrast. It is an interruption that writers use to move the audience from the present moment to the past via inserting events in order to provide background or context to the current events of a narrative. Authors use flashbacks as a means of adding background information in the present events of their story. They interrupt a specific event within their story by using events that have already occurred or that have not been presented. This gives the reader added information about a character's past, including his or her secrets, inner or external conflicts, or significant events that affected his or her life. If the author is able to do this well, the reader will begin to convey reasoning for the actions of the characters throughout the story and develop a better understanding of present events. This also helps the author create a theme for the story and increase the emotional impact it will have on the reader" (Sedillob, n.d as cited in Hadj Yahia Hadj Mahammed,

2016). Authors use flashbacks in their works for many different reasons. One key reason is to fill in elements of one or more characters' backstories. Flashbacks can help the reader understand certain motivations that were otherwise unclear, or provide characterization in other ways; it can also create suspense or add structure to a story; it breaks the present action of the story to reveal an event from an earlier time; it provides background information to help readers understand the story, and often contributes to the mood, characters, theme, or setting of the story.

A flashback is a way of presenting events that happened prior to the current action taking place (Littlehale, n.d. as cited in Hadj Yahia Hadj Mahammed, (2016)). The use of a flashback is to convey information to the readers regarding the character's background and give them an idea of the characters motives for doing certain things later in the story. Therefore, it deepens inner conflict. It provides stimulus for the conflict deepens the touching effects and allows the reader to sympathize even with the villain. Flashbacks also increase tension. A mere mention of the past event makes readers wish to know the secrets. So, he/she reads on to find out what the secret is, and how terrible is the secret that it provides the motivation for the conflict in the story. It is a popular literary technique for writers to use when starting a story in the middle of things, to add suspense, or to provide the reader with important information.

A flashback typically is implemented when the narrator tells another character about past events, the narrator has a dream about past events, the narrator thinks back to past events, revealing the information only to the reader and the narrator reads a letter that prompts back to an earlier time. Flashbacks are a useful way to start a story at the end, and then fill the reader in on the events that got the characters at a certain point. It also mirrors the way our minds work, as we often think back to past events or people as the result of triggers we may see throughout a normal day.

In literature, flashbacks are incredibly useful for different objectives it is linked to the author's purpose. The writer may opt for various aims, understanding characters' relationships and background, understanding a character's motivations and perspective, disrupting the chronological linear order of a narrative for more depth and complexity, creating surprise or suspense, giving clues or hints to remember which foreshadow future events, enhancing understanding of an important theme or idea. In order to use flashback, it is important to be aware of why the flashback is necessary to the story. The flashback must reveal something intriguing which propels the plot forward or supplies essential information for the reader's understanding of the story. To use flashback, the writer has first to write the story in the present situation and then insert the necessary information using

flashback.

Doing researches on different literary devices helps to add something in the readers mind. It may deliver hints or clues how to conduct a research paper on this regard. It also adds a knowledge regarding to literary analysis. Therefore, this research focused on the analysis of flashback events employed in Kibrom's novel The Revelation. The novel "*The Revelation"* is written by Kibrom Gebremedihn. It is written with 125 pages and 20 chapters. It is winner of 2013 Burt Award for African Literature which recognizes excellence in young adult fiction from African countries.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study basically aimed at analyzing and interpreting flashback events used in Kibrom's novel *The Revelation.* In addition, this study attempted to achieve the following specific objectives.

- To scrutinize the relevancies of the past events or flashbacks employed in the novel;
- To appreciate the writer and his utilization of flashback events.

Research Methodology

This study was designed on library research and used documentation method in collecting data. The researcher also used qualitative data analysis approach to analyze the data since words, phrases and statements were used in expressing the collected data. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the novel and the title under scrutiny. This is because the novel is written in English language and the events related to the flashback are highly used in the novel. The researcher utilized different documents, theses, dissertations, journals, articles, and books as sources of data. These sources can be labeled as primary and secondary sources. The primary source involves the actual literary text that is Kibrom Gebremedihn's novel *The Revelation.* On the other hand, the secondary sources include any materials, published and unpublished, related to the study under scrutiny. Document analysis was used as a research tool to collect valuable data for the study at hand. The novel "*The Revelation"* is written by Kibrom Gebremedihn. It is written with 125 pages and 20 chapters. It is winner of 2013 Burt Award for African Literature which recognizes excellence in young adult fiction from African countries.

The researcher, in conducting the study, followed procedures to collect the relevant data for the study. Firstly, the novel was read repeatedly and critically to understand what is depicted in it. Secondly, underlying the important word, phrases

and sentences and then taking important extracts related to the study was done. Thirdly, the researcher arranged, and verified the data identified or the extracts selected related to the study. Fourthly, the researcher selected the most relevant data which can go in line with the topic under study. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

Analysis of Flashback in Kibrom's Novel *The Revelation*

This part focuses on analyzing and interpreting the collected extracts related to flashback. Brief explanations and justifications are given below.

The following extract addresses background information about the grand parents of Blen or parents of Hiwot. It helps Blen to share the indigenous cultural wedding tradition of her grandparents had before.

> Hiwot narrates as "My mother was six years old when she married my father who was nine. Their parents were farmers. At the wedding, the children wore special clothes and sat on wooden chairs. After the guests ate, drank and danced, they received gifts from both families. From that day on they were declared husband and wife. (*The Revelation* 11)

The above incident narrates the actions that have already happened but important in the actual narration in the novel. It delivers background information about the wedding ceremony of the parents of Hiwot. The importance of inculcating this flashback is that it shares the tradition of the traditional or earlier marriage ceremony of Ethiopia and Ethiopians. In the earlier time, Ethiopians, especially people of rural Ethiopia, were forced to engage in to marriage their children in their infancy age. This extract also reflects some cultural habits conducted during marriage ceremony. Cultural habits like special clothes, wooden chairs, eating, drinking and dancing aspects and giving gifts purposely for the wedding ceremony are represented in the novel *The Revelation.* The relevance of inserting these past events in the novel is to share the life lesson the parents of Hiwot enjoyed and what cultural habits were held in marriage ceremony and how the couples spent their lives with their infancy age marriage. Blen shared these traditions because of the inclusion of such past events. The following flashback also depicts how the parents of Hiwot spent their childhood time and grew up after their marriage.

> They made them live together in the house of the boy's family as children. So they grew together looking after their own herds in the mountainous

> village. They flourished all the same soil like twin corncobs of lonely maize. They grew up playing similar games, hunting the same birds, swimming and basking. But the children eventually grew; and it was from this family that I was born. (*The Revelation* 11)

The above incidents portray the childhood practices that the parents of Hiwot spent after their marriage. They lived together at the boy's family; they look after herds; they flourished soil together, they play similar games, they hunt the same birds, they swim and bask together. Their childhood triggered them to do things freely without any shy. However, when they grew, they may not act like what they did in their childhood. In addition, we can understand that the boy's families, culturally, are responsible to take care off the daughter as she departed from her families. The author employed this flashback so as to share some cultural aspects of the wedding ceremony of Ethiopians. Hiwot narrated it for Blen to let her learn from the life experiences of her parents. In other words, the author inserts this event to show the love affair of the couples and their intimacies.

> Blen, life started to turn sour for me at an early age. A revolution took place in the country. The monarchy was ousted and almost all towns and cities became battle grounds. The army which pretended to side with the people in the beginning usurped political power. My father was then conscripted forcefully. He wrote a letter to my mother every month from Dire Dawa where he was assigned. After two years, he came and took us with him. We lived in a barrack together for about two years when the military junta decided to fight against the insurgents in northern Ethiopia. My father's battalion was transferred. (*The Revelation* 11-12)

This extract portrays the life lessons that Hiwot spent at her early age. She spent complicated life situations. She departed her father because of the political disorder of the period. She lived in a problematic situation in a barrack. The extract also justifies the political system of the period. It depicts the clash between the Dergue regime and the other revolutionist group. Lots of people were conscripted forcefully to participate in the tension created in the between groups. The following extract delivers evidence how the father of Hiwot was forced.

> No solider or officer was allowed to move his family with him. We were told to stay where we were. It was naturally a very difficult time for my mother who

> could not even receive letters from my father regularly. She lay awoke most of the nights worrying about him. She sensed a danger looming. (*The Revelation* 12)

The above excerpt reflects the life lessons of being a soldier and family members of a soldier. It portrays the negative impact of being a soldier on the life of family members. It is depicted that the family members (Hiwot and Hiwot's mother) did not go with the soldier or father of Hiwot. The mother of Hiwot was in difficult to get a chance of meeting her husband even via exchange of letter. Generally, military life is not as such comfortable for family members and also it helps Blen to know how Hiwot grew up and gives her strength in the upcoming journey of her life.

> What I cannot still forget is my mother's love for the coffee ceremony. She often did it twice a day, but always differently. One time while making coffee, she placed the black coffee pot and the white demitasses, lined up on the rekebot on the ground. The rekebot was standing on green blades of grass and adey flowers. She also put a plate filled with puffy popcorn alongside it. The air was filled with a pleasant scent which swirled from the incense burner at the corner of the room. Mother was usually focused when she roasted the coffee beans. That day, however, she seemed anxious. She examined carefully the color of the beans. When satisfied, she put the beans with unsteady hands into a mortar and crushed them with a pestle. The sweet aroma of the powdered coffee filled the room.
>
> She put the powder into the pot of boiling water. She then put the pot on the glowing fire. She picked it up and stirred it for just a while perching. When ready, she placed the pot on the 'matot' slightly titled, until the roaring pot of coffee would settle and be ready to be poured in minutes. She did all the process fully focused. After she scattered around a handful of popcorn in every direction mother started expressing gratitude to the lord. I remember the words she murmured. She said almighty god we thank you for everything! Do not forsake us. May good news reach us? Bless our country. Bless this house and the ceremony. Let the thirsty get drink and the starved bread. Let the sick heal, the pregnant deliver safely. Let the elders speak wisely and the leaders follow your path. Give us peace and let us know its taste. Concluding her prayer, mother raised the pot with its handle and began pouring the coffee into the demitasses. At that moment, the pot exploded. She sat frozen holding the handle of the coffee pot…. (*The Revelation* 12-13)

The above extract reflects different issues. Firstly, it depicts some cultural activities followed in preparing Ethiopian coffee. From this, we can understand that the writer played a role in portraying the cultural aspects of coffee preparing. The process of Ethiopian coffee preparation is introduced. This past event was used to make Blen to know and respect her own culture and who her grandmother was in preparing coffee. On the other hand, the author wants to reflect the coffee ceremony of Ethiopia. Secondly, the writer incorporated some material cultures in narrating events happened before. These are *the black coffee pot, the white demitasses, adey flower, rekebot (it is a thing in which the demitasses put on), matot (a thing in which the pot is put on and prepared either grass or…,).* In addition, Blen is informed of to keep in mind her indigenous cultural habits. This is evidenced in her struggle with the antagonist character Eden who is habited with foreign cultures and ignores her own home land and her own traditions.

> Not physically, but she was mentally devastated," said hiwot casting her eyes down and fighting back her tears. I ran to her… to help her but she seemed lifeless. I called her hugged her but she did not respond. She sat like a statue. She was lost. I finally, called out for help. Neighbors came and helped me take her to a hospital. The doctor said she was physically normal and would recover within few days. We returned home with some medicine. Days, weeks and months passed without change. Mother remained in bed in utter silence. So I took full responsibility of the house as our neighbors disappeared throughout time…. (*The Revelation* 13-14)
>
> I am not sure Blen. There were perhaps a few of them in the village. In any case, we were not in touch. So one day, three military officers and two social workers came to our home. They asked me about my mother's condition, our names and ages, and filled a form. They came again after some days and took us to Addis Ababa. We were only allowed to take with us some clothes in two bags. First, they took us to the headquarters of the Armed forces. Then, an ambulance came and took my mother forever. I cried and wept insisting to go with my mother. But a muscular officer restrained me. Hopelessly, I tried to find the eyes of my mother. I always remember that moment as if it happened some minutes ago. She wanted to tell me something. She wanted to shout some last words, but she could not even mouth it. Tears gushed on the hands of the officers who held her… Some minutes after the departure of my mother, they took me to an orphanage. So that was the way I became an orphan at the age of

nine (*The Revelation* 13-14)

The excerpt quoted above reveals different issues; firstly, it depicts the feeling of both Hiwot and her mother felt when they departed each other. The feeling of crying and weeping, searching the eyes of her mother, the need of Hiwot's mother to tell Hiwot something and the gush of her tears are some feelings that we can understand from the above extract. This extract, in other words, clearly reflects the close relationship between mother and daughter. All the feelings stated above showed the strong intimacy between Hiwot and her mother. This in turn helps Blen to think in this way. The second incident reflected in the above quotation is the relationship Hiwot and her families had with the villagers. Though the villagers/ neighbors helped Hiwot by taking her mother to hospital, they did not have a close relationship. In Ethiopia, when people suffer difficulties, people can help each other even they are in conflict of each other. The third event inculcated in the above extract is about how Hiwot became to an orphanage. As indicated, Hiwot departed her mother who helped her in every aspect. She had also missed her father. No one who can help her was with her. Hiwot departed from her mother; the officers took her to an orphanage at the age of nine. The relevance of inserting this flashback is to share Blen how her mother Hiwot spent a very difficult life passage. It helps Blen to understand the feeling of her parents more particularly her mother. This is seen when Blen came back to home from university to visit her mother. It increased the intimacy they had.

Oh yes, I knew later that they institutionalized her in the Amanuel mental hospital; she died after a few months. I once met a woman whom I knew when we were in the barracks. She told me that my father died on the same day the coffee pot exploded and my mother became ill. My mother knew at that moment he was killed. This is amazing. Isn.t it?

I was successful in the first six years of my stay. I was a keen and hardworking student. I was also a source of pride to my institution and my teachers. So, I was always called to the head office and given prizes and gifts by father Goldman, a catholic priest. He was the director of the school and orphanage. He hated war which he said made children's life miserable. Father John loved children; but he was a disciplinarian. We feared God. But we were more afraid of father John than God. So I was considered lucky by everyone in the orphanage as father John promised to send me abroad for education. However, as this could be true only if I scored above 95% average in the grade

> 8 national examination, Father John allowed me to use his library whenever I liked. He also helped me improve my language proficiency.
>
> However, something dreadful happened before I sat for the examination. Father Goldman was ordered to leave the country as the communist government claimed that he was an agent of the CIA. We were left alone in the wilderness. A feeling of hopelessness cast a shadow over the institution. On the eve of the New Year some children under the age of 15 were sent to governmental orphanage. The rest of us were thrown out to live own our own. In fact, we were given some money and vocational training. It was then that I learned sewing and embroidery. I still earn enough to live from this work. That was how I started to struggle for survival. I worked day and night. It did not matter how things were difficult. It did not matter how hard life was. I just won my livelihood using these coarse hands and the sweat of my brow. Even though, I like my work, it was not my vision to be a tailor. My vision was to become a nurse; but I remained here. However, there is something important that you have to understand. I will never ever stop the pursuit of my life. Sooner or later, I will be a nurse. (*The Revelation* 15-17)

The above extract reflects the opportunities and challenges that Hiwot, mother of Blen, came across in her educational journey. At the first stance, she was a hardworking and competent student in her education. She was treated optimistically in the school because of her education. She gained different prizes and gifts from the director of the school. She was allowed to use the director's library and helped to improve her language skills. However, Hiwot unexpectedly get confused when the director of the school and the orphanage was forced to leave the country. During this time, Hiwot felt loneliness, wilderness and hopelessness. She is obliged to taste another life journey as she was given some money and vocational training. She learned sewing and embroidery. She had a wonderful work habit that she was working day and night and led her life in good manner. Though she had a dream of being a nurse, she was not successful because of the demanding situations happened on the director of them and the school. Her dream was in the hand of the school she was learning and the director of the school too. However, things fall together and made her dream dark.

Generally, this flashback was inserted by the author to reflect how life is full of ups and downs. Hiwot narrated the problematic life experiences she had had for her daughter Blen to inform her how she grew and passed challenging obstacles. In addition, this past event was employed to let Blen recognize the efforts her mother

devoted to win troubles in her life journey. It also gives a glimpse for Blen to be strong in her mentality or to be confident enough in winning tough situations just like what her mother did. The author has also represented Hiwot as a strong lady who can win cumbrous situations. This is evidenced in the novel in various ways. Firstly, Hiwot was born from a lower class family and they died at her early age. This led her to taste a bitter life. She sent to an orphan school and of course she was an excellent student. Secondly, though she was very good student in the school, another hardship came to her. The school director was obliged to leave the country and as a result, hiwot became in the hand of difficulties. Thirdly, hiwot was felt loneliness, hopelessness and wilderness. However, the way she committed to win the struggle was appreciable. She became hard worker and led her life properly. In addition, her husband after giving a birth to Blen that is after five years left his homeland lived in a strange land. During this time, Hiwot was treating her daughter Blen with difficulties with the aid of her husband. These all hardships were happened on Hiwot but she won all. This on the other hand gives a strong lesson for Blen to go in line with the strong sides of her mother.

> ….you know Blen, your father was a good man. He was a selfless man who always put other peoples' interest before his own. He loved his country very much: as much as his own family. He had great dreams. He had plans to make you great. He believed that education could solve every problem in the world. The books in this house were all his. He was a voracious reader entirely free of personal vanity. He hated people who fought and killed one another for money, power and pride. He always advised everyone to use their precious time for doing something noble. He was bold and defiant. (*The Revelation* 25)

The author *Kibrom Gebremedihn* in the above excerpt reflects the event that happened on the father of Blen. This flashback was employed in the novel just to share information about who the father of Blen was. Blen was in search of who her father (*Alemayehu Sileshi*) was. To know this reality, she frequently asked Hiwot (her mother) to tell her the reality about him. As a result, Hiwot told the reality that happened on her husband. As specified above, Alemayehu Sileshi or father of Blen was a good man, who was crafted with optimist, patriot and hopeful qualities. He has a positive stance about the importance of education in solving problems in the globe. In addition, the writer has crafted Alemayehu (*father of Blen*) as he adores reading books. He believed in humanity than being materialist as he hated people who run for money, power and pride.

> …..We had lived for about five years together peacefully until your father came home one night covered with … blood. I was escaped to death and failed down on the floor… (*The Revelation* 25-26)

This extract reflects the relationship between Hiwot and her husband Alemayehu. It reflects how much they were much-loved with each other. The writer employed it to show Blen how much her parents were intimated or lived in harmony with each other. This is because the feeling Hiwot felt when he came to home implies their strong intimacy. It depicts her suffer because of the crime committed on her husband. Generally, this quotation is employed to share Blen the life of her parents and the strong intimacy they had before.

> …He told me that some men tried to kill him because he had witness to a crime. The crime was committed by corrupt officials who smuggled national treasures out of the country. So they took him outskirts of the city in van and shot him on the chest. Believing he was died, they then threw him to be devoid by hyenas.
>
> … He came home by himself. After all the shooting, he was slightly injured around his chest. The criminals were deceived by the amount of blood they saw over his body.
>
> …What happened next was terrible. He told me that these men would not hesitate from eliminating him if they knew he was alive. Not only that. They would kill everybody who had met him under the pretext of preventing the evidence from reaching the public. That meant we were highly exposed to danger had they known that he had met us. Therefore, he decided to leave us behind and flee. (*The Revelation* 26)

The above three extracts reflect the actions that happened on *Alemayehu* father of *Blen* and husband of Hiwot. The first paragraph reflects the political system of the country that her parents were enjoying. *Alemayehu* was a victim person because of his right witness to the criminals who committed crimes on trafficking resources of the country. They tried to kill him though he escaped from death. In line with this, extract two portrays *Alemayehu's* recovering from terrible or shoot and coming to his home. The criminals were deceived by the blood bleed from his chest. This reflects the cruelties the criminals committed on Alemayehu. The third extract reflects the kindness and honesty of Alemayehu. He went leaving his own families

so as to save their lives. This is because the criminals are cruel enough as they want to eliminate the people, whoever they are, meet with Alemayehu. This reflects that the criminals are powerful and beyond rule of law who cannot be obeyed by law. On the other hand, it depicts the weak legal system coverage in the country.

> … If men violate the innate law in their hearts that bind them together to be human in a social boundary, they cannot obey the legal system which emanates from their communal interest.
>
> …He said so and went out of the house in the middle of the night. I begged him to take us. But he advised me to stay behind for your sake. He chose to suffer alone in a strange land. He also told me to report to the police that he was missing after three days. And after six years, he sent letters. One of the letters was for you. I have kept it hide like a treasure of gold as you were a kid. (*The Revelation* 27)

This extract reflects the move off of Alemayehu from his families and homeland to a strange land to escape from the evil deeds of the criminals. In addition, he decided to go abroad so as to save his families and left Hiwot to keep her daughter Blen at her homeland. It also depicts the positive attitude of Alemayehu towards his families, Hiowt and Blen. This in short was inserted by Kibrom just to teach the positive feeling of Alemayehu for Blen. Blen feels happy when this was told to her.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study was conducted basically on critical analysis of flashbacks employed in the novel *The Revelation* written by Kibrom Gebremedihn. All the flashbacks utilized in the novel revolve around building the personality of Blen. The following are prominent among the basic relevancies of the flashbacks employed.

Blen was informed to know her own cultural traditions. She learnt traditional way of coffee preparation of Ethiopians and the material cultures used in the process, traditional wedding ceremony of Ethiopians and the material cultures and folk customs employed in the process, cooperative working habits of Ethiopians and so on. She was curious enough her own identity and herself; this may emanate from the past event narrated by her mother.

Blen was assembled excellently in her education because of her mother's past life on education. Hiowt was excellent student at her early age and this in turn led Blen to be excellent in her academic performance especially at Addis Ababa University. She was a voracious reader just like her mother Hiwot.

Blen was put up morally strong when difficulties happened on her. She learnt it from the past events of her mother. She escaped lots of demanding challenges; for instance, she kept going excellently in her education though Eden was her big obstacle; she felt strong about searching her father.

Blen was also introduced different issues about her country just like the weak political scenario and absence of rule of law as shown on the life of Alemayehu. He left his country and lived in a strange land because of the criminals' wrong act on him.

The researcher wants to recommend other researchers to conduct another study on other literary devices or techniques of the novel under study or other novels. Literary works and writers should be appreciated. This will be done when we professionals of literature conduct researches on these regard. Ethiopian literature in English in general and novels in English in particular are at their infancy stage. Therefore, researchers should appreciate them by conducting researches and then sharing the life lessons depicted in the novels by publishing it.

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