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Can One Teach Alterity? Preparing Students for Ethical Encounters

Corina-Mihaela Beleaua

Given the current state of literature classes in academia, it is crucial to rethink the various teaching approaches that might lead students to a better understanding of the world around. Literature, as source of goodness, beauty, and truth, has the potential to facilitate peaceful encounters. The role of literature professors is thus central for students' configuration of the self and the other. The institutionalization of pedagogies of recognition, such as multiculturalism or postcolonialism, lead to separation, rather than dialogue and acceptance of the other. It is thus necessary to reconsider current pedagogical discourses and frame new methodological approaches for teaching literature.

In order to do so, there are a couple of questions that we should consider: What should a monolingual professor do in order to provide his/her students with an appropriate understanding of other cultures? How do we incorporate the idea of self as translation in the interpretative apparatus of monolingual students? Does one teach classical literature the same way as multicultural literatures? What kind of practicality can one attribute to literary concepts such that they are made accessible towards finding a more harmonious means of coexistence that is not reductive? Can multiculturalism and the "performance of alterity" truly preserve the life of the Other and encourage outsiders to aid in this preservation? Framing answers to such questions might lead to the configuration of a methodology that would transform the practice of teaching into a process of knowing the self, thus becoming Other.

We are a group of graduate students from the University of Georgia at Athens, working on different aspects of multiculturalism with an emphasis on teaching literature classes. Covering a variety of topics on the state of the discipline and literary practices, the following essays address interdisciplinarity and multiculturalism from a historical, philosophical, and pedagogical angle. We are interested in examining how comparatists bring together literature and philosophy, religion,

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linguistics, and education, in order to reinstall the Other at the core of the liberal arts curriculum.

“It is not a matter of nations being obliged to think in unison; rather, they should become aware of and understand each other, and, if love proves impossible, they should at least learn to tolerate one another” (qtd. in Strich 34).¹ Goethe’s incentive is valid for both the beginning of the nineteenth century and for today’s context. As initiator of the idea of World Literature *Weltliteratur*, Goethe sought to bring people together by reinforcing the role of harmony and acceptance. He emphasizes the need for an international community of writers who would display a balance between the national and the cosmopolitan: “there is no such thing as patriotic art or patriotic science. Both belong, like all good things, to the whole world, and can be fostered only by untrammelled intercourse among all contemporaries, continually bearing in mind what we have inherited from the past” (qtd. in Strich 35).²

The academic quest to engage alterity results in pedagogies of recognition, such as multiculturalism, postcolonial studies, queer studies and, more recently, world literature. All these pedagogies and particularly multiculturalism seek to militate for ethnic diversity and tolerance for minorities. To what degree do they succeed? Or, more pointedly, do they succeed more than comparative literature as it attempts to study literatures (in their original languages) across linguistic, cultural, and geographical boundaries, involving extensive knowledge and awareness of differences and doing so in an interdisciplinary fashion?

Our collective contribution addresses such problems in teaching alterity and frames possible solutions by offering a variety of practices, thus acknowledging literary multiculturalisms. Theories of alterity, such as multiculturalism or postcolonialism might lead to commodification, fetishization, and tokenization. It is thus essential to examine the interdisciplinary potential of literature, philosophy, and education in developing awareness of the Other. The following essays will each discuss the potential of literature to nurture ethical encounters. We are aware that our endeavor is not exhaustive, but it only opens the way toward a fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue that invites literature professors from both English and Comparative Literature departments to reconsider their own teaching methods and add innovative practices that students might benefit from.

The first essay, titled “Deeper Than Multiculturalism: Relocating the Roots of Literary Studies Within an Ethics of Encounter,” will introduce us to more specific theories of multiculturalism by focusing on their ethical encounter. Hannah Fenster investigates the ways in which various theories can shape literary studies and education, especially in a culturally plural environment like the United States. After a criti-

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cal study of multiculturalism and an investigation of theorists such as Paul Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas, Fenster examines examples from translation studies, theories of hybridity from Latin American Studies, and practices of cultural multiplicity in the West African region. The end goal of her article is to demonstrate the ethical nature of literature as a cultural symbol in a rapidly pluralizing world.

The second essay, "Multiculturalism in Practice," examines the conditions of production of the experiential corpus that builds multicultural exposure. As Sabnam Ghosh acknowledges, the practice of multiculturalism as represented in texts and taught in classrooms hides the larger everyday life as lived in and outside texts. One's intercultural encounters happen at ethnic events on school campuses, in oriental marts, or within ethnic enclaves that are made into a spectacle and paraded on streets. Thus, commodification, tokenization, and fetishization form the conditions of production of texts. Using Asian-American authors as case studies, Ghosh observes that "multiculturalism promotes culture without any actual accountability to the original."

The third essay addresses the relationship one can envision with the other, by presenting the danger of reducing alterity to a mere projection of selfhood. In "Saving Whose Life and Wherefore?," Satish Kumar discusses "intersectionality," a term that has gained currency in various fields of academic inquiry and activist politics. The term as used today seeks to remedy the gaps in mainstream identitarian politics, which fail to recognize the interrelatedness of identities and marginalities. Such an approach, as bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins point out, is in no way novel. The intersectional nature of the marginality and oppression faced by racial, gender, and sexual minorities, has been articulated in various ways even before the coinage of this term. However, since gaining popularity as a counter-point to the dominant discourses of identity politics, especially in the context of feminist and LGBTQI discourses, "intersectionality" has gradually started to become the primary mode of understanding the complexes of identities and marginalities. The essay seeks to explore, not only the interaction between "intersectionality" and older formulations of identitarian inclusivity, like multiculturalism, but also the ramifications of this new centrality of "intersectionality."

The fourth essay discusses literature as a moral and cultural catalyst that develops students' receptivity, thus reaching the ultimate purpose of teaching which is the constitution of the free man. Corina-Mihaela Beleaua's essay, "Teaching Literature for the Constitution of the 'Free Man,'" seeks to answer the following questions: Can one teach alterity? Can literature professors facilitate students' understanding of the self and the Other? Can one teach tolerance, acceptance, awareness, em-

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pathy? Her contribution will bring together literature and several philosophies of education, in order to show how (comparative) literature is a moral, cultural catalyst that develops the students' and readers' receptivity for the other. She looks at teaching not in terms of theorizing, explaining and conceptualizing alterity, but rather in terms of facilitating the encounter with alterity. She claims that alterity can be taught as a movement or process toward others. Teaching alterity is not a stagnant theoretical process, but rather a dynamic recognition of the other through a direct encounter.

In the last essay, "Architextu[r]al Abstraction as Literary Method: On Poietic Objects and Common Self," Irina Kruchinina argues that engaging alterity presupposes cultivation of a compassionate type of subjectivity. She argues that all things people could potentially share are contextual, conditional, and finite and thus their representations cannot be brought to a common denominator. Literature allows us to meet on the same page by offering an alternative three-space map of the world, where all conceivable things become united by a mutual co-extensionality. Kruchinina claims that a certain operation of geometrical abstraction can enable a literal translation of individual objects/representations into one another while preserving their essential structure. Literature transforms the world and its elements, which have their finite appearance, sound, and perception, into a matter of poetic word, i.e., the sublime dimension of things. Literature is thus looked at as language of image, sound, and mind.

This series of practical approaches on multiculturalism shows how easily it expands throughout disciplines. In order to frame an open vision on multiculturalism, one needs to acknowledge the fact that its misuse might perpetuate the cultural hierarchy it aims to go against. Consequently, this cluster proposes a reevaluation of the multicultural approach through the integration of comparative and interdisciplinary practices that increases chances for facilitating an appropriate encounter with the Other. One should bear in mind that the practice of multiculturalism must not ignore ethics of encounter, but on the contrary, it should avoid the trap of power mentalities by nurturing global awareness.

Multiculturalism might be one of the means literature instructors use in order to teach alterity and allow students a non-mediated encounter with the Other. For attaining such a goal, instructors should determine students' engagement with texts by trying to boost their empathy by surpassing the multicultural paradigm where the self defines the Other, thus reaching an intercultural dimension where the self finds his path toward the Other, by paying attention to the Other's specificities and by enriching the self's own view through a genuine in-

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teraction. Preparing students for ethical encounters is a responsibility that needs a global approach.

In order to activate students' desire to properly interact with others, literature teachers should avoid the downfalls of multiculturalism and focus on offering examples of good practices that will melt down boundaries between people and reconnect the center with the margins, by nurturing a holistic mindset. Surpassing the limitations imposed by a multicultural approach and employing literary texts in a broader context will sharpen students' critical thinking skills and will enhance their ability to communicate.

Moving beyond the already traditional multicultural mindset of most universities will allow literature to become a remarkable resource for guiding students' paths toward the Other, thus teaching alterity without defining it. As Kidd and Castano mention, "fiction . . . contributes to the development of consciousness and enriches our daily lives" (379). By allowing literature to gain its well-deserved central place in academia and by teaching with the clear purpose of opening readers' minds toward an irenic mentality, literature teachers will help students acknowledge the need to improve their relationship with the Other.

Notes

1. A fragment from Goethe's journal, *Propyläen*.
2. Goethe conceptualizes world literature including a recommendation that prompts "global awareness."

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Notes

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The following articles take as their collective point of departure Dorothy Figueira's monograph *Otherwise Occupied: Pedagogies of Alterity and the Brahminization of Theory*. This volume provides a thorough history of American academe's conceptual treatment of the Other in the legacy of the singular, "transcendental abstract subject" that emerged from Sartrean existentialism and the rise of structuralism as an alternative to phenomenology (Figueira 6). It traces the history and patterns of this "paradigm shift from the aesthetic to the political" by way of the trend toward commodification of the Other via the emergence of identitarianism (1).

Figueira confirms that the study of literature on a global scale began to lose ground to institutional efforts towards multiculturalism in the 1990s and early 2000s, and continues today (9). She describes multiculturalism's shift in focus towards the prioritization of difference in a domestic context, the reassertion of the singular identity within the many that make up America. In its scramble to categorize and acknowledge nonwhite identities, it made groups of people integral to America as a nation into "others," and inevitably excluded those who identify with a non-represented identity or identities (17). When applied pedagogically, multiculturalism results in requirements like that of multicultural courses, which perpetuate the definition of African-American literature or immigrant fiction, for example, as a) homogenous and b) separate from the literary "norm." It repackages the study of literature by framing engagement with difference as a special-case scenario (19). In contrast to comparative literature's basic praxis that crosses national boundaries, Figueira makes clear that multicultural literature reinforces the concept of a singular national literature from which multicultural literature deviates.

In broad practice, multiculturalism aids American universities eager to prove their lack of racism. Despite efforts towards positive discrimination and affirmative action, this practice ends in tokenism again and again, with professors of color being hired to teach themselves and not much else. Figueira details this process in the chapter "Gestures of Inclusion," which discusses the practices of positive discrimination in India and affirmative action in the United States. Furthermore, in this system focused on acknowledging and representing marginalized lit-

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eratures, literary theory and criticism can begin to function as symbols of penance and engagement, as pseudo-activism via scholarship (64). Often, alterity translates to power through the self-minoritization of academics in order to give themselves the right to “speak for” marginalized populations, and well-intentioned multiculturalism can further separate cultures that in reality do, and *must*, exist in conversation with one another. Conceiving of oneself as a conglomerate of influences necessitates a certain ethical self-awareness, with which multiculturalism fails to engage.

Above all, *Otherwise Occupied* is a discussion of the influence of pedagogies of alterity on “a larger debate in academe concerning race” (1). Thus, in addition to a critique of multiculturalism and its offshoots, including Postcolonial Studies, and world literature, the monograph also grounds itself in ways of moving forward, using as its basis the ethics of encounter from Paul Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas. The text contains frequent echoes of Ricoeur’s idea of the self-as-translation, and Levinas’s “response-ability” required by the “copresence” of the Same and the Other (6). *Otherwise Occupied* continues to speak to the present moment in academe, and it has inspired the following reactions regarding theories and pedagogies of alterity.

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About the Author

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Deeper Than Multiculturalism: Relocating the Roots of Literary Studies Within an Ethics of Encounter

Hannah Fenster

The increasing cost of higher education has placed colleges and universities under pressure to deliver certain educational outcomes and standards for their attendees. Curricula based on the Common Core, Liberal Arts, or General Education frameworks have become tools used to facilitate the process of ensuring a student's breadth of educational experiences during their undergraduate years. This student-centered attempt at cultivating the Renaissance Learner has implications for virtually every department, but my task in this paper is to address those within the context of literary studies. If we are to have a truly student-centered experience within this discipline—one that not only offers students a transformational experience worth time and money, but also trains them to engage meaningfully with difference in a contentious political and social climate—we must reinstate the Other at the core of the curriculum. From a theoretical standpoint, this task will necessitate forgoing the benevolent but inefficient framework of multiculturalism in favor of an educational approach centered on an ethics of encounter.

In *Otherwise Occupied*, Dorothy Figueira traces the way that institutional efforts towards multiculturalism began to replace the study of literature on a global scale in the 1990s and early 2000s, a pattern that continues today (16). She describes multiculturalism's shift in focus towards the prioritization of difference in a domestic context, the reassertion of the singular identity amongst the many influences that constitute life and individuality in America. In particular, in its scramble to categorize and acknowledge nonwhite identities, multiculturalism makes groups of people integral to American history into "others," and inevitably excludes those who identify with a non-represented identity, or a combination of multiple codified identities (17). In essence, through tokenization, multiculturalism perpetuates a kind of isolationism it claims to fight. The institutionalization of multiculturalism on a general scale, usually through central Offices of Multicultural Services and/or multicultural course requirements, forces literature

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departments to remain solvent by creating classes that perpetuate separation, instead of dialogue, between various histories and traditions.

To get a sense of the discourse of multiculturalism on an institutional level, I sought out mission statements from Offices of Multicultural Services or Affairs at several universities. The mission of the Office of Multicultural Services and Programs at The University of Georgia, for instance, “envisions a University of Georgia that honors the identities, perspectives, and worldviews of our entire community.” Comparable programs at the University of Kansas, Duke University, and Johns Hopkins University, to name a random sampling, emphasize their common missions of supporting students from underrepresented populations, as well as promoting “multicultural education” through events. The rhetoric of support and celebration communicates the ability of multiculturalism to promote the *existence* of difference and diversity on a college campus, and not much else. This approach is tied to institutionalized mandates towards “diversity,” which, in the words of Jasbir Jain, “emphasizes difference and assumes a norm; it implies strangeness and unfamiliarity” (*The Diaspora Writes Home* 28). Jain also draws attention to the Oxford English Dictionary 1691 definition of the term “multiculturalism,” which “was used to indicate differing from what is right, good, or profitable” (28). Thus, multiculturalism, as the tool of efforts towards diversity, perpetuates the very cultural hierarchy it claims to fight.

The application of multiculturalism to literature traces its roots to Goethe’s notion of *Weltliteratur*. This concept relies on the proposition that literature reflects its national culture or nationhood, indeed the spirit of its nation as a whole. In conversation with Eckermann, Goethe cautioned: “But, really, we Germans are very likely to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, when we do not look beyond the narrow circle which surrounds us.” He went on to explain what is now widely accepted as his definition of world literature:

I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise every one to do the same. National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of World literature is at hand, and every one must strive to hasten its approach. But, while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to anything in particular, and regard it as a model. (165-166)

Thus, alongside evolving ideas of language and nationalism from Herder to Anderson, Goethe sparked a parallel legacy of longing for the possibility of the study of literatures from all over the world together, as a way of revealing connections between disparate peoples

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and cultures. Goethe rightly identified globalizing trends in intellectual and literary as well as political spheres: “My confident statement that in these truly stirring times, and with the consequent greater ease of communication, there is hope of a world literature in the immediate future” (qtd. in Strich 350). Goethe’s *Weltliteratur* proved revolutionary for the way it crossed national borders and broadened the scope of potential literary engagement. Although his theory did not address the problem of practice when it came to studying literature across borders, leaving behind the issue of “canonicity,” it did call attention to the problem of the *field* of literary awareness, arguing for the importance of allowing the “geniuses” of various national cultures to influence one another while maintaining their particular identities.

Goethe’s “hope of a world literature” has proven seductive. While for Goethe *Weltliteratur* represented a benevolent curiosity, in recent years, the concept has acquired a political dimension and direction. David Damrosch, a spokesman for world literature in its twenty-first century incarnation, defines it as “not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a *mode of circulation* and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike” (5, my emphasis). Damrosch’s approach aims at using world literature to implement democratic ideals in literary study, celebrating the ability to treat each work with the same approach. Not only does this approach neglect the fact that the works come with nuanced individual, social, and historical contexts, but it also strays from Goethe’s definition of world literature, incorrectly forcing its focus from the *field* of literary study to the *mode* of literary study. This view results in the prioritization of a shared or universal method for studying literatures from dissimilar cultures over a focus on understanding the specific cultural contexts that produce those various literatures and the variety of methodologies necessary to engage with them.

This evasion of encounter with difference fails to mention any pre-existing modes of handling or working through these differences, and indeed misses the opportunity to cast difference in a positive light. Thus, as Jasbir Jain notes,

the concept of the universal, with its fallout into unequal binaries, is an estranging one. It does not create any space for dialogue or recognition of the important fact that just as our culture and its affiliates constitute our identity, they do so also for the other. But if the gap has to be bridged in terms of relationships, a better term than the universal might be the idea of alterity. (*Forgiveness: Between Memory and History* 80)

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Alterity refers to the idea of difference in a neutral sense. This neutralizing facilitates relationships, the kinds of relationships that the literary text as a cultural object has the potential to provide. Thus literary engagement has a high potential to lead to engagement with alterity, to dialogue across difference.

Today's multiculturalism (think back to the Offices of Multicultural Affairs) claims to celebrate this difference and maintain a philosophy of dialogue and intercultural understanding. In this sense, it very much perpetuates Goethe's spirit and intent. Yet another major distinction between multicultural and world literature lies in the boundaries within which they operate. Where world literature focuses on transcending established boundaries, multicultural literature operates within and maintains an awareness of defined institutional, particularly national, boundaries. Where Goethe prioritized finding the best works of literature on a global scale, multicultural literature focuses on issues of representation within its defining borders. These fixed boundaries place works of literature in conversation with the nation, making them necessarily political.

In the United States, this focus on representation manifests itself by emphasizing nonwhite literatures within the context of a multicultural literature requirement. The foundational vocabulary of this practice is based on faulty logic. The term "multicultural literature" implies a singular group—literature—that embodies multiple characteristics from various cultural traditions within its homogeneous identity. The common practice of referring to a work about a single nonwhite culture, such as a classic African-American text, as "multicultural," operates on inconsistent grammar. In order to make sense of the term, one must imagine a separate, primary culture from which the text at hand has deviated to create a network of multiple cultures. Multicultural literature could achieve its goals of intercultural dialogue more effectively by allowing texts to be studied free of implicit comparison to a homogeneous Anglo-American culture. Additionally, the current practice hinders the preservation of the complex history of Anglo-American culture in its fractals of Italian-American, Jewish-American, Irish-American, and so on, creating a reductive binary separation. Furthermore, if multicultural literature is designed to serve as an apology, or even a reparation, for past and present injustices, the most direct way to do this would be to categorize literatures from white and nonwhite cultures by distinguishing cultural characteristics instead of by their positions in this binary.

Using literature as a tool to help re-balance political inequities is a valid and magnetic goal. Yet the practice of doing so must be handled with care. The curricular requirement of a "multicultural" course, as

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exists at the University of Georgia, for example, perpetuates the practice of defining African-American literature, immigrant fiction, or Chinese poetry, for example, as separate from the “norm.” Multicultural literature relies on the assumption that “people comprehend people like themselves, rather than translate difference” by framing engagement with difference as a special-case scenario, even a curricular requirement—always a self-referential practice (Figueira 19). Goethe himself may have anticipated these methodological adaptations, cautioning, “the pleasure-seeker wants to hurry, and thus obstructs the progress of that which could actually help him” (Strich 25). In contrast to world literature’s basic praxis that crosses national boundaries, multicultural literature reinforces the concept of a singular national literature from which literature deemed “multicultural” deviates within the boundaries of a culturally plural nation like the United States.

How, then, do we access a study of literature that truly honors and facilitates cultural plurality and difference, in America and beyond? The answer, at least in part, lies in the departmental location and methodology—in particular, in Comparative Literature as a discipline. Where English departments consider multicultural literature a subset or specialty of their offerings, Comparative Literature has a long history of defining “literature” as a network of plural *literatures* from multiple cultures. Comparative Literature has been described as a “hospitable space” for “the cultivation of multilingualism, polyglossia, the arts of cultural mediation, deep intercultural understanding, and a genuinely global consciousness” (Pratt qtd. in Hutcheon 300). As a result, contradiction and all of its accompanying uncertainties and anxieties are definitive characteristics of Comparative Literature as a discipline. These are part and parcel of what it means to have ethical encounters with alterity through the text. Comparative Literature conceives of a plural society and acknowledges that in order to harbor plurality, that society, and the individuals that constitute it, must harbor contradiction. The discipline of Comparative Literature has deliberated the effects of this eternal negotiation of difference in official ways since its inception. The American Comparative Literature Association’s 1993 Bernheimer Report named this core of debate as a disciplinary “anxiety,” and the term “anxiogenic” circulates within the discipline in volumes such as *The Comparative Perspective on Literature: Approaches to Theory and Practice* and *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*.

In response, however, some scholars have embraced disagreement and contradiction as a productive central tenet of the discipline. Linda Hutcheon indicates that

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Comparative literature's major disciplinary strength and major intellectual attraction have always seemed to me to lie in a positive version of what Emily Apter considers its 'unhomely' quality (90) and what Bernheimer calls its 'quality of dispossession – a kind of haunting by otherness' (12) [. . .] any such misunderstanding is part of the intellectual vitality of the field. (302)

André Lefevere's response to Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* extends the argument that otherness contributes to "intellectual vitality." Bloom's book bemoans the fact that poets can never write original work but will always produce work that is derivative of the poets who inspire and influence them. Translation theorist Lefevere responds in "Mother Courage's Cucumbers" by welcoming textual "refractions" that exist within a system of inevitable influence. Lefevere does not contradict Bloom's acknowledgement of influences between generations and between literatures in translation, writing that "the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience" does in fact have "the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work" (Venuti 234-35). However, he neutralizes the influence that so concerned Bloom by asserting that a "refraction [. . .] represents a compromise between two systems" (237). This acceptance of the impossibility of a world where original and translated works exist in vacuums is a hallmark of Comparative Literature. Comparative Literature takes cultural mediation as its methodology.

David Ferris queries: "is there [. . .] a logic that drives comparative literature to question continually that which constitutes it as a discipline? Is this a logic that also ensures [. . .] that the answer to what comparative literature is should always fail in order to preserve the question?" (80). Lionel Gossman and Mihai I. Spărosu's 1994 collection of autobiographical essays entitled *Building a Profession: Autobiographical Perspectives on the History of Comparative Literature in the United States* responds to this question. The volume, which contains essays from leading scholars of Comparative Literature as the discipline took root in the United States following World War II, serves as its own kind of state-of-the-discipline by featuring voices from notable comparatists such as Rene Wellek, Anna Balakian, and Gerald Gillespie. One major thread that weaves throughout the collection is the reframing of intellectual conflict as positive and productive, even necessary. "Several contributors express disappointment and occasionally even bitterness over the ideological divisions that have lately plagued the field," the introduction states, continuing with the reminder that "spirited controversy has been a built-in component of Comparative Literature

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virtually from the outset and that the very nature of theory is antagonistic, since it is closely related to questioning and debate about the nature and boundaries of literature and literary study” (x). A spirit of tolerance underlies this statement, a spirit of intellectual putting-into-perspective, leading towards a de-escalation of emotion and a push towards rational encounter with alterity.

Since *Building a Profession* is an anthology compiled by two eminent comparatists in the United States in the post-WWII generation when the discipline took off, it is a good gauge of the intellectual spirit of the discipline. Interestingly, after its neutralization of controversy, the introduction goes on to caution against “the danger of turning Comparative Literature into a pure political agenda for special interest groups” (x). “Comparative Literature,” it continues, “is naturally sympathetic to cultural and ethnic diversity and pluralism. Comparatists should not lose sight, however, either of their own scholarly and human limits [. . .] or of the conflictive and exclusive nature of difference.” These leaders of the discipline celebrate pluralism but also advocate for a wise assessment of negotiable versus non-negotiable difference. This point adds yet another layer of mediation and of perspective-keeping to the discipline, cautioning scholars not to push to find similarities or universalities that do not exist.

The problem with importing the mission of multiculturalism into a literature department, moreover, is that notions of “honoring” or “supporting” are quite passive in contrast with the active, equalizing engagement that literature can facilitate through a discipline such as Comparative Literature. Jain writes, “even ordinary structures which one takes for granted mark the difference and create hierarchies of inequality” (*Forgiveness* 80). She questions, “Can difference be, in some degree, accommodated within the concept of equality?” (80). We must not underestimate what literature, literary studies—or indeed, what students—can do. An adherence to multiculturalism allows American universities to demonstrate publicly their lack of racism while reinforcing artificial racial and ethnic categories that are in reality far more blurred.

This simplification of the multicultural approach is at odds with the nature of reading itself as the basis for literary study. Reading is informed by vast, nuanced personal histories and contexts. It teaches students to reexamine their own upbringings that have created the lenses through which they view the text. Hans Georg Gadamer details this understanding in *Truth and Method (Wahrheit und Methode)*, affirming the individuality of the encounter with the Other and understanding the creation of the text itself through the event of reading (103). Gadamer defines “returning to itself from what is other” as “the

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basic move of spirit” (13). Gadamer’s notion of historically affected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*) describes the inevitability of the influence of individual perspectives on the reading of the text at hand and the need to *reflect* on those perspectives in order to gain the fullest possible understanding of the text. Gadamer’s case for self-reflection dovetails nicely with that of Emmanuel Levinas in *Humanism of the Other*. There, Levinas describes the essential role of vulnerability in the formation of subjectivity. Growing closer to the Other is not a passive move, he says; rather, one reaches a level of intellectual sincerity only through an active willingness to engage with both the subjectivity of the self and the Other. This is the process that occurs when encountering the narrative of an Other through a text.

Paul Ricoeur, too, argues that the self is only constructed through its engagement with otherness. In *Oneself as Another*, he explains how the encounter with alterity “unselfs” the self, essentially making it strange to itself, and that this “unselfing” allows for knowledge of the Other to enter. In turn, this knowledge opens a space for moral action, and these moral actions contribute to a broader ethics of behavior. Ricoeur justifies the self’s ability to change with each encounter with alterity and at the same time retain a coherent singularity by splitting identity into two components: *idem*-identity and *ipse*-identity. *Idem*-identity refers to each shift of the self upon its encounter with various others, and *ipse*-identity encompasses all of these negotiations into a singular selfhood. In this way, “otherness,” Ricoeur writes, “is not added on to selfhood from the outside, but it belongs instead to the tenor of meaning and ontological constitution of selfhood” (317). In this context, the self emerges as a being in constant negotiation between various forces of influence. Ricoeur’s ideas move beyond the separation—be it in the form of celebration or fear—that can come with difference, advocating instead for the value in irreconcilable, but educational difference—difference that produces dialogue.

These theories pave the way for the kind of thinking that needs to underlie today’s academic discourse, curriculum development, and pedagogy: thinking that extends beyond two-dimensional encounters between self and Other, and instead engages in what Jasbir Jain calls “an exchange between the self and its multiple others that refuse to be contained within categories like race, gender, and religion and bring in a criss-cross of loyalties [. . .] that are often at odds with each other” (*The Diaspora Writes Home* 32-33). By contrast, and here I will refer again to *Otherwise Occupied*, Figueira frames academic emphases on “multiculturalism” as modes of learning about similarities between oneself and an Other, instead of learning to understand the difference

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of the Other as it affects the self. Her argument extends the theories of Ricoeur and Levinas:

One of multiculturalism's underlying assumptions is that people comprehend people like themselves, rather than translate difference [. . .] The sad truth is that some students of multiculturalism, although they saw themselves as border-crossers or cultural workers, defined alterity in very self-referential terms. (19)

Trends towards multiculturalism in academic pedagogy teach students to frame their understandings of others through their own vocabularies instead of learning to incorporate new ways of thinking into their individual identities.

The field of Translation Studies has the potential to guide Literary Studies more broadly through this discussion of the ethical navigation of difference within and between selves. Translation, a practice shaped around the concepts of cultural pluralism and mediation, has cast difference in a positive light historically by assuming as its task the facilitation of ethical contact between cultures. Discussions of cultural multiplicity appear throughout the long history of practices and theories of translation. As early as 395 A.D., Jerome references Horace's advice to the translator: "And care not with over anxious thought / To render word for word." Jerome's own advice is to preserve the "sense" of the text above all, to understand the text not as a series of words but as an emblem of culture for which it is the translator's duty to serve as ambassador.

For Friedrich Schleiermacher, writing from a multinational Prussia in the early nineteenth century, language and culture were dynamic practices that grew stronger with the addition of new concepts through translation. For Schleiermacher, the translator serves as a cultural mediator who both shapes and is shaped by his or her native language (46). His notion of the translator-as-mediator serves as a blueprint for the scholar, student, or other reader who encounters a foreign text and is able to decide which cultural elements to absorb for the purposes of enriching his or her own culture or selfhood. Eugene Nida, Antoine Berman, and Andre Lefevere, to name a few influential translation scholars, contributed lists of steps for the translator to follow, pragmatic frameworks designed to enable encounters with alterity. These steps may be critiqued and debated, but they are present, full attempts at ethical engagement with the Other.

In recent years, the field of Translation Studies has taken it upon itself to combat prejudices that these encounters might reveal. These

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efforts stem from vehement anti-colonialism that manifests itself in extreme, even “polemic,” ways (Polizzotti 17). Lawrence Venuti, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Gayatri Spivak, and others argue that translating oral literature, or orature, from formerly colonized cultures into European languages serves destructive political agendas and presents a certain “violence” to the source text (Venuti). Venuti concludes the first chapter of *The Translator’s Invisibility* by voicing his goal “to force translators and their readers to reflect on the ethnocentric violence of translation” –the use of the word “force” implying a kind of militancy that is not open to disputation (41). In the chapter on canon, he traces ways in which English translators translated classical texts in the service of aristocratic agendas during the early modern period. The word “domestication” is written with a distinctly bitter tone, and “fluency” of translation accused of tricking readers into understanding the text in their own cultural context instead of the original. For example: “Denham’s domesticating translation [of the *Aeneid*] casts the destruction of Troy in a form that resonates with certain moments in English history”; “Denham made available, not so much Virgil, as a translation that signified a peculiarly English meaning”; “Fluency can be seen as a discursive strategy ideally suited to domesticating translation” (59, 61). He goes on to critique Alexander Fraser Tytler’s *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (1791) for the ways it appeals to the individual “reason and good sense” of the translator to “correct” the pieces of the source text to communicate the sense of the piece in the way that will resonate best with the target audience. In the chapter on nation, Venuti beautifully summarizes Schleiermacher’s ideas of the mediation of the foreign, but then accuses Schleiermacher of speaking only to a German elite whose education permitted them to understand both source and receiving cultures. In sum, Venuti does advocate for “fluency” of translation that comes with understanding of both cultures, but then laments that “the illusion of transparency produced in fluent translation enacts a thoroughgoing domestication that masks the manifold conditions of the translated text” (43). In other words, he ends in the impossibility of translation.

Certainly, the translations Venuti cites reveal the prejudices and assumptions the translators may have had about the source cultures, and these are important to understand for what they can lend a contextualized reading of the work. Yet critiques like Venuti’s linger so long on the impossibility of the perfect translation that they neglect any discussion regarding the possibility of moving forward in an ethical way. Situations like these can be handled in two ways. The first approach is to allow for a kind of theoretical paralysis. Venuti’s volume ends without a clear statement on how to proceed once one has identi-

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fied the “violence” inherent in translation. It is interesting that much of Venuti’s evidence for “ethnocentric violence” comes from passages that reflect accurately the way cultures did and do blend through translations as sites of contact. Even as these translations do reflect colonial mentalities and power imbalances, it is now more productive (and this is the second approach) to observe these patterns as historical trends that can guide our present approaches to translation in a more ethical direction.

Mark Polizzotti responds to Venuti by noting that Venuti’s argument “tends to oversimplify matters in pursuit of its agenda [. . .] There is a large middle ground between ‘naturalizing’ a work so drastically that it becomes denatured and preserving its foreign flavor to the point of serving up gibberish” (17). The exploration of this “middle ground” lies in redirecting energy from critiquing bias to exploring it and developing an ethics of translation. As I have already mentioned, a whole host of scholars seeking to prescribe an ethics already exists, from Nida to Berman to Lefevere. For a present day example of a notable group of translators exploring and enacting an ethics of translation of and for the twenty-first century, I will turn to Antena, a group which describes itself as “a language justice and language experimentation collaborative founded in 2010 by Jen Hofer and John Pluecker, both of whom are writers, artists, literary translators, bookmakers and activist interpreters” (antenaantena.org). Based in the Southwestern United States, Antena views the “aesthetic practice” of translation as a necessary step in the creation of a world where multiple languages coexist in a system of equal validation. It provides both theories of and guidelines for creating multilingual spaces to facilitate conversations between people of multiple native languages. The philosophies and practices of the group provide refreshing examples of the links between translation theory, the ethics of individual behavior, and a broader re-envisioning of ideal life in a culturally (and linguistically) plural society.

Through its series of manifestos, most notably *A Manifesto for Discomfortable Writing* and *A Manifesto on Ultratranslation*, Antena outlines a framework for conducting ethical translations and multilingual writing that indirectly responds to the paralyzing fear of linguistic “violence” voiced by Venuti and others. These manifestos frame translation as an ongoing process, “a laboratory, a place to create unexpected combinations of like and unlike things and explore the results, a place to make attempts and embrace failures and extend investigations without regard to a clear sense of destination or outcome.” Antena’s realistic yet inviting language opens ethical possibilities in a crucial way. The collective acknowledges the need to write and read translations with-

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out a shadowy goal of perfection, but it also does value more ambiguous end results:

If reading work in translation makes us think we haven't read widely enough, that's a good thing. If reading work in translation makes us wish we knew two or ten or thirty more languages, that's a good thing. Rather than running away from the untranslatable, scorning it or eyeing it suspiciously, or lamenting the loss it represents, we experience the untranslatable as invitation to further immersion, further closeness. (*Manifesto on Ultratranslation* 3)

This passage conveys Antena's underlying interest in the possibility of language to reconfigure identity. In fact, it expands on this point when it notes that uncomfortable writing functions "to make us strangers in a place we thought was home. To find spaces for listening inside strangeness." All of this talk about the dual necessity of strangeness and closeness paves the way for conversations about the constructions of individual identities and actions upon which a larger multilingual, culturally plural society builds itself. This progression—the "making strange" followed by "finding spaces for listening"—reflects the ethics of encounter outlined by Paul Ricoeur.

Ricoeur is especially pertinent to this discussion because he connects the negotiation of self with linguistic translation through the idea of the self-as-translation, bridging the ethics of translation with a broader ethics of encounter. The translation of language, Ricoeur argues in *On Translation*, emerges as an extension of the continuous, everyday mediations between self and what is outside the self. Calling this act of self-sharpening against one's environment "internal translation," he writes that "a bridge is thrown between internal translation . . . and external translation" (25). In other words, "internal translation" between the self and the environment provides a small-scale model for translating literary works between cultures; a translator will inevitably focus on what a receiving culture needs from a source text, just as the individual focuses on receiving what one needs from one's surroundings. The constant act of "internal translation," Ricoeur argues, makes it so that "it is as several people that we define, that we reformulate, that we explain, that we try to say *the same thing in another way*" (25). From this premise, he promotes the view of translation as continuous revitalization in his gentle description of translation as "the discovery of [the translator's] own language and of its resources which have been left to lie fallow" (21).

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Ricoeur also notes that translation “is really about approaching the mysteries of a language that is *full of life*” (24). He opens *On Translation* by emphasizing the importance of mourning the notion of the perfect translation. A translator must undergo this process as a necessary first step in undertaking a translation, he explains. This comment has a similar effect to Antena’s celebration of the untranslatable in its manifestos, moving the translator into a place to navigate an ethics of translation, to see the possibilities in imperfect translations, and to step away from a paralyzing fear of impossibility. The works of Ricoeur, Schleiermacher, the Antena collaborative, and other scholars of translation demonstrate that there are inevitable paradoxes inherent in forming oneself, in encountering difference, and in the material objects that result from these efforts. On a tangible level, theories of translation as mediation are essential in a United States that harbors more and more languages.

These examples from translation studies offer a crucial perspective within the broader context of navigating cultural difference in the academy. When we conceive of the self as a continuously evolving production of encounters with Others, we open the door for scholarship and curricula that replace multiculturalism’s patterns of avoidance with ethical approaches to encountering difference. Along the way, we honor the practice of reading in its full nuance and educational promise.

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Multiculturalism in Practice

Sabnam Ghosh

The practice of multiculturalism as represented in texts and taught in classrooms hides behind it the larger everyday life that generates the experiential corpus of multiculturalism as lived in and outside texts. In institutions of learning, one encounters different cultures every day through cultural celebrations, ethnic nights on school campuses, oriental marts, ethnic enclaves, and cultural events that are made a spectacle of by being paraded on streets. Moreover, the publishing world tells us what to read through the selection of texts that garner awards and recognition. They are marketed rigorously and marked as products of ethnicities with which we as reasonable readers should engage at least for the rest of the year. This “culture industry” through commodification, tokenization, and fetishization forms the conditions of production for the texts that produce the eye-opening “multicultural experience” for authors, academics, and non-academic populations. In the following discussion, I propose to explore the conditions of production for multicultural experience using Asian-American authors as case studies.

Dorothy Figueira, while explicating on the “institutionalization of postcolonialism,” uses the word “Brahminization” to discuss postcolonial criticism. The term was used by the anthropologist M.N. Srinivas in the 1950s to describe the “broker-like” role that the upper caste people of the priestly class play in facilitating the relation between the common masses and God. The *Brahmins* are the presumed repository of divine knowledge and are the prescribers of high culture (Figueira 68). I borrow the usage of the word in the sense of “cultural brokers” to describe the role of the “author” in multicultural America. Authors and their texts assume the role of brokering in multi-ethnic America to inform people of their multiple and heterogeneous cultures. One can take, for example, the role of Carlos Bulosan’s *America Is in The Heart*. Bulosan’s text is seminal in Asian-American literature owing to its articulation of suffering, the clear evolving sense of the individual and their sense of triumph towards their struggle in the United States. One truly feels a sense of pleasure and relief once the protagonist makes it in the country. In contrast, Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* evokes contrary feelings in Asian-American Literature. The text became the subject of some aggressive “Chinese American pen

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wars”¹ among popular writers and critics in the field, but at the same time, it is important for its role in inspiring generations of women writers in expressing their specific gendered experiences. However, what becomes really significant in the text, especially for the purposes of this essay, is its evocation of the struggle in articulating language and the ineffability of ethnic experience.

Kingston questions whether the in-articulation is even an accepted experiential paradigm for the ethnic writer. The Brahminical status of the author with esoteric knowledge of the inside, in this case the author’s knowledge about their own shelf, their culture and their struggle with articulation, poses a problem precisely because it reflects the “problem” that culture is also in-articulable. Hence, the expectation of transfer of a complete cultural experience is a myth. In fact, the position of a “Brahmin” (priest) is in place to dilute the process of encountering the divine. Interpreting the scriptures and performing rituals that usual people cannot undertake for themselves assumes prior esoteric knowledge and depends on the misunderstanding or ignorance exhibited by normal people. The presence of the “Brahmin” is validated by his access to the divine that cannot be crossed and which is presumed and trusted as being there. In a similar way, the author’s position is the reflecting boundary between knowledge and ignorance. If the multi-ethnic author imparts knowledge, then the reader is the receiver of this knowledge by acknowledging their trust in the author’s skill. However, is the author’s writing or knowledge neutral or are they a reflection of the systems in which they themselves are subjected to a biased experience of the source culture?

Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* provides an excellent case study for us to examine the points mentioned above, namely, the conditions of a text’s production and its articulation of ethnic experience. This novel was published at a crucial moment, in the early 1970s when Asian-American Literature was primarily a male-dominated field. The only other prominent Asian women writers were Sui Sin Far and some romance novelists who wrote under pseudonyms and popular authors who did not deal with the subject of Asian Americanness. Most of the male writers wrote with the intention of establishing allegiance to America and proving the Asian-American’s capacity to be a good American citizen.

It is also because of this trend that texts like John Okada’s *No No Boy* did not gain any recognition at all because they spoke about experiences that did not in the end glorify the life led by Americans of Asian descent. The problem at stake here involves the role of the “cultural broker,”² whose job it is to identify the essence of being Asian

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American. *What categorizes a legitimate spectrum of experience that is both nationalistic in intent and worthy of being written in texts?*

The Woman Warrior was strongly criticized, especially by Frank Chin, of warping reality, of disregarding the specificity of myths, and of trying to generate a consciousness that was contrived. Chin's criticism echoed the Marxist critique of false consciousness,³ where the ideology of the ruling regime replaces any consciousness of reality and in its stead comes to stand in for the reality of the masses. In fact, Chin's comments bring out the "stipulation" of consciousness made inherent by the state of the discipline. In *The Big Aiiieeeee*, he along with Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong in 1991 refused to publish authors like Kingston and Tan, proclaiming that the anthology was intended to publish authors who wrote about the "real" and that "The writers of the real are very hard to find. . . ." (xv). He accuses them of being popular by boldly faking the best known myths and stories of Asian cultural history, thus starting the debate on the "fake and the real" (Introduction xv). When evaluated from the standpoint of the status of Asian-American Literature as a field in the 1970s, Chin's critique backfires, because *The Woman Warrior*, through its distorted representation of families, cultures, and behaviors presents a diasporic Asian-American reality that is authentic owing to its fragmentation.

The question that arises concerns "writing consciousness": how must one write consciousness in a text? What kind of consciousness is necessary in a multicultural scenario? Can the United States's multiculturalism be considered a state of false consciousness? Can any consciousness be "false"? If not, then is one looking at a symptom or the possible realization of an intermediary experience which is neither true nor false, and if this experience is in our terminology—the symptom of multiculturalism? In the following discussion, I will analyze these questions as they pertain to the conditions of multi-ethnic productions of Asian-American texts. I will seek to identify or stipulate a legitimate spectrum of experiences and the limits of false consciousness.

The term "culture industry" was coined by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (*Culture Industry Reconsidered* 12-19) for describing the controlling and controlled nature of the mass culture of consumption that developed and existed in the new form of monopoly capitalism which arose especially in the US in the post WWII years. In order to understand the usage of the term, it is imperative to go through the processes and side effects of the development of capitalism in the US and Europe. Both Adorno and Horkheimer trace the popularity of monopoly capitalism to the days of the New Deal in the United States. With President Roosevelt's aggressive extension of federal control in spheres of the "economy and the adoption of a greater planning and

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regulative role” (Johnson 115), the Great Depression finally came to an end and the “burgeoning consumerist culture” was “hailed as a truly democratic expression of popular will” (Johnson 115).

Along with the New Deal, the “complete victory of Fascism in Europe,” “the multiple crisis of the interwar years in Europe,” (Johnson 115) as well as the Great Depression around the world, all seemed to have been resolved but with the increased governmental intervention in all spheres of life. So, the idea of democracy and capitalism that existed in the pre-war years morphed into a form of capitalistic society that was heavily manned by governmental agencies and espoused a conformist and uniform corporate culture. Horkheimer states that “Liberalism at its dawn was characterized by the existence of a multitude of independent entrepreneurs, who took care of their own property and defended it against antagonistic social forces” (139). This is the original form of capitalism that existed, one that can be termed as the “good” kind of capitalism, where individual will and effort equaled benefits and personal growth. Critiquing the earlier form of liberal capitalism, Pauline Johnson identifies the changing trend towards monopoly capitalism, stating that individuals, “isolated by motives of self-interest nevertheless tended to become more and more alike through the pursuit of this very self-interest.” The construction of society as a network of interactions between private, self-interested individuals produces a culture of conformist motivations, and with this, an effective management of the tensions between the individual and society (119).

In effect, catering to one’s own self-interests generated the same notion of effort and willpower to such a degree that the effort and end goals eventually became one and the same. During this time period, one observes the generational inheritance of wealth, the influx of new immigrants to the United States, the problems of racism and citizenship, and finally the Great Depression and the War Years. In the post-war years, Johnson states, “in the epoch of monopoly capitalism” individuality loses its economic basis transforming the mode in which the relationship between the individual and the society is regulated. In the age of big business, “the future of the individual depends less and less upon his own prudence and more and more upon the national and international struggles among the colossi of power” (119). The great economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s fueled the rise of corporate power and created the objective conditions for dependence which robbed individuals of their self-sufficiency and exposed them to unprecedented manipulation (119). Friedrich Pollock, while analyzing the syndrome of monopoly capitalism, states that a complicated relation exists between the government and “seemingly independent institutions,” such that the “power interests of the ruling class prevent people from fully using

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the productive forces for their own welfare and from having control over the organization and activities of society” (92). The implicit forms of domination reduce big corporations and businessmen to mere renters who are supported and controlled by governmental ideologies and reinforce the mindlessness and alienation provoked by the capitalist mentality of power.

The concept of “alienation,” according to Adorno, provides the first social stimulus for the development of the capitalistic mentality.⁴ He traces the concept back to Marx’s analysis of capitalism, where the objects “manufactured” are “commodities.” The commodification of products which were otherwise produced through organic systems of need, livelihood, and creativity, reduced genuine communities to laborers who were just instruments of the system of goods manufacture. The alienation of the individual from their creative potential provides capitalism with its first form of alienation from the life flow of society. Both human beings and their products become *capital*. Robert W. Witkin states,

The process of production comes to be initiated, ordered and controlled not by the direct producers but by the production system that keeps them employed. Workers become ‘appendages’ to this system, estranged from the product of their labour. They do not choose it, nor does it express their social being. Work is progressively de-skilled and each individual perform routinized, atomized and meaningless tasks at a pace and under conditions s/he does not control. These atomized performances become the elementary particles of a system of production, external to the subject that has garnered to itself all power of initiative, design and control. Finally, workers are estranged from their fellow workers. Their organic ties that should bind workers in a genuine process of social cooperation have been destroyed and with them the basis of mutual respect and a spirit of ‘community.’ (4)

It is understood that capitalism presents itself as an efficient system at the cost of a harmoniously productive community. Communities that exist in a capitalistic society are fragmented and competitive, where knowledge and power are not shared but sought on a competitive basis. So how does Adorno link this phenomenon to the modern capitalistic society? For Adorno, the term “alienation” evokes the contradiction of living “within a totality which binds people together,” not on the basis of solidarity, but “only through the antagonistic interests of human beings” (Honneth 51). This process not only produces an

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alienated system of personal relations, but also produces hugely disparate class inequalities. In essence, this system of social interactions produces a symptom of damaged life and creates a power structure that becomes the guiding principle of society based on acquiring commodities rather than on human interactions. In fact, Adorno states that developments in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the US all reveal the same tendencies. Modernity comes to represent a new array of phenomena characterized by alienation, false consciousness, and new totalitarian systems of power. Johnson makes the important transition from this situation to mass culture when she claims that, "with its new power (increasing bureaucratic reach), and technological means (radio and television), the state is able to expand its influence. It now enters and administers every fact of life" (120). Such administering of all forms of life is what Adorno identifies as "Culture." Culture is thus equally alienated from the objects which constitute it and for which it provides entertainment, what Adorno initially termed "mass culture" and eventually revised as "culture industry" (Adorno 231).

Adorno traces the rise of this culture industry to the breakdown of the family system. When the means of production is co-opted by the state, the system of knowledge and hierarchy that existed in a family system with the patriarch starts disintegrating. In such a situation, younger generations begin to look at larger organizational factors, such as symbolic role models, state ideologies, cultural productions for systems of order to provide meaning to life. "In a supposedly chaotic world it provides human beings with something like standards for orientation, and that alone seems worthy of approval," writes Adorno in *Culture Industry Reconsidered* (235). The tempestuous drama of self-formation usually enacted in the old bourgeois family has changed into the easeful assimilation of cultural norms offered by a total system of consumption. Entertainment, distraction, conspicuous consumption all play a part in promoting a popular perception of contentment. Individuals enjoy leisure; felt needs are satisfied (Johnson 121). One feels in control of what one *chooses* to participate in, chooses to read and chooses to identify with but the fact is that the contemporary mass culture is anything but spontaneous and has very little to do with the genuine demands of the masses. One picks the best or the most popular things to be in or one conforms to an identity construct with which one chooses to identify. These conformities are hardly individualistic. Adorno states that "the masses are not primary, but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage to the machinery" (232) So what is the "culture industry?" Adorno notes that the "culture industry fuses the old and familiar into a new quality. In all its branches, products which are tailored for consumption by the masses, and which to a great

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extent determine the nature of that consumption, are manufactured more or less according to plan” (231).

Essentially, the culture industry is geared toward generating false needs by understanding the psyche of the masses and manipulating their consciousness. Demands are generated according to the ideology of the state. Technological advancements or more naturalistic uses of materials, such as gas, are then marketed as new and advanced products. The culture of advancement and progress in a capitalistic society has almost nothing to do with the needs of the masses. Rather it furthers the state’s profit motive and ideology. Adorno writes that, “the entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms” (232). Culture becomes the disguise through which commodities and ideology are pushed to the masses. This process is achieved through various cultural engagements including art, music, cinema, and literature. What parades as progressive and new in all these forms is a “disguise for eternal sameness” (233). Adorno cites Kipling’s famous poem *If*, which lists out all the moral categories for an ideal human being. He claims that literatures of this kind are stimulated by the culture of morality and respectability and become a template for future literature as well as societal behavior. In the alienated and consumeristic system of production, the idea of progress and happiness is tied to the acquiring of commodities. Advertisements push material happiness to consumers, thus creating a false consciousness of contentment.

One can observe this phenomenon in contemporary car commercials, where certain models of car advertisements promote a certain lifestyle. High end cars like Maserati and Bugatti market the idea of a “sexy and sleek” lifestyle of the playboy variety, and these commercials always promote thin and scantily dressed women standing next to the cars. In family-targeted SUV ads, one observes the placement of a mid-sized family home, a happy family who take road trips facilitated by the handy family vehicle. These representations of family, wellbeing, life style, and personality presented in these commercials facilitate commodification of not only the commodity but an entire way of life that comes packaged as a commodity. Adorno states that the “more dehumanized its methods of operation and content, the more diligently and successfully the culture industry propagates supposedly great personalities and operates with heart throbs” (233). The industry continually propagates the idea of “good life” as if the measure of life holds true for these images. The total effect of the culture industry, states Adorno, “is one of anti-enlightenment, in which enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness” (238).

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The tragedy and danger of this transformation is that “conformity has replaced consciousness” and, according to Adorno, it is only art that has the capacity to de-alienate the human being from the entrapment of the consumerist mentality (238).

The discussion of *The Woman Warrior* becomes crucial here. The text makes an effort to break out of the norms that bind and dictate behavior. In the case of ethnic writers, writing automatically assumes an ideological position. The writer becomes the spokesperson for the group and all individuality is sacrificed for the good of the ethnic group. As Frantz Fanon has noted in *Black Skin White Masks*, “to speak is to exist absolutely for the other” (1). Ethnic writers are forever condemned to this position, where their words are not individual words or any writing but writing geared towards the ideology that is propagated by the group. In this sense, multi-ethnic writers themselves become the commodity and become stand-ins for an all-inclusive and racially diverse ideology promoted by the state. In this case, ineffability or inarticulation pose as a hindrance or even danger to the reigning ideology.

As much as the state wants a diverse population, the existence of the population and state demands must be on the basis of ultimate transparency. That is to say that the transaction of compliance from the citizens in exchange of a system of order from the state must be a transparent system. However, ineffability is anything but transparent, as it reveals the cultural obscurities that prevent transparency and become the mode of survival of the ethnic group. Ineffability reveals that the transparency and the assumed understandability of ethnic groups is again false consciousness. It is difference that makes for an authentic experience, especially when diasporic life in itself is fragmented, episodic, and characterized by the inability to transfer experiences or cultural values across generations. False consciousness also promotes stagnation and the ossification of culture for state purposes of identification, but a true culture is one that changes and is molded according to the will of the people. The term “diaspora” means a “scattering” or “dispersion.” This scattering of values makes for the inability of one complete narrative.

The popularity of popular ethnic writers such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, Bharati Mukherjee, and Maxine Hong Kingston lies in their ability to break out of this mold that is precast even before their writings are conceived. One can also envision Zora Neale Hurston’s life in this regard. Hurston refused to bear the burden of slavery from her ancestors. She chose to be an individual who prided herself on being “as snooty as the lions in front of the Forty-second street library.”⁵ The refusal to conform or lose her individual consciousness cost Hurston the career she made and led her to eventually rest

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in an unmarked grave. But her novels and essays leave behind a legacy that highlights the problems involved in envisioning oneself outside of one preordained culture. According to Adorno, it is only Art which has the capacity to help the masses regain bits of their consciousness. Through the “autonomy of art,” Adorno proposes that society can free itself of the all-encompassing cultural binding that surrounds it. In a multicultural scenario, such as in the United States, the problem of the culture industry is conceived not as emanating from the people, but defining them.

Culture becomes stagnant in a multicultural scenario, as it looks to the source cultures to continue its definition when the reality of diasporic life is completely different. In that sense, culture becomes ossified in its reception and is alienated from its constituents. Objects of cultural signification are no longer signifiers, but fetishes that do not encourage self-expression but become stand-ins for expression. The transference from fetish objects to fetish consciousness is defined by Robert W. Witkin as

The psychological correlates of fetish-consciousness are the counterpart of socio-economic forms of capitalist social relations. Products are standardized; the response of the consumer to the product is presupposed in the design of the product. It could not be otherwise unless the recipients were to be freely involved in the creation of the product and there are not. Marketization does not encourage self-expression but it its antithesis; it maximizes predictability and repeatability. The system of production thus manipulates and controls the psyches of those who must make it work both as producers and as consumers; as a consequence, the individual ends disempowered in both domains. (5)

In light of this, how does the multicultural environment in the United States analyze the specific conditions of production and the spectrum of experiences described in American multicultural texts?

* * *

In the beginning of this essay, I had to think of the places in my academic career where the problems associated with multiculturalism cropped up in organic ways. I am a doctoral student in Comparative Literature and my research is in Asian-American Studies. I can usually discuss critical issues in the field with relative ease; however, the place

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where I always get stuck is in the selection of texts to teach undergraduates in a course on Asian-American Literature. On the one hand, one has the canon of popular texts such as *The Woman Warrior*, *The Joy Luck Club*, and *The Interpreter of Maladies* that usually comprise the standard syllabus on Asian-American Literature. But the problem arises with new texts. Which works do I consider Asian American? What does the term even mean in terms of books—do they have to be Asian or American or how much of both? Is the content supposed to be Asian American or is the author? How can an event be just Asian American and, in such cases, how much Asian influence categorizes a text as Asian American and not just Asian? The issue at stake here is the inherent question of the cultural experiential corpus around the text.

The experience that one has is that the essence of a text must arise out of a fragmented cultural exposure. The university lumps all of these hyphenated course offerings under the “Multicultural” requirement as a part of the knowledge-based experiential corpus that they want their students to experience.⁶ What are the conditions of production of this experiential corpus? What is the literary equivalent of consciousness of the multicultural self or the other, which makes these texts and contributes to our literary multicultural exposure? In short, what is the authors’ experience of multiculturalism that results in a text becoming a commentary disseminating knowledge and information through and by its conditions of production?

My approach to these questions would be more of a detour through the multicultural landscape to examine the flirty relationship that American life has with multiculturalism. This approach is an attempt to bridge the gap between the “everyday man” and the “philosopher” that Michel de Certeau defines in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1-8). Certeau claims that culture builds our everyday life, our interactions with our daily objects of use, our practices that see us through the morning to the night, our television channels, our advertisements, our clothes, our food—all dictate and decorate our culture. It is only through a casual flaneuristic interest that we can create objective spaces that facilitate theoretical spaces for engagement. The particular spaces that I want to take you through are the supermarket, the university campus, and cultural events in or outside ethnic enclaves.

The versions of multiculturalism that I seek to analyze are most appropriately described by Amir Ali as “Chicken Tikka Multiculturalism.” The flavorful Indian chicken dish that is a staple in most Indian American/UK restaurants, is seen by Ali as symptomatic of the happy face of multiculturalism, one that seeks to highlight the sycophant forms of multiculturalism that keep populations happy as opposed to

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the other kinds of institutionally disadvantaged faces that are subject to racism and stereotyping. My analytic corpus deviates from my usual strictly academic and literary engagements, seeking to bridge the practical and the literary to contextualize and understand the “behind the scenes” act of US multiculturalism.

Commodification

Walking through a supermarket, one stumbles upon the Ethnic rows of condiments and groceries variously named “Asian Foods” or “Oriental Foods” or “Latin American Food” that characterize any large flourishing supermarket brand. It is through these sparsely furnished shelves that the experience of condiments for a multicultural cuisine is disseminated. Further, dotting the US landscape is a series of “Oriental Marts” and “Oriental” supermarkets. Most of these places have the generic US hyphenated food with a scattering of “duck sauces” and curries of various spice levels, catering to the average white American taste.

I am always asked and sometimes told that I really like spicy food, to the extent that it has begun to mess with my idea of my own sense of Indianness. The food selection suggests that if one knows anything about an Indian person, it is that they like spicy food. Drawing from Adorno (231-88), one can infer that as much as people make culture, culture also makes people. In this capitalistic system that categorizes and boxes according to assumed notions of culture, multiculturalism is an exotic, colorfully packaged foreign linguistic commodity that one consumes without a proper knowledge of what this process entails.⁷ One thanks multiculturalism for having brought to them the plethora of tastes that burst on their palate with a spoonful of curry. One revels in the flavors and remains content with the taste through which they access and know these otherwise unreachable cultures.

Fetishization

At a recent India night celebration at the university I was baffled that the beginning of the celebration introducing Indian culture to white Americans began with a Saraswati Vandana. Saraswati is the Hindu Goddess of learning and is often invoked at the beginning of literary and cultural endeavors to usher in good luck to the event. But is not India a secular country? Are there not a range of religions practices there? Should not the secularity of the country be the message promoted rather than an explicitly Hindu ritualistic practice? Is the multicultural event furthering and promoting the focus on Hinduism in a

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country rife with communal violence? Why are Islamic and Sikh populations being ignored by highlighting the Hindu nationalist politics at play?⁸ Eventually, such programs become an acute kind of fetishization of cultural norms that become stand-ins for other hierarchies such as culture, religion, politics, and the demographics of the people conducting these events. Another example of such fetishization is the Chinese New Year celebrations in New York. Undertaken on a mass scale, the celebrations are enacted as a spectacle for other people. By participating in such a spectacle through pictures taken on cell phones, one experiences multiculturalism in the United States.

Figueira conceptualizes commodity fetishization in her critique of postcolonial criticism, describing three components of the act, “a mystification or levelling out of historical experience. It also exhibits an imagined access to the cultural Other and entails the reification of people and places into aesthetic objects” (68). Taking art and religion as a starting point for such fetishization, access to the other becomes an object of immediate gratification. Take for example American performances of Indian classical dances, such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam that make first-generation Indian Americans and non-Indian Americans feel like they are partaking in the “cultural” India, without any knowledge of the history of these dance forms and their origins. What does such reduction of experiences deliver? What version of multiculturalism do we actually experience in our everyday material, physical, culinary, textual moves around the city?

Tokenization

In a symbolic scene in late author Bharati Mukherjee’s novel *Jasmine*, the heroine and her husband Prakash happily browse through a glossy US university brochure which seems to have too many pictures of Indian and Asian students. Naïve Jasmine comments that Prakash might only meet *desi* people at the Florida International Institute of Technology in Tampa, rather than Americans. The issue that the scene introduces is whether the US multicultural ideology promotes a melting pot, or if it just showcases diversity. The South African comedian Trevor Noah in one of his acts comments on the horrified face of the immigration agent when he decided to choose “white” on his immigration form racial box, since apparently what he marked did not really matter as the data was just used for demographic purposes. The casual blind eye toward multicultural accounting obfuscates a meticulous record of what must and must not be seen. Diversity is an asset, as evidenced by the Cold War era consolidation of minorities, and the

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tokenization today asserts unity while hiding the institutionally disadvantaged “minorities” who make these advantages possible. Quite simply put, some of the students in my “multicultural” courses, even though they raise the diversity quotient of the university, often find it very difficult to compete in their classes because of their linguistic skills or owing to their different educational experiences. Tokenization is a result of the commodification and fetishization that one experiences while celebrating the multicultural scenario in the United States. Commodity, object fetish, and commodity fetish all work toward the consolidation and recognition of people as commodities, as capital promoting an all-inclusive and tolerant society.

I would like to draw upon an intriguing moment in Slavoj Žižek’s essay on multiculturalism, “Multiculturalism and the Logic of Multinational Capital,” in which the UK Labour Party’s “back to basics” campaign is compared to the famous scene in Paul Verhoeven’s movie *Basic Instinct* where “Sharon Stone for a brief moment spreads her legs and reveals to the fascinated policemen what is (or is it?) a glimpse of her pubic hair” (31). Žižek’s logic for comparison suggests that the idea of a “brief glimpse” that the scene presents becomes symbolic of the opportunistic motives of the multicultural situation. A glimpse is fleeting and that baffles the viewer—did they really see something or was it imagined? Was the thing really there or was it their imagination playing tricks? Culture in this situation becomes an illusion of authenticity, because one can convince oneself of either event, of seeing the whole or not having seen anything at all. This version of multiculturalism promotes culture without any actual accountability to the original culture and thus promotes a form of exemplification that is tokenized, to say the least. The US engagement with multiculturalism is an illusory opportunistic endeavor that aims to satiate the national ideology and the diversity of its populations. The engagement is brief, packaged exotically and enticingly. This constant flirty engagement with cultures that make up the multicultural scenario in the everyday American life is staged as nothing but a glimpse into some essential elements of several cultures with the aim of exemplification through capitalist forms of either commodification or fetishization, resulting in a typified tokenized production of cultural displays. Texts in that sense also appear as tokens that aim to “introduce” us to the other or to facilitate the “encounter” with the other without being ever able to grasp who or what the other really is.

Returning to the “conditions of production,”⁹ a phrase borrowed from Foucault and Gramsci, we may question what form the backgrounds of the “multicultural” Asian-American texts take. In the essay “Autobiography as a Guided Chinatown Tour,” Sau Ling Cynthia Wong

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responds to the criticisms about the reworked myths in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* by asking if the readers who criticized the text were expecting a guided tour of Chinatown when they read the book. Certainly, the US multicultural ideology does not deliver on this promise. One wonders again about the benefits of this essentialized practice: does it stimulate respect, understanding, and collaboration or does it manifest itself in small scales of brief glimpses like the language and culture courses that recruit students for study abroad programs by providing them only with a brief glimpse of the culture in question.

The experience of culture in the US is an expensive practice; it dovetails from supermarket shelves toward authentic experiences that can be as fetishized and exoticized, such as sushi catered off of a woman's body. Žižek in the above-mentioned essay reformulates Hermann Goring's famous phrase "Whenever he hears of culture, he reaches for his wallet." What is the price of culture? Or is the price directed toward the intersection of various cultures that vacillate between the participatory and spectaclization? The post-war integrationist multicultural philosophy certainly seems to have a price tag.

Adorno cautions us of the ways in which culture has a tendency toward stagnation and repression (231-39) rather than accommodation and fluidity. The practice of multiculturalism attaches as an insidious effect of stagnation of an essentialized and tokenized culture. In such a system, Chinese culture is stuck forever at its General Tso's chicken, just as Indian culture is at their Chicken Tikka Masala. The attention to tokens reproduces the "glimpse" alluded to above, where empty global culture first observes indigenous or localized particularities in an essentializing fashion. Then it aims to reproduce them through their understanding of the other, preserving an empty and privileged sense of universality from which any other culture can be appreciated. Quoting Žižek again as a condensation of the former elaboration on tokens, I conclude that if we succumb to the control of the global company, "we shall all not only wear Banana Republic shirts but also live in banana republics" (44).

Notes

1. Kingston is hailed as the voice for "the Asian American female community" (Grice 19).
2. The cultural broker makes the "culture" accessible, but is not necessarily tasked with genuine interpretation.

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3. Though used as a concept to describe Marx's theories, the term "false consciousness" was first used by Georg Lukacs in his book *History and Class Consciousness*, 1923.
4. Witkin, 151-52. Witkin traces alienation to that described by Marx and then elaborates on Adorno's usage of it. Alienation is also a thematic in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and later in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*.
5. Zora Neale Hurston asserts her individualism first in her essay, 'How it feels to be Colored me' and subsequently in her characters like Janie in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
6. The university system as experienced at UGA has a multicultural requirement for undergraduates. This requirement needs every graduating student to have some multicultural exposure by taking a couple of courses from an assortment of offered course listings that apparently fulfils the multicultural and literature requirement.
7. See Figueira, *Otherwise Occupied*, for more discussion on commodification in postcolonial theory and criticism.
8. See Figueira's article in *The Indian Express*, "Aryans and Others," for a discussion of the way myths are used for nationalistic politics, <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/aryans-and-others/>. Accessed 03 March 2019.
9. The term occurs in multiple works by Gramsci and Foucault, but I borrow it specifically from its usages in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* and Foucault's essays on power and knowledge.

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Saving Whose Life and Wherefore?

S Satish Kumar

I admit the posing of this question indicates a scope far more ambitious than I can hope to address in this present study. I also admit that the extent to which the two aspects of this question—the “whose” and the “wherefore”—are negotiated is limited. However, in seeking to address the problem constituting the relation between these two aspects, I hope to explore a possible means of understanding the categories of the Self and the Other, as they are constituted in present-day discourses. What is the relationship one can envision with the Other? What does this relationship entail? What are its terms? Is it possible to relate to the Other in terms that do not reduce alterity to a mere projection of selfhood? These are the questions I propose to consider in this study.

“Why Preserve the Life of the Other”? This was the straightforward and yet immensely potent question with which Judith Butler inaugurated her talk at the Tanner Lectures on Human Values hosted at Yale University on March 30th 2016. What prompts us to preserve the life of another? How are we moved toward wanting to protect the life of another? What does this reveal about the self-appointed protector? What does such an act reveal about the one in need of protection? Does this desire to preserve and protect stem from security in one’s own life and paternalism towards another, whose life is configured in terms of vulnerability? To whom is this protection extended and does its extension impart a value (differential of course) to the lives one seeks to preserve? If so, whose life is worth preserving? These “simple questions” emerge, Butler suggests, from her initial question—“why preserve the life of the other?”

It is undeniable that these questions come from a place of recognizing both identity and its *alter*. By *alter*, I mean that which is located outside of the identifying “I” or the collective “we.” By outside, I also mean at the limits of the identifying “I” or of the more problematic inclusive collective “we.” If, following Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another*, one thinks of the “I” in linguistic terms, as a signifier (of which I am the sign), the *alter* or the Other, as Levinas defines it, is the limit of the extent of its signification. In commonsense terms, the Other limits the extent and the extension of the Self, in the simplest sense of circumscribing. I am such and such or so and so, because I am not such

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and such or so and so. On the most basic level this differential is where a preliminary discussion of identity can begin. We will return to this shortly. For now, let us focus on the questions Butler raises in the aforementioned talk and use these questions to navigate our way back to the problems of signification in the “I.” The intent or endeavor to preserve the life of another emerges from an understanding that this life existing outside myself is worth preserving. It is worth preserving, perhaps, because it has meaning for me or I am able to construct meaning from it that is intelligible to me. I understand its worth as a thing in itself, or in terms that are relational to my own. Butler states this endeavor to preserve is circumscribed by the possibility of failure and the ethical ramifications of that failure, which exist regardless of whether this failure is through an unsuccessful endeavor to preserve, or through a deliberate choice of inaction.

I am reminded here of a situation presented in Rabindranath Tagore’s novella, *Chaturanga*, concerning a young widow named Nanibala. This situation addresses both failures, but primarily focuses on the failure of an endeavor to preserve. Published first in 1916, the novella is set in the context of early colonial modernity in India. The story of Nanibala appears in the first section of the novel, which revolves around the story of the protagonist Sachis’s uncle Jagamohan, who is the embodiment of British Humanism and represents the first generation of the colonially educated liberal thinker. This section of the novel is set against the backdrop of social reforms carried out around the turn of the century in colonial India by social thinkers such as Raja Rammohun Roy, who used their colonial education and their faith in Western humanistic values thereof to interrogate the cultural values and social practices of their own context. A large part of these reforms were predicated on the uplifting of women within the context of Indian society and culture by the abolishment of practices like *sati* (widow self-immolation) and *purdah* (the confinement of donning a veil), and reforms such as widow remarriage and female education. It is against this backdrop of reform that one reads the story of Nanibala in *Chaturanga*.

The young widow Nanibala, who had most likely been given in a child marriage to a much older man, seeks refuge in her uncle’s house with her old mother, also a fellow widow (Tagore 15). Following her mother’s death, Nanibala is abducted from her uncle’s home and is now on the verge of being kicked out by her uncle and his family on account of speculations regarding the nature and events of her abduction (15). They fear she has been “defiled” and would bring shame upon their household (15). These events play out in the house next door to where Sachis had recently been hired to tutor a child. Being his uncle’s protégé-

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gé, he takes matters into his own hands and rescues Nanibala from her uncle's home and installs her in the care of Jagamohan, whose moral indignation fuels his willingness to take her in, as he feels her predicament is an indictment of society as a whole (16). As the story unfolds, we learn that it was in fact Sachis's elder brother, Purandar, who had abducted Nanibala and that it is possibly his child that she is carrying. Purandar and his father Harimohan devise several ruses to force Jagamohan to throw Nanibala out of his home, scared that she might "spill the beans" on her abduction. When all else fails Purandar forcibly evicts Nanibala from Jagamohan's house in his absence. Jagamohan finds her and brings her back. Traumatized from the experience, she delivers a stillborn child (20).

The harassment from Purandar and his father continue and Jagamohan decides he will take Nanibala and leave for some place in the countryside far from the reaches of his brother Harimohan and his no-good son Purandar (21). Sachis, knowing his father and brother only too well, tells Jagamohan that they will not give up until they see Nanibala dead, and offers to marry her himself (21). Overjoyed at his nephew's moral courage, Jagamohan clasps Sachis to his breast and sheds tears of joy and pride (21). Sachis decides to marry Nanibala under the new "Civil Marriages Act," one of the reforms enacted by the colonial government in India at the time to facilitate widow remarriage, since Hindu Marriage Laws did not allow it (21). Preparations for a simple ceremony at the local courthouse continue in the face of stiff opposition from Sachis's father and elder brother, when in an unexpected turn of events, Nanibala commits suicide. She leaves a poignant note wherein she thanks both Sachis—her savior—and Jagamohan, in whom she had found kindness and affection that even her own parents had been incapable of showing her. She admits in her suicide note that she still harbored feelings for Purandar, her abductor and her abuser. She apologizes to Sachis for this weakness and hopes that she would prove worthy of him in a future life, but in this life, suicide was her only option (27).

Nanibala is never mentioned again in the rest of the novel and neither is Jagamohan. Confused and troubled by these events, Sachis leaves the city and goes off on a spiritual quest. The questions raised by Nanibala's death are left unanswered but revisited when Sachis finds himself in the *ashram* of a guru named Lilananda Swami. Here he meets a young widow named Damini who is placed under the care of the guru. Damini falls in love with Sachis and unlike Nanibala is willing to give herself to him, but Sachis is incapable of reciprocating her love. We are never proffered a reason for this inability and Sachis himself never makes a connection between Nanibala's rejection and

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his inability to reciprocate Damini's love—he is incapable of making that connection. However, what interests me here are the questions that are left unanswered and the crucial turn of events in the protagonist's life that are left unexplained. The fact that the author leaves these questions unanswered opens up the possibility of multiple readings of the significance of the events surrounding Nanibala's life and death both within and outside of the narrative. Is Tagore trying to point to the lack of female agency within the discourses of the many reform movements in colonial India that ironically centered around women's issues? Could one read Nanibala's suicide in terms of a rejection of all the reforms in Indian society that were trying to define the scope of her "being," without asking for her opinion or consent? Does Tagore suggest a critique of the "phallogocentrism" inherent in discourses of nationalism and nationhood in colonial India, through the character of Nanibala? Reading Nanibala's story through a subaltern lens prompts one to interpret her suicide as the only possible attempt a mute subaltern woman has at vocalization—a last possible attempt at claiming any agency configured only in terms of a deferment. However, such an explanation, in my opinion, continues to leave the questions surrounding Nanibala's suicide, for the most part, unanswered. The most pressing question being how this "tormented" woman would find herself harboring feelings for her "tormenter."

It is perhaps this question that troubled me the most when I first read *Chaturanga*. It is also a question I find entirely too frightening to unravel a response to. This question and others like it, I would argue, comprise the limits of our understanding. They are frightening because they are wholly outside of my scope of understanding, because I cannot grasp the rationale behind the events in which another acts in these ways. A psychological analysis of Nanibala's last testament would be explained theoretically in terms of Stockholm syndrome. Despite such a theoretical explanation, I am viscerally incapable of grasping the experiences and their effects leading up to its presentation. A similar predicament presents itself in *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Alice Walker's highly controversial 1992 novel. The story revolves around Tashi, a minor character first appearing in *The Color Purple*. She is from Olinka, a fictional African country of Walker's creation where female genital mutilation is practiced. Tashi marries an American man named Adam and moves to the United States during a period of war in Olinka. She escaped genital mutilation as a child but chooses to have the procedure done later in life. Deeply scarred by the trauma of the procedure, she goes mad. While I will not go into a fuller analysis of this novel, as I did with *Chaturanga*, I do think it is important to allude to it as yet another limit case. The novel does facilitate a possible un-

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derstanding of Tashi's motivations in having the procedure done after having escaped it as a child: she is torn between assimilating into a foreign culture and seeking to honor her roots in Olinka. However, it is not the motivations or the rationalizations of the act that I wish to emphasize; rather, the obvious inscrutable alterity of such acts.

Why do these events trouble me? Is it solely because they defy what I define for myself as the scope of human action—the limits of the humane, perhaps even of the sane? I cannot fathom how Nanibala could possibly harbor feelings for her abuser or why Tashi would want to willingly inflict genital mutilation upon herself. It is in these instances that the Other becomes the limits of the signification of the Self: what Levinas explains in *Time and the Other* as the limits circumscribing the definition of the Self. In this collection of four lectures he delivered in Paris under the same title between 1946 and 1947, Levinas explores ideas foundational to his later works such as *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being*. In the beginning of the first lecture he posits three categories—the idea of an isolated and lone subject, the relationship to time and the subject's relation to the Other (Levinas *Time* 39). The constructions of the solitude of the subject form the basis of Levinas's critique of Heidegger's vindication of the solitary *Dasein* (40). He holds Heidegger's conception of solitude in the midst of a prior relationship to the Other as ontologically obscure (40). This construction of solitude, according to Levinas, is even more problematic in envisioning how solitude can possibly be "exceeded" in relational and transactional relations with the Other that constitute the idea of a collective, especially if the ontology of the subject is constructed in terms of an essential solitude (41). Levinas first suggests what such an "exceeding" will not be. For him, it cannot be knowledge, because the object is absorbed into the subject through knowledge, in the final erasure of duality (41). Neither can it be ecstasis, because in ecstasis, according to Levinas, the subject is absorbed in the object only to be recovered in its unity (41). The collective, then, could only be envisioned in the disappearance of the Other (41).

For Levinas, however, the idea of a collective or collectivity is not one where pluralism merges into a unity. The inability of realizing this collective, for him, lies in the very nature of the subject being defined in terms of solitude. He further explains this process in terms of a relation between the existent and existing—his interpretation for the idea of Being and being as attributed by Heidegger (44). The existent in Levinas's reading of the Heideggerian Self places an ordering principle on existing. The existent is the realm of the ontological, and it is in this movement towards the ontological that existing is contracted by the existent (43). Levinas defines the event of this contraction as *hyposta-*

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sis (43). He cannot tell us why or how the existent is put in contact with existing; he only offers us the significance of this event (49). It becomes manifest in the appearance of “something that is.” This “something that is” bears existing as an attribute and is master of this existing as the subject is master of an attribute, and it is in this mastery that the solitary existent emerges (52). This departure from self and return to self is, according to Levinas, the very work of identity and the process by which the existent is closed-up upon itself as a monad in solitude (52). It becomes the basis for what “philosophers have always recognized as the amphibolous character of the ‘I’: it is not a substance, nevertheless it is seen as preeminently existing” (53). This “I” is solitary because it is configured in unity, or what Levinas defines as the moment of *hypostasis*—the event where the existent exercises its power on existing. The operation of ontology only seeks to eternalize this event.

Existing without existents, is where Levinas posits the starting point for conceptualizing the subject’s relationship with the Other (54). The relationship with the Other can only be understood in terms of an interruption or a rupture in the ontology of the Self—in the end of the control exercised by the existent on existing. The ultimate event in which the existent can no longer exercise control over existing is, in fact, the cessation of existence itself—the event of death. Death is different from suffering. Even if experienced with passivity, suffering is an experience and as such already signifies knowledge and the inevitable return from the object to the subject (70). Suffering, though painful and even if experienced passively, thus facilitates a reification of the *hypostasis* of identity—the vindication of the Self, in both materiality and spirituality. His reading of death is different from that of Heidegger, where it is configured as the event of freedom. For Levinas, death is the limit of this possibility of a return to the subject (70). The finality of death makes it grievable. It is wholly unknowable. Levinas conceives of the relationship to the Other in terms of the subject’s relationship with the wholly unknowable, in the most practical sense of the yet to be (79). Death forms the absolute limit of the signifying power of the “I.” Grief stems from this absolute unknowability, but also from the absolute loss of the power of the “I” for both the subject that has ceased to exist and the subject that continues to exist. From that point on, the “I” that was can only exist as object. This is perhaps why Levinas views suicide as “the final mastery one can have over being” or the “final recourse against the absurd,” where the absurd is defined as the situation where “one is no longer the master of anything” (50).

Levinas provides one lens with which we can read Nanibala’s suicide. However, I wish here to return to the initial question of this essay by exploring what an endeavor to preserve the life of another could

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mean. I wish to preserve the life of another because I see it as worthy of saving. I may see it as worthy of saving because I am invested directly in its safety. I may see that life as constitutive of a collective I define for myself. It may be the life of a friend, lover, or one with whom I share a kinship through birth. However, as Butler asks, what prompts me to endeavor to preserve a life that is outside of my collective—my people? What prompts Sachis, for example, and then Jagamohan to protect the life of Nanibala? Jagamohan is ashamed of Nanibala's plight. Ashamed on whose account? His own? He does express ownership of guilt in her plight, but in universal terms. This is "our shame" he says—"yours and mine" (Tagore 18). In the immediate context of this conversation we could assume Jagamohan is addressing Sachis. He could not be addressing those who are responsible for Nanibala's suffering, for they are not in the least ashamed of what they have done to her. This inclusion in the possessive "our" implies a shared base or core of values—Jagamohan knows these values are shared because he was responsible for their inculcation and cultivation. This is why he was moved to tears when Sachis offers to marry Nanibala, because in doing so Sachis had vindicated him, his values and his beliefs. Nanibala, however, is not included in this collective; she is the object that this "you and I" address as the "that one there"—the one whose life needs preserving.

As I stated earlier, Nanibala's death plays a pivotal role in Tagore's narrative. Following Nanibala's death, Sachis abandons not just the city where his uncle lived, but also his intellectual apprenticeship with Jagamohan. He seeks refuge and spiritual solace in Lilananda Swami, who demands absolute and unquestioning surrender as a prerequisite for discipleship, a far cry from debating Locke and Hume under the tutelage of his uncle. Can this escape be interpreted as a manifestation of Sachis's grieving for the loss of Nanibala? What did this loss mean to him? He never expressed having loved her, and yet her loss prompts him to act in ways completely alien to his character, as we encounter at the start of the novella. What causes this drastic change? Is it Sachis's failure to preserve the life of another? He seeks to abandon all that had defined him and led him to attempt saving Nanibala's life. Does the endeavor to save the life of another, at least in this context, represent an attempt at expanding the limits of the signifying power of the "I"? Does the failure to preserve the life of another then represent the failure of what we saw in Levinas as the absolute loss of control in the face of death for the existing subject, and by extension, the absolute loss of control experienced in the face-to-face with the Other? One could possibly read Sachis's need to redefine himself in terms of this loss of control. The failure of the paradigms of the Self in confrontation with an absolute *alter* forces him to seek new paradigms for defining a more

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powerful and effective self, necessitating a more detailed understanding of the constitution of the “I”—what Levinas calls “the very work of identity.” The argument, therefore, can be made that it is the constitution of the “I” that prompts the subject to act, or to borrow Butler’s terminology—to perform. However, does this action, if directed towards another, also present a demand for the Other to perform alterity?

In an essay titled, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” Judith Butler addresses the issue of “theorizing as lesbian.” What does it mean to write as so and so or such and such? Firstly, to write as or write in the name of is already an act of production, usually in response to, as Butler states, a request to perform as or in the name of (Butler 307-308). In her preface to the 1999 edition of her much acclaimed book *Gender Trouble*, Butler clarifies her use of the term performativity and the conceptual framework it represents in the understanding of gender. She states that she draws upon Derrida’s work on Kafka’s parable of the doorkeeper and the man from the country (xiv). Rather than taking a detour through Derrida’s work and back to Butler’s, I choose instead to look at the short story itself in unpacking her notion of identity and performativity. Let us briefly consider the short piece by Kafka titled “Before the Law.” The parable is seemingly simple. A man from the country comes to see the Law—gain admittance before the Law. The door to the Law is open but guarded by a doorkeeper. The man from the country begs for admittance and the doorkeeper refuses. Upon reflection he asks if the doorkeeper would ever let him in. The doorkeeper admits to a future possibility. He offers him a stool and the man sits down. Days pass and then years and the man continues to wait, inquire, try to bribe his way in, but with no success. There are other doors and doorkeepers too, but the man has eyes only for this door leading to the Law and the doorkeeper who blocks his path. He could have just gone past the doorkeeper without seeking permission. The doorkeeper had even offered the man this choice. This choice however came with the cryptic warning—but I am powerful. Though he was the lowest of all the doorkeepers there, he was still powerful. What his power was or how he would exercise it if tried, the doorkeeper does not say. The man from the country decides, however, not to put the doorkeeper’s power to the test. Finally the world around him starts to grow dark. He cannot tell if his eyesight is failing him in his old age or if his end is near. He can, however, see the endless streaming light irradiating from under the door. He could never understand why the Law would be inaccessible, but as his end draws near he has but one question—why had no one else in all these years come there seeking admittance before the Law? The Law is something everyone strives to attain, so how was it then that no one else came seeking admittance

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but him? The doorkeeper, seeing the man's now dwindling life, informs him that the particular door had been meant for him alone and he alone could have gained admittance through that door. Saying so, the doorman rises and tells the man that he is now going to close the door (Kafka 3-4).

What happens to the man? Why did the doorkeeper wait till the very end to tell the man that the door was his alone to enter through? Could the man not have gone past the doorkeeper paying him no heed? What does this tale tell us about the man? Is there a moral to the story? Should it have one? What happens if it does not have a moral? Does that change the way one reads it? These are questions that are perhaps best left unanswered. Here is what Butler has to say:

There is the one who waits for the law, sits before the door of the law, attributes certain force to the law for which one waits. The anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning is the means by which that authority is attributed and installed: the anticipation conjures up its object. (xiv)

She extends the reading to gender—the production and performance of gender roles, expectations that end up producing the very phenomena they anticipate (xiv). Is Butler then implying that the constructions of gender perform the same function as the Law? But the man never gains admittance before the Law. How is the Law calling on him to perform a life of waiting? He does attribute certain force to the Law, there is no doubt about that—otherwise he would not have made the journey to gain admittance before the Law. He never questions the Law or its force; like everyone else he strives to attain it. He does however engage with and question the doorkeeper—the keeper of the threshold between man and the Law.

The Law, in this short piece by Kafka, is constituted in its inaccessibility. The man from the country cannot gain admittance before it. It should be accessible, but it is not. He cannot see the face of the Law. All he can see is the light that irradiates from beneath the door—endlessly streaming. There are multiple metaphorical ways that this moment in the parable can be interpreted. The Law is absolute in its inaccessibility. However, this inaccessibility can be interpreted two ways. The Law is inaccessible because it is absolute, or it is made inaccessible at the very threshold of accessibility through the interaction between the man and the doorkeeper. Presently I have no use for the former. What has always fascinated me about this story is the interaction at the threshold. The narrative is both constituted of and constituted by the dynamics of the threshold. What is at the threshold is not the Law,

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but the doorkeeper—the Law lies in the beyond. What is also at the threshold is a conflict. What is the source of this conflict? Is it internal to the man or is it external? I choose the man as my starting point because the narrative makes him apparent as its focalizer. I return to one of the questions raised at the end of my narration of Kafka's parable. Why could not the man have crossed the threshold of an unlocked door without the doorkeeper's permission? This is perhaps where Butler locates the constituting of gender in terms of performativity. She clearly delineates the coexistence or the cooperation between exteriority and interiority in the constituting of gender—"the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits outside itself" (xv). Such a view of gender and gendered identity, based on performativity, calls into question every conception of the "internal" or the "essential," thereby problematizing conventional gendered notions of selfhood and identity (xv). While Butler concedes that dismissing the entirety of the "internal world of the psyche" as effects of a "stylized" sets of acts is impossible, she notes that taking the "internality" of the "psychic world" for granted is also theoretically unsound (xv).

One could return here to the relationship of the existent and existing encountered earlier in Levinas. The problem of interiority and exteriority is in part answered by the relationship between the categories of the existent and existing that Levinas postulates in the event of *hypostasis* and the project of ontology. The metaphor of the threshold becomes a powerful one here, because it is at the threshold of the existent and existing that action or the inability to act based on identity and the performance of identity begin. This question is often configured in terms of being, as in the case of Hamlet. "To be or not to be" is then not really the question if one considers the rest of the soliloquy. The question is really the part that follows—"Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer The Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune, Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles." It is this question that is fleshed out through the course of the soliloquy and in Hamlet's ever vacillating mind. It is not because he is not convinced of the need to "take Arms against a Sea of troubles," but like the man from the country in Kafka's parable, he also seems to negotiate a threshold. In Hamlet's particular case, the specific threshold he struggles to cross could very well be the legitimization of kin slaughter by killing his uncle who was also guilty of the same crime. Hamlet could be seen as being caught between the moral injunction to avenge his father's death and his own dilemma of committing in the process of avenging one crime another of the same kind. Does such an act not make him no better than the object of his vengeance?

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In *Precarious Life*, Butler contextualizes a similar ethical conundrum in the context of the horrific events of 9/11 and the retaliation that ensued in the form of a war against terror. She makes the argument here that violence of a retaliatory nature, in being faced with the one's own vulnerability in the experience of violence, stems from structures that censor or prohibit mourning or grieving (37-38). In the fall of 2014, VOGUE India premiered a short film under their social justice forum VOGUEEmpower that, as they say, "went viral" on social media. The film by Vinil Mathew, starring famous Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit, was titled *Start With the Boys*. The 121 second short film is a play on the age old gendered maxim—"boys don't cry." It opens with the cries of a newborn infant and follows instances in the lives of young boys where they are conditioned by this maxim. These injunctions to not cry are not always configured in censure; for example, when a boy of approximately sixteen or seventeen runs up to his father in tears, overjoyed by the victory of his team in a soccer match, the father, also overjoyed, reminds his son of the same maxim while embracing him. The film also shows girls and women reminding young boys of this gendered maxim. The film abruptly cuts to the very stern face of a young man, possibly in his late twenties, his eyes slightly reddened and glistening. But as the camera pans we see him twisting the arm of a woman. He forcefully lets go of the woman's wrist and the scene ends with a fade out of a close-up on the woman's face—bruised bleeding lip, bruised cheeks and a blackening eye. As the scene fades Madhuri Dixit's voice takes over stating: "From a tender age we teach them, boys don't cry. It would be better instead if we taught them boys don't cause another to cry." The film uses a powerful cinematic rhetoric of juxtapositions in making a somewhat seamless connection between the gendered maxim "boys don't cry" and gender violence or more particularly gendered domestic violence. The message of the film seemed also to derive some force from the context of the debates surrounding the issue of marital rape in the Indian Houses of Parliament earlier that year.

A radical feminist reading of this social justice advertising text would immediately point out that the film continues to function within the structures of patriarchy in that it posits the power to cause another to cry with the masculine. While I do not condone violence of any kind, retaliatory or otherwise, I am also uncomfortable with the seamless transition the film makes from the censorship and censure on crying to gendered domestic violence—which is not to say that Butler also connects the censorship on mourning and violence in similar terms. Once again, I am not arguing that a connection cannot be made between the two; I am however arguing that the connection is more

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complex than a simple logic of causation. The logic of enacting identity and the endeavor to preserve the life of another, in my opinion, can be seen as stemming from the same place—the desire for knowledge or the desire for ecstasis, as Levinas defined it in *Time and the Other*. It stems from the power the existent exerts on existing, in the return to and the reification of the acting and thinking subject—the latter of course deriving from the Cartesian maxim of *cogito ergo sum*. To act, therefore, can mean to act in the name of or to act in anticipation of, as Butler puts it, an “authoritative disclosure of meaning” which is in itself the means by which “authority is attributed.” This act when directed towards another can be understood in terms of the extension of this authority beyond the subject, who is defined or made meaningful by it to the object that exists outside of it.

As Levinas argues in *Time and the Other*, this cannot be an effective means of encountering alterity because such an encounter only serves to reaffirm the Self in the erasure of otherness. Also, in seeking to reaffirm the Self though acting in the name of the Other, one demands of the Other a certain performance of alterity. In endeavoring to save the life of another, I am not only imparting value to it, but evaluating it in my terms—in terms intelligible to me. When I respond to Nanibala’s final testament in *Chaturanga* or to Tashi’s choice in *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, my response cannot be anything but visceral because my parameters of cognition are completely futile and bankrupt in apprehending these events. They exist wholly outside of me. What am I striving to achieve in saving the actors of these actions? To save them from what or whom? To save them from themselves because I lack the ability to understand their actions? What shocks me more, the actions themselves or the inscrutable intention behind them? Or do they frighten me because I see them as an interruption of the continuity of my understanding? In doing so they undermine my belief in the likeness I share with another. Or does this fear emerge from a wholly different place? If one envisions a relationship between the subject and another in terms of an extension of the signifying “I,” in terms of an erasure of difference, does a rupture in this imagined continuity not implicate the “I” itself? The actions of the Other frighten me not only because they are beyond my understanding, but because in my insistence on unity I see myself being moved to act similarly. I do not understand the action or the motivations behind it, but I am frightened by the possibility of understanding them because this possibility would imply my acting in the same way. It is in this sense that I posit a possible source for the endeavor of preserving the life of another can be found in the very work of identity. Herein I believe Butler’s work falls short, because in focusing on why one endeavors to preserve the life of another, the

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equally important question of how this endeavor is understood and operationalized is left underexplored.

Like Levinas, Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another* explores a means of understanding identity. He also addresses the problem of subjecthood and objecthood. Basing his critique on the exclusivity of identification in language, Ricoeur seems to be making a similar movement away from what Levinas defines as the solitary subject in Heidegger's construction of *Dasein*. However, he posits a radically different view in positing the Self as Another, not in terms of a comparison, but rather in constitution (3). While Levinas seeks to overcome the solitariness of the subject, Ricoeur posits the subject as not being solitary *ab initio*.

Oneself as Another suggests from the outset that the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other . . . To "as" I should like to attach a strong meaning, not only that of comparison (oneself similar to another) but indeed that of an implication (oneself inasmuch as being other). (3)

He further explains this connectedness in terms of what he calls the "idem" and the "ipse." The simplest way in which these categories can be understood is perhaps in terms of location or locationality. This location is first primarily spatial, in the sense of the "idem" as the "I" here and the "ipse" as the "that one" over there. The Levinasian relationship with the Other is configured in terms of temporality—the Other is in a future time. Ricoeur agrees in the temporality of the "idem," but the "I," if we return to the Cartesian position of *cogito ergo sum*, as he does, is configured in the present (4). The extension of this temporality is, he identifies, a "lacuna" in an understanding of the self in terms of ontological constructions, or to reiterate Levinas, the very work of identity. Therefore for Ricoeur the "ipse" is not an othered self or a self that is deferred in the future. It coexists with the "idem" in the same time and place. I am simultaneously the one here and that one there. The Self for Ricoeur, in *Oneself as Another*, can only be defined relationally in existing simultaneously as the "I" here (and now) and the "that one" there (and then). The Self is both self and other, or both subject and object if one prefers, because the Self is an Other to another Self.

Ricoeur's elaboration echoes Levinas's definition of the Other in a work such as *Totality and Infinity*, in which he reflects upon what the Stranger can represent.

The absolutely other is the Other [*L'absolument Autre, c'est Autrui*]. He and I do not form a number. The collectivity in

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which I say “you” or “we” is not a plural of the “I.” I, you—these are individuals of a common concept. Neither possession nor the unity of number nor the unity of concepts link me to the Stranger [*l’Etranger*], the Stranger who disturbs the being at home with oneself [*le chez soi*]. But Stranger also means the free one. Over him I have no power [... *je ne peux pouvoir*]. He escapes my grasp by an essential dimension, even if I have him at my disposal. He is not wholly in my site. But I, who have no concept in common with the Stranger, am, like him, without genus. We are the same and the other. (Levinas 39)

I read Ricoeur’s position into the last sentence of the quoted passage. I return, from this point, to the set of questions with which I began this essay. Why preserve the life of another? What does it mean to endeavor to preserve the life of another? Levinas does posit an absolute and irreconcilable alterity in the Other, but he also states, “We are the same and the other.” In this similarity he does not see an erasure of difference, but rather an acknowledgement of plurality. It is in this sense that the Other provides the limits of the Self, in that it constructs the limits of the unity of the Self—beyond which only plurality can exist. The Other cannot be saved in terms that are mine. Such action would still mean an exercise of power, when the endeavor to save becomes paternalistic. Here I both agree and disagree with Butler’s views on precarity. The link Butler makes in her aforementioned talk and in *Precarious Life* can easily be misunderstood as no more than an inversion of the Foucauldian paradigm of power and marginality. The less precarious life deems the more precarious life worthy of saving; it deems its loss grievable. In such a scenario, saving of another’s life becomes no more than a vindication of the veracity of the Self. It only reaffirms an *a priori* magnanimity of the subject. A magnanimity either in understanding the suffering of another and working towards remedying it, or a magnanimity in the experience of and ennoblement through suffering.

In conclusion, I return to the title of this essay. The question is one, as Butler rightly points out, of moral psychology and moral philosophy, but what I am suggesting is also a move from the moral to the ethical. We live in times that demand from us moral positions that are often labeled ethical. The problem is that we assume ethics to be an *a priori* universal category. In positing the ethical as contingent, I am not arguing in favor of a nihilistic anarchism. We live today surrounded by contesting claims of identity that assert their magnanimity in the experience of suffering or in endeavoring to remedy suffering seek affirmation and vindication. Such gestures lead to no more than articu-

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lations of comparative and contesting claims of saviorhood or victimhood. While conditions of marginality may be unique to a particular marginal group in that the specific experience of their marginality or oppression is grounded in specific and located historical processes, marginality as condition is not unique. The study of marginality has gained much ground in academe over the last few decades. We have seen one form of victimhood after another become the center of interest in the Humanities and the Social Sciences—the gendered other, the racial other, the psychological other, the religious other, the sexual other, the colonized other, the postcolonial other, and the list goes on.¹ What happens to these marginalities once the interest in them fades? Do we assume that they are no longer marginal and therefore no longer need the attention? Do we claim to have cured the condition's marginality, congratulate ourselves on our success and move on? Or have we simply exhausted all we could possibly say about a particular marginal other, and are relying on the short life of public memory as we wait for the next victim in need of saving to emerge? Also in moving to the next victim do our parameters for the performativity of victimhood and, by extension, alterity change, or do we carry over the same demands of performance from one Other to another? More importantly, what is the positionality we claim in delineating these marginalities and in endeavoring to preserve their interests? Are we as academics and theorists claiming a share in the suffering of the Other?

The questions I am raising here are of an ethical nature and have to do with the ethics of engaging the Other and the ethics of spokespersonship. By spokespersonship, I do not imply speaking for the Other, as some academic theorists seem to envision it. One cannot speak for something or someone wholly outside one's range of comprehension. One cannot speak for a context of oppression or experience that one has not experienced. This is not to say one cannot speak about it. It is in this distinction between speaking for and speaking about, that an ethical praxis of engaging the Other can begin. This understanding can only stem from the recognition, as Ricoeur states, of oneself as another. It makes for a powerful rhetoric to claim that there is no "I" without a "you" and that in saving the life of another we are in fact saving a life that is our own. One endeavors to save the life of another because we believe in their right to exist as we do in our own. It is beautiful to expound on the enrichment the Other brings to our own life and our own existence. But whoever said the Other ever agreed to become the substratum of our existence or to serve towards our enrichment?

Notes

1. Dorothy Figueira makes a similar argument in *Otherwise Occupied: Pedagogies of Alterity and the Brahminization of Theory* regarding the growing centrality of identitarianism and identitarian politics in the social sciences and the humanities in the United States. She argues that most practices of institutional multiculturalism in the American academy function as commodification and the fetishization of otherness, rather than actual engagements with alterity. See: Figueira, Dorothy M. *Otherwise Occupied: Pedagogies of Alterity and the Brahminization of Theory*. SUNY Press, 2008.

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Teaching Literature for the Constitution of the “Free Man”

Corina-Mihaela Beleaua

Given the vulnerable status of literary studies in today’s academic world, there is the need to re-actualize the potentialities of literature in guiding one’s becoming as a “free man.” In the following discussion, I bring together the study of literature and the philosophy of education in order to investigate how (Comparative) Literature can be a moral and cultural catalyst to develop students’ or readers’ receptivity. I define teaching as a process of becoming, rather than a source of pre-established definitions; thus I choose to separate the present analysis from pedagogies of recognition (such as multiculturalism, Queer Studies, postcolonialism, world literature) in order to frame the ultimate purpose of teaching, which is the constitution of the “free man.” This purpose echoes the ancient ideal of *paideia* that encompasses standards of perfection consisting of goodness, beauty, and truth. I am investigating the potentiality of transferring classical values by emphasizing their validity for the post-truth era in which we are living.

How should we teach literature in order to attain the *paideic* goal? Can literature professors facilitate students’ understanding of the self and the other? Does literature have the potential to help readers or students attain unity within themselves by exposing them to perennial values? The self needs to acknowledge its presence and freedom, so as to eventually be able to relate to the other. The self as an agent has the capacity to initiate novel actions and to engage actively with the other. The understanding of one’s multi-layered identity creates awareness of how much more one can do, independently of institutions, social expectations, or cultural restrictions. Literature can help the self of the reader reach stability. It allows one to acquire gratuitous hospitality. It is in this insight that I am suggesting that an effective literature teacher should pay attention to the particularities and predispositions of students so as to help them unravel new understandings of their individuality and encourage them to “think about the virtues of others [because it is only through that process that] our own good qualities will imperceptibly find their place” (Goethe 339).

Fichte,² Kant,³ Pestalozzi,⁴ and Goethe provided guidelines for students to experience the limitless possibilities offered by reading fic-

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tional texts. If we go back to the ancient educational ideal of *paideia* (understood as the process of building up the free citizen), we will have even greater chances of transforming literature classes into tempting invitations for a continuous new becoming. Literary studies cannot be replaced by Performative studies because, as Damrosch notices, “[e]ven as we open out our studies toward the full diversity of verbal, visual, and musical representation today, older narrative modes will surely continue to have an important place in our studies. Virgil, Kalidasa, and Proust give us unique pleasures” (289). Thus, let us restate that a major responsibility of teachers is to transmit moral values to students by guiding their reading in order for them to be able to touch upon core values, assimilate knowledge, and apply it for improving their lives.

It should be noted that the concept of the “free man” implies moral development, aesthetic freedom,⁵ and self-discovery.⁶ In Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (1795), we have a clear example of a fictional character whose becoming (or ultimate freedom) is shaped by his contact with art and reading. Goethe’s character reaches freedom through reading and through a self-exploratory process that helps him understand his purpose in life. The re-actualization of virtues through literature allows Wilhelm to gain unity within. Similarly, for today’s reader, Goethe’s text can be a valuable resource for guiding one’s becoming by focusing on the identification of perennial values.

In order to transform reading into a source of goodness, beauty, and truth, one needs to pay attention to the texts’ language and horizons. As George Steiner acknowledges, “comparative literature [is] an exact and exacting art of reading, a style of listening to oral and written acts of language which privileges certain components in these acts . . . Any reading engages the history and tenets of language”⁷ (*What is Comparative Literature* 9). I will thus argue that teaching literature implies the responsibility of guiding students’ attention to grasping the rich meanings and symbolism of texts, while also nurturing cooperation, receptivity, and mutual understanding.

The nineteenth-century ideals to which Goethe aspires constitute an imperative need in our current society. Postmodernity’s search for meaning goes beyond pedagogies of recognition or ideologies that frame reality in narrow boxes and aims at reaching a common language. Pedagogies of recognition refer to programs of study aiming at the identification and integration of minorities in a host culture and community. The North American educational system has been actively engaged in diversity programs aiming at multicultural literacy. In *Otherwise Occupied*, Figueira emphasizes that the reference frame of multiculturalism, postcolonialism and minority studies is based on a pseudo-claim at engaging the other. In contrast, the recognition of

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victimization as a common ground for the aforementioned pedagogies “offers the illusion of victory over racism” (24). In the absence of moral pillars and without the reconfiguration of classical values, this search process results in fractured identities.⁸

Moral ambivalence is so acute that any substantial endeavor at pursuing self-knowledge results in the commodification of the other, the fetishization of technology, and the tokenization of information. We no longer make distinctions between truth and falsehood because of the sustained erosion of identity in modern society. Freeing one’s mind from the fear engendered by this vision of chaos is possible through literature because it entertains alternative ways of looking at the world, not merely through the optic domination, but also through the playful narration of the self.

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German pedagogues tried to instill in their students a set of values aiming at harmony and self-fulfillment. Their major aims were moral development, aesthetic freedom, and self-discovery. The key concept in the German system of education was *Bildung*. A term associated with *Erziehung* (education), *Bildung* represents the process of forming a personality. Pedagogues wanted to instill equilibrium in the formation of their students. They sought the harmonious development of three fundamental powers: intellectual, physical, and moral strengths. It was felt that only through this effort could one nurture love, obedience, pacifism, responsibility, and attentiveness, thus becoming a “free man.” The ultimate purpose was to free the spirit from the yoke of the passive reception of traditional values and allow an adequate development of the inner forces through an active acknowledgement of how these values could currently contribute to one’s personal development.

In *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, Goethe offered his readers a non-conventional method for self-improvement. In the twenty years it took for Goethe to publish this novel, he matured his thought. In an effort to move from Romanticism to science, Goethe underlined the need for harmony between the beauty of the body and the goodness of the soul. As a Neoclassicist, he reinstated the classical values that could lead to a harmonious unity of existence. An undeniable cultural force and polymath, Goethe influenced nineteenth-century European thought as Germany’s principle literary figure, and contributed to German Classicism, Enlightenment, and Romanticism. Invited to Weimer, at the court of the young Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimer, Goethe became finance minister and became involved in the state’s affairs. Goethe’s prose and poetic work, together with his science treatises, criticism, and research in folk traditions confirm his cultural eru-

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dition and offer sufficient rationale to restate his global influence in the current age.

Goethe wrote Wilhelm's story as a *Bildungsroman* that represents a perennial invitation to a lesson of self-realization through reading and voyage. The main character manages to escape the empty bourgeois life and his dreams of a job in the theater after a series of incidents that teach him about his role in society. He commits himself to a search for meaning, self-cultivation, and God, while also helping others. By following Wilhelm on his path to maturity, the reader distinguishes various arguments that sustain the value of literature, "All I desire is to raise their minds" (154). Goethe's character is "[. . .] overcome by a profound sense of how insensitive and neglectful we are toward our friends and acquaintances while they are still with us, and only when our happy relationship with them is terminated, at least for a time do we regret what we have failed to do" (170).

The book effectively conveys nurturing lessons about friendship and work ethic, as the reader follows the hero's path toward self-understanding, attentiveness and receptivity, "Thus Wilhelm, in striving to achieve unity within himself, was in fact steadily depriving himself of the possibility of any such regenerative achievement" (171). According to Goethe, books can assist us in the active process of achieving unity because they provide aesthetic models, examples of good practices, and life-lessons "that would help us toward true enlightenment and the achievement of proper perspective, either by providing us with the right materials or by giving us a sense of the unity of our mental powers" (248). He also underlines the moral importance of art. "Good art . . . is like good society: it obliges us, in the most pleasing way, to recognize form and limitations like those which govern our being" (316).

The effect of art is redemptive and one has to know how to embrace its eye-opening outcome, since "many are reminded of their own wretched deficiencies when they are in the presence of great works of art" (352). Poetry has an essential social role as well. "The poet—like a god—is a teacher, prophet, friend of gods and men" (45). The effect of reading a poem, a story, or a play is that of self-analysis and personal inquiry, together with a state of "jubilant self-satisfaction and radiant future prospects" (88). Theater and reading are educative forces that can assist one in his/her search for meaning in life. While theater entertains, enlightens, and elevates (3), books "provide us with names for our mistakes" (181); thus the exposure to both forms of art is essential for one's moral enhancement. The difficulty of embracing life was prevalent in the nineteenth century, as it is nowadays. Goethe's work helps one find dignity and worth in a society shaped by aristocrats or

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wealthy people. Accepting one's role in life is not easy and Goethe's writings offer examples of good practices.

Education, as a dominant theme of Goethe's writing, is meant to provide individuals with appropriate means of reaching higher moral grounds. Goethe promotes non-institutionalized education, based on awakening curiosity in young people. "So much is talked and written about education; and yet I see very few people who understand what that simple, noble, all embracing concept means, and who can translate it into action" (68). Wilhelm's methods entail listening to one's natural rhythm and acknowledging the often-mute craving for self-cultivation. These methods can lead readers to start their own process of self-discovery. Goethe's ideal of inner unity suggests an awareness of the necessity of connecting the physical, the intellectual, and the moral. It also allows the outside of individuals to project the inside.

Art is the golden path for reaching this ideal, and Goethe, similar to Schiller, argues that education needs to be built on wisdom, inclination, and predisposition. The educational system involves knowledge of particularities of students for the configuration of the future adult, since "In every predisposition, and only there, lies the power to perfect itself. Very few people who want to teach and affect others, understand that . . . let us perceive quite clearly what we are and how we can develop ourselves and be just toward others, for we only deserve respect if we respect others" (339). As a master of words, a brilliant teacher and a moral beacon, Goethe managed to elevate the spirit of his contemporaries and successors.

Friedrich Schiller embraced a similar ideal of freedom and showed its connection with art, by stating that, "poetry can be to Man what love is to the hero . . . [Beauty] can educate him to be a hero. She can summon him to action and furnish him with strength [. . .] it is through beauty that we arrive at Freedom" (11, 27). In his letters *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Schiller predicted that for "the aesthetic creative impulse cannot develop until the play impulse is in easy and habitual action" (8). He considers art the "awakener of human culture, through the liberation of man from desire" (11). "Man must pass through the aesthetic condition, from the merely physical, in order to reach the rational or moral" (12).

Schiller's aesthetic play is an ideal of humanity. He infers that art should be at the core of the teaching experience because of its potential in creating alternatives of thought, by raising individuals to higher moral standards,

The aim of imaginative education . . . is to give the individual a concrete sensuous awareness of the harmony and rhythm

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which enters into the constitution of all living bodies and plants, which is the basis of all works of art, to the end that the child, in its life and activities, shall partake of the same organic grace and beauty . . . By means of such education, we instill into the child that instinct of relationship which enables it to distinguish the beautiful from the ugly, the good from the evil . . . the noble person from the ignoble. (18)

In his fifth letter, Schiller claims that poetry in particular can offer a path beyond actuality. It enables the reader to get closer to truth. It is only through this openness toward the liminal world of poetry and art that one can reach a more holistic understanding of things, “those who do not venture out beyond actuality will never capture truth” (60). Schiller’s visionary stance anticipates the central role that poetry and literature would play in the centuries to come, “Poetry has not yet become the adversary of wit [because] Before truth causes her triumphant light to penetrate into the depth of the heart, poetry intercepts her ray” (76).

One can reach truth through the interaction with a text and by manifesting inner receptivity so that truth can reveal itself within. Truth “is not something that can be received from outside” (109). It relies on freedom and spontaneity in front of a text/work of art. “Contemplation (reflection) is Man’s first free relation to the universe which surrounds him” (120) and beauty is the result of this free and pleasing endeavor. Imagination “finally makes, in its attempt at a free form, the leap to aesthetic play” (135). Aesthetic play is the liminal space that receives the reader, allowing his imagination to freely construct the beauty inculcated in the text. The aesthetic impulse can confer on humanity a “social character,” establishing harmony in the individual because “only the communication of the Beautiful unites society, because it relates to what is common to them all” (138). The liberating potential of the aesthetic function represents an ideal that Goethe also tried to instill in the hearts and minds of youth. His philosophical ideals echoed not only locally, but also globally, because pedagogues throughout the world relied on his wisdom when building their own professional trajectories. Like Wilhelm, they tried to stake out their own path (174).

Today, we have moved far from Goethe’s desideratum. According to Figueira, there has been a shift in the “literary paradigm [. . .] from the aesthetic to the [. . .] political”(55).⁹ This shift encourages the development of new disciplines such as multiculturalism,¹⁰ postcolonialism,¹¹ Queer Studies,¹² and world literature¹³ as pedagogies of recognition, or new forms of interpreting the relationship between peoples and people. By current World Literature, I understand Damrosch’s

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project of a global literature that promotes literary texts belonging to literatures of the world, in the name of recognition and tolerance. Through World Literature, one is introduced to non-Western literature in English translation. Even in the case of Damrosch's approach, World Literature is a captive to the Western perspective because texts are read in English translation, and similarly, with multiculturalism and postcolonial studies, World Literature "allows [readers or] students to taste other cultures without digesting them" (25). World Literature (as a biased and superficial celebration of otherness) celebrates its monolingual approach and lack of in-depth knowledge of other cultures (except European and American). It tends to accommodate minor literatures in the name of inclusiveness.

The reader might not have a fair grasp of the rich meaning of certain narrative discourses if he/she does not engage with the text in a more inclusive manner and chooses a superficial, decontextualized, or geographically biased analysis. In contrast, Comparative Literature allows the reader to access original texts through a direct encounter with the source language. In this case, one proceeds to learn new languages so as to have access to foreign texts. Obviously, there is a limitation on the many languages an individual can learn. Without the mediating role of translation that often loses valuable cultural content, a multilingual reader, who can read original texts, has more opportunity to understand characters and empathize with them. From a comparatist perspective, fictional texts facilitate the transformation of the monstrous other into the familiar same, thus encouraging the reader to compare his/her own views with those of another, eventually accepting and embracing diversity.

Literature has a dialogical potential in creating a supportive platform for the encounter of the self with the other, by moving beyond mentalities of power,¹⁴ and hence fulfilling Goethe's integrative ideal of *Weltliteratur*. I include the current World Literature in the category of disciplines subjected to the mentality of power because of the reasons mentioned above. In contrast, I promote Comparative Literature and intercultural studies, as less dependent on such a mentality. By Comparative Literature, I mean the study of literatures (in their original languages) across linguistic, cultural, and geographical boundaries, involving extensive knowledge and "awareness of cultural differences." I support Figueira's claim that Comparative Literature is the discipline that gets the closest to Goethe's unifying ideal of *Weltliteratur*. Goethe's concept reiterates the Hellenic principle of *Humanitas*, seen as a process of educating humanity into its true form, the real and genuine human nature."¹⁵ This intellectual principle encourages humanism rather than individualism because it confirms that the essence of

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education is to make “each individual in the image of the community” (Goethe xxiv).

Literature opens a third path between humanism and individualism. Looked at separately, both principles have advantages and downfalls. On the one hand (in the absence of the third element), individualism leads to selfishness, but at the same time, it has an inherent potential for self-awareness and self-discovery. Literature grants individualism the needed awareness of otherness. On the other hand (in the absence of the third element—contextually seen as an emphasis on the self as a part of the whole), humanism can lead to uniformity and collective limitation, but also to empathy and care for others. I would thus opt for the golden mean between humanism and individualism. Literature provides people with the confirmation of their belonging to a community by increasing their sense of awareness of the self, of the other, and by evoking the need for social responsibility. At the same time, literature hooks readers and nurtures critical thinking, thus encouraging individualism and personal freedom.

Humanism and individualism can beautifully work together in order to shape a well-educated person who is aware of his/her own individuality and freedom of choice, while at the same time acknowledging the presence of the other who needs openness, care, love, respect, and tolerance. Literature intervenes at the micro level of the transaction of ideas in a dialogue and determines in both participants a deeper sense of attention and understanding. Thus, readers may acknowledge that Buber’s *I-Thou* relation and Ricoeur’s *ipse/idem* identity can reshape their understanding of the self and the other.

In the case of American literature classes, one of the core values is their grounding in the real. Students are taught to look at texts through their own lenses and discuss what the text tells them. *Cui prodest?* Dialogue-based classes are valuable for students’ awareness of their colleagues’ points of view. Students learn respect, tolerance, and acceptance of other people’s points of view. Most literature classes are meant to facilitate the encounter of the student with the text and its implicit cultural background through close reading exercises followed by group discussions. Students learn to share ideas and build their own arguments by positioning themselves in relation to what the text transmits. It is the teacher’s freedom to organize discussions in a variety of activities, so as to offer students an enjoyable reading experience. Is it enough?

New Criticism,¹⁶ the formalist literary movement of the twentieth century, limits the analysis of literary texts, mostly poetry, to their immediate content. Students are encouraged to read the text as it is, without letting themselves be trapped into symbolic/metaphorical

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tangents. The classical layering of the text is limited to its immediate understanding. The text says what it says and one should ignore supplementary connotations. This method isolated the text from its intertextuality and the historical background or canon preceding it. Still very popular in the US, this method continues to structure many literature classes, particularly in English departments. Most texts are read in translation because there are few speakers of European languages, and many times professors tend to ignore the importance of the context in which the novels were written, and the cultural aspects encoded in their language. Such readings can focus on choosing key or even random fragments that are analyzed with students in class. What is the knowledge conveyed to students? What do they really acquire through such exercises? Does their expertise not remain superficial?

I would argue that by following the method of close reading, students will never acquire a well-rounded understanding of the message conveyed, and they will be left with a fragmentary, superficial, and approximate knowledge. In order for the encounter with the text to be genuine and productive (by echoing the values transmitted in the mind and subsequent behavior of the reader), readers need a stable structure with which to approach literary texts. They should be taught to look for background information that will help them unravel the hidden meanings and subtle hints (often lost in translation).

In his book on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Steiner describes old criticism as the right approach/love of any work of art:

The old criticism is engendered by admiration. It sometimes steps back from the text to look upon moral purpose. It thinks of literature as existing not in isolation but as central to the play of historical and political energies . . . It proceeds with most general application, on a belief particularized by Jean-Paul Sartre in an essay on Faulkner: 'the technique of a novel always refers us back to the metaphysic of the novelist' [à la *métaphysique du romancier*]." (6)

Steiner considers novels as the "most coherent and inclusive [. . .] renditions of experience that literature attempts" (20). Similar to Matthew Arnold, Steiner looks at literature as a matter of "high seriousness" and perceives it as religious art. He views literature (epic or dramatic) as metaphysical, ethical, but also political. He urges for the return to old criticism as the only path toward the transcendent characteristic of literature. New Criticism, in his view, does not confer a holistic approach. In terms of teaching literature, Steiner's view is extremely relevant. Combining close reading with an in-depth analy-

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sis of the texts' horizons would increase chances for students to reach a higher degree of understanding. One might grasp a narrow line of thought from texts that are not presented in conjunction with the biography of the author, historical context, details about genre, themes, motives, and awareness of the reading competencies.

Today's teachers need to acknowledge the necessity of teaching alterity as a move toward beauty and value. The teaching philosophy of any literature instructor should aim at a clarification of their students' encounter with the other of the text. This process has a transforming role. It is the teacher's responsibility to lead students through the text so they do not miss relevant information or ignore key facts that would impede their engagement with the other. The teaching process must not become an empty, theoretical, and abstract construct that has nothing to do with the world around us.

Formal training is necessary because it guides students into identifying moral values and examples of good practices. Educating "through and for values"¹⁷ (56) should be the purpose of all literature teachers who should pay attention to both the selective canon (bibliography) and the hermeneutic canon (practices and interpretative methods meant to expose students to educational values).¹⁸ They should combine the linguistic competence,¹⁹ with persuasive competence,²⁰ so as to offer students a broad perspective and a corollary of alternatives and understandings, and to eventually reach the desired educational ideal.

According to the educator C.R. Adler, the recognized set of reading strategies consists of monitoring comprehension, metacognition, graphic and semantic organizers; answering questions (QAR question-answer relationship strategy), generating questions, recognizing story structure, and summarizing (49-54). Among these strategies, there are not enough explicit techniques that go beyond the immediate understanding of the text. Many times teachers are satisfied with following the several strategies without going further into the results of such activities. In *Becoming Readers in a Complex Society*,²¹ Alan Purves, Professor Emeritus of Education, presents the opinion of the representatives of the National Society of the Study of Education, who notice that, "while students learn to read a wide range of material, they develop very few skills for examining the nature of the ideas that they take away from their reading. Though most have learned to make simple inferences about such things as a character's behavior and motivation . . . and can express their own judgments of a work as 'good' or 'bad,' they cannot return to the passage to explain the interpretations they have made" (2).

I suggest that literature teachers should explore such reading strategies in order to achieve pre-established outcomes of their approach.

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These outcomes should be well aligned with the general and specific objectives of a literature class. The teacher's purpose should not stop at the passive transmission of information, but it should go deeper into observing and guiding the encounter of the student with the (other in the) text. Teachers can direct students toward responsible and appropriate encounters, thus avoiding Freire's *banking model*.²²

One of the main purposes of literature professors is to "develop a program of cultivating the moral and aesthetic values of the pupils, namely, the development of their appreciation of life and literature through the study of a great number of literary works" (87).²³ Similar to Goethe, they could connect the reading of great novels with personal transformation and becoming. As Mircea Breaz notes, "The great books of formation involve fundamental paths of existential becoming, becoming great epic themes, through the artistic transfiguration of reality" (*Literatura pentru Copii*).²⁴ By looking at different approaches in teaching fictional texts, one can establish correspondences and stimulate a professional dialogue for the future.

People complain all the time about the evil of racism, discrimination, and xenophobia. How many of us have sincerely looked at the connection between what/how we teach and all these divisive social phenomena? One might argue that literature proved inefficient in solving the aforementioned problems. I argue that despite a rich plethora of literary texts, the voices of those defending literature have not been heard, or have been ignored. It is for this reason that I advocate for a new defense of literature, a fresh, well argued, and strong consideration of the positive outcomes of reading. By allowing literature to gain its well-deserved place at the level of any dialogue, and by teaching with the clear purpose of opening readers' minds toward an irenic mentality, the self of the reader/student will acknowledge the need for restructuring his or her approach in terms of the other. The study of world literature classes should and can fashion an empathetic dialogue. They can also help with the constitution of the "free man." Literature should be adopted as the core of the curriculum, as providing empathetic models for behavior as well as valuable assets in shaping an irenic mentality, where the other becomes a subject, identifiable with the self.

Changes need to be implemented in our educational systems independently of cultural or geographical variables. First, we shall perhaps revisit Goethe's classical ideals of the unity of disciplines and values (goodness-beauty-truth), and secondly, we need to inspire in individuals the thirst for knowledge, but also the "free play of mind"²⁵ that aims at moral development and identification of one's path in life. It is necessary to free the current educational systems from the heavy burdens

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of self-centered mentalities of power that tend to manipulate and suppress individual potential. The aesthetic drive needs to be nurtured through an early exposure to beauty and art, in all its manifestations, with some instruction in the elements comprising the classical standards of evaluation. Literature, as a moral and aesthetic path, offers students a liminal space of encounter with the other, thus fostering acceptance, a peaceful disposition, and independence of the mind. Regardless of the actual pragmatic tendencies in the current educational systems, literature offers scenarios with “potentialities of transfer” (Steiner, *After Babel* 318) that can remodel mentalities and offer alternative modes of thought.

Notes

1. By unity within, I refer to sameness, or oneness, and I borrow Paul Ricoeur’s definition of identity as *idem* and *ipse identity*. *Idem identity* is understood as self-embodied and situated in a cultural continuity. On the other hand, *ipse identity* or selfhood is the agent, characterized by intentional causality; it is “constancy of the self,” manifested in keeping one’s word, and based on ethical considerations. *Ipse-identity* refers to the self not as absolute, but in relation with (an)other (124).
2. In his third Address, written in 1808, Fichte underlines that “education is the art of training the pupil to pure morality” (38).
3. Moral training should be based upon maxims, not discipline (Kant 83) because morality is a “matter of character” (Kant 96).
4. Pestalozzi’s “faith in the possibility of improving the human race” (Hayward 61) has in view the process of intensely raising the capacity of the mind, through spontaneous effort, “analogy and subjective observation” (236).
5. For Dewey, “image is the great instrument of instruction” (29). For Ruskin in *The Stones of Venice*, the main objective of moral education is to foster in the minds of students the ability to see beauty in nature, in the work of God, and in goodness.
6. Ruskin draws upon the Greek ancient wisdom in order to promote reading as building material for the moral basis of each individual: “Children should be taught what to admire, what to hope for and what to love” (Ruskin, *Essays and Letters* 255).
7. From George Steiner’s inaugural lecture as visiting professor at Oxford.

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8. Phrase borrowed from Donna Haraway. See "Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Routledge, 1991, pp. 149-181.
9. See Figueira, Dorothy M. *Otherwise Occupied*. SUNY Press, 2008.
10. Multiculturalism represents a pedagogical praxis; specific for a mentality of power that privileges political manifestations. Its role is to militate for ethnic diversity and tolerance for minorities.
11. Post-colonialism is similar to multiculturalism because they are both the result of mentalities of power. The latter speaks about external control and its effects on people. In this case, the location of the theorist is essential for the understanding of the inherent power game.
12. Queer Studies fall under the umbrella of the power mentality, together with studies of minority groups.
13. David Damrosch. *What is World Literature: (Translation/ Transnation)*. Princeton UP, 2003.
14. By mentalities of power, I understand a behavior and thought pattern based on the principle of force (Spairosu 303). 15. See Jaeger Werner. *Paideia, The Ideas of Greek Culture: Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens*. vol. I, II, III. Translated by Gilbert Highet, 1939, Oxford UP, 1986, p. xxiii.
16. See T.S. Eliot. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, Harvard UP, 1964.
17. "educația prin și pentru valori" See Sorin Cristea. "Educație prin și pentru Valori." *Didactica Pro. Revistă de Teorie și Practică Educațională*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2006.
18. Educational, pedagogical or didactic values and cognitive component (informative, referential); affective component (subjective, personal); axiological component (education and cultivation of values); moral component (behavioral, ethical); aesthetic component (creative, artistic for beauty recognition and cultivation); initiatory component (formative, initiatory); identity component (intrapersonal and interpersonal component of the self); prophylactic or therapeutic component (securing, relational, integrative); the playful component (recreational, fun, fulfilling pleasure for pleasure's sake). My translation for: "Valori formative, pedagogice sau didactice și componenta cognitivă (informativă, referențială); componenta afectivă (subiectivă, personală); componenta axiologică (educarea și cultivarea valorilor); componenta morală (comportamentală, etică); componenta estetică (creativă, artistică și de recunoaștere și cultivare a frumosului); componenta inițiativă (formativă, inițiativă); componenta identitară (componenta intrapersonală și interpersonală a sinelui); componenta profilactică sau terapeutică (de securizare, relațională, integrativă); componenta ludică (recreativă, distractivă, de împlinire a plăcerii gratuite). See Mircea Breaz, "Valori Educativă în Literatura pentru Copii. Cărți ale Formării din Genul 'Kinderbildungsroman'"

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in *Studii și Cercetări din Domeniul Științelor Socio-Umane*. Limes & Argonaut, 2015, p. 229.

19. The understanding of the explicit of a text.

20. The understanding of the implicit of a text.

21. See Alan C. Purves and Olive Niles, editors. *Becoming Readers in a Complex Society*. U of Chicago P, 1984.

22. Freire's *banking model* of education portrays students as containers for educators to drop knowledge into their heads. Words lose their concreteness and teachers' narration is far from students' experiences. Thus, education is an act of depositing. However, Freire manages to offer solutions that might free both teachers and students from the oppressive pedagogy. He considers that the creations of systems through dialogical relations might restore the lost equilibrium. Dialogue is no longer in the hands of the self, but it is rather the result of engaging in a systemic process of growth for all participants. See Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.

23. My translation for: "antrenarea unui program de cultivare a valorilor morale și estetice ale elevilor, respectiv dezvoltarea aprecierilor lui asupra vieții și a literaturii prin studiul unui mare număr de opere literare" See G. F. Kneller. *Logica și Limbajul Educației*. Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1973, p. 87.

24. My translation for: "Marile cărți ale formării implică parcursuri fundamentale ale devenirii existențiale, devenite mari teme epice, prin transfigurarea artistică a realității" (230). See Breaz, Mircea. *Literatura pentru Copii*. Repere Teoretice și Metodologice. Cluj-Napoca: Editura ASCR, 2011.

25. Phrase borrowed from Matthew Arnold. See Matthew Arnold. *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings*. Edited by Stefan Collini, Cambridge UP, 1993, p. 37.

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Architectu[r]al Abstraction as Literary Method: On Poietic Objects and Common Self

Irina Kruchinina

The purpose of this essay is to show how a certain type of lexical analysis in reading may serve as a transfiguring mode of reasoning. One may look at the discourse as borrowing the textures of the described space of action (rather than merely describing it) to figure out the architectonics of meaning commanded by the intensities of words liberated from contextual tensions. Thus, text presents itself as an ontological ratio ([r]) between language and space actualized in their primeval unity as a matter of an individual being. Such movement in reading is henceforth called an architectu[r]al, which denotes the transfiguring process of elevation of the textual elements from the context at hand to the realm of lexical autonomy (archi-text), and their merging into a semiotic architecture of being within the system of creation that is half verbal half spatial.

Otherwise Occupied by Dorothy Figueira opens up a discussion on “politics of appropriation” in relation to theories and pedagogies of alterity by an overview of later linguistic and philosophical theories attempting to expose strategies for acquiring a common sense meaning, and enabling the coexistence of different universes of world representations, including “atypical and conflicted” ones. The present discussion will attempt to contribute to the current dialogue in the quest for a unifying meaning, understood here as a worldview where everything—architecture, visual imageries, supplications, joys, intentions, distant stories in different languages—come as they are into a co-extensional integrity. I will show how, through the poietic mind’s eye, an all-encompassing meaning emerges in the form of the universal architectonic of municipal spaces, as their description in native languages acquires an architectu[r]al dimension. One can think about architectu[r]e in terms of an ekphrasis of acoustic images, which takes words corresponding to the elements of municipal spaces and describes the universal. Such ekphrasis fulfills the necessity of language to be its own self-critique, a certain step outside of itself, as it is described by Derrida in “Structure, Sign, and Play” (416). One can imagine the architectu[r]al dimension as a fiber of language.

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In the following discussion on the sublime order of space, I hope to offer a diagram of textual analysis which can bridge mythological, symbolist, ritualistic, fictional, philosophical, scientific, and other discursive structures by distilling their poetic origin. This diagram would offer itself as a “field” of operations with views of texts of various thematic, cultural, contextual, and predicative character. It will aim to converge the sight of the reader-viewer intrinsically and enable them to reinvolve the sense of the primary impulse that initiated thoughts, imagination, and figurative intuition to become an essential discourse that is primary to any specific subject of it.

To decrypt the essence, one first needs to create a crypt that would make the former into a perceivable figure of speech, capable of affecting the full experience as being both the inner and physical/emotional movement, an image/a view/perspective, and the idea that they together constitute empirical reality. In such a context, in the external view, or the plot, the subject of the discourse elevates the elements of the object-reality from their contextual to the lexical realm if only to serve the oculus that lets those elements reveal the golden ratio of their composition, invisible to the barren/objectifying eye. Once expressing the order of creation itself, the elements become absolutely free, as they stay in a relation of co-extensionality within the ultimate whole, rather than in a relation of mutual limitation. Co-extensionality is used here in Leibnizian sense, such that each significant (signified) element equals, in produced value, to the meaning of another significant element. This value is transfigurative rather than quantifiable: both significant elements undergo an operation of abstraction from their signifying contexts to the dimension of an overarching meaning, which may be thought of as a unity of intentionalities. Such unifying meaning is not so much signifying as rather transfiguring by means of brining the binary contrast between subject and object, the viewer and the view, the I and the space to the state of being mutually consubstantial in Word. Such co-extensionality enables each signifier to unfold into an ontological effect of being in space shaped by the Word-creator. Freedom thus is defined by the co-extensionality with all possibilities to express the initial will/impulse into being.

As it is shown in the diagram below, an ekphrastic lens (EL) elevates the elements out of the individual contexts of empirical and subconscious realities and allows them to function inside a purely poetic pattern (fig. 1). Such an operation allows the vector of human vision to redirect itself from projecting onto the world to projecting its image viewed on the map of purely verbal meanings, back onto the immanent self. When Mallarmé says to Degas that the poem is made not out of ideas but the words themselves, he denotes primacy of the lit-

eral over cognitive meanings (Valéry 5). Yet literal meanings can be only conceived poetically, through the operation of transposing the mimetically construed representational forms of thinking into the simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive Word order that constructs the meaning out of purely lingual laws of concordance. As a result, the elements of reality—the initial subject matter of mimesis—are envisioned and consequently experienced as elements of an ineffable Word harmony, that by describing reality, inscribes it into its universal context. This universal context becomes an architecture of common sense.

As the functional (FC) and fictional (FS) elements of reality, i.e. the images of empirical and subconscious processes of perception, appear on the verbal plane (VP), the individual universes of discourse (UD) acquire a fiber dimension of meaning that allows for the invisible geometries of space to emerge through the erased notion of immanent space as local languages are abstracted from their loci (see fig. 1).

In this sense, the architextu[r]al dimension is an ekphrasis of ekphrasis, or a commentary to a commentary to representational forms of

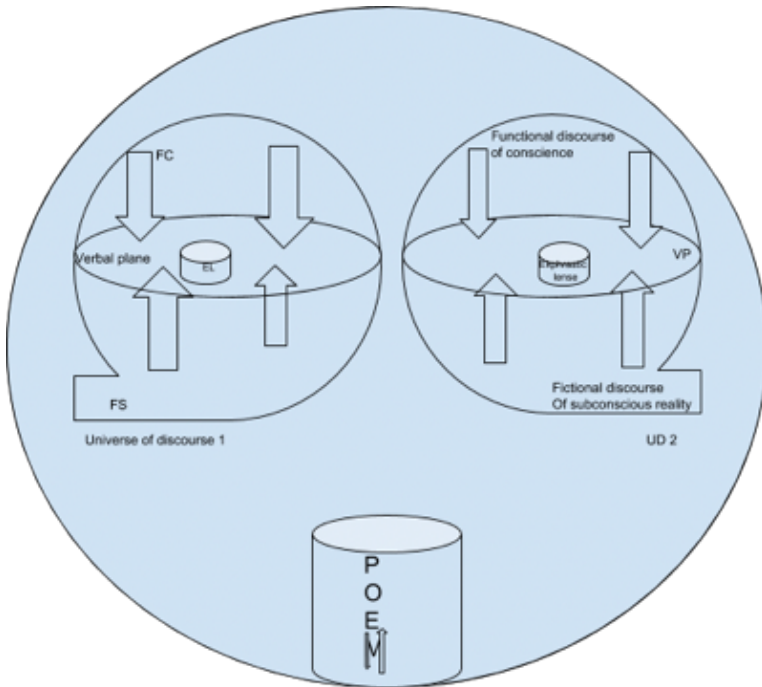


Fig. 1

Figure designed by the author of the article.

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thought. Such discourse eliminates contextual meanings and brings focus to the words themselves and the undercurrent of their inner associativity. The architectu[r]al discourse draws a new silhouette of the self in conceived reality with tangent lines to the ineffable. Once the individual universe of discourse gets projected onto the ineffable through the same poem, they together create an interference pattern through which the ineffable itself emerges.

In the context of this discussion, poesis is recognized as a core verbal function that circulates phenomenal values within diverse bodies of text and ordains cognitive meanings as means to corporealize Word order. The latter can be thought of as a text of texts, such that all the texts stay in likeness with it, while it remains independent of them all and simultaneously brings forth through their likeness with it. Such understanding of language comes from Kierkegaard's idea of the edifying authority of discourse over the reader or writer: "With definiteness, then, the word is to be spoken, and so it is to be spoken with authority" (44). What urges the word to be spoken "then" in *The Imaginary Discourse on the Occasion of a Wedding*, is its covenantal function, where the word does not express people's intentions, but puts them in relation to "the eternal resolution." Kierkegaard describes this resolution as "eternity's beginning in time"; in other words, this performative word that mediates thought and act places people into a certain architectu[r]al space, where words do not signify but connect the immanent and the eternal, the visible and the invisible, the intentional and the unconditional in one act of speech.

Such discourse has indeed a certain similarity with Austin's classical performative; being told "on the occasion," Kierkegaard's Word-act connects particular time and circumstance with the realm of the mindful (Danish "tankte," i.e., conceived in mind, or by thinking) and the eternal, or unconditional. Kierkegaard's discourse tunes the mind that perceives the actual with the eyes opened to the eternal that speaks through, and thus commands the actuality into a state of being in the eternal kingdom. It is the word in its transcending dimension that signifies the beginning of the eternal in the signified timely act, that attunes reasoning with the Logos, or the initial Reason into being, that must be spoken by virtue of "and so" have authority. This discourse gives the authority to speak to the speaker, who baptizes the present in the name of eternity. It "addresses itself" to the speaker and the reader: it comes from the realm independent from the mind, driven by reason outside of the human mind. Kierkegaard figures out the structure of sentences that build up meanings through the superiority of the Word. He shows that the Word knows the mind internally, as it predicts all conscious paths and yet keeps them in faithful relation to the truth

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that Kierkegaard finds in one's relation to God: "The discourse will not ask about your happiness but will ask whether you have consulted God and your conscience" (*Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* 44). The Danish word for conscience is "samvittighed," which literally and etymologically means a common vision, a knowledge produced or shared in communion. Kierkegaard sees God and the conscience as homogeneous parts of the sentence, such that consciences come after God, the discourse brings one into one mind with God.

Kierkegaard shows how all thinkable meanings cancel each other out and return to the moment of the initiation of speech, as the sentence seeks continuation. This initiation point at "eternity's beginning of time" can be conceived as the unconditional command to speak by the reason found outside of any mindful occasion. Thus, discourse becomes a commentary to mindful resolutions measured against the internally invigorated sense of truth, or conscience, and helps direct the mind towards willing only the Word of truth regarding the self. Such commentary creates a discourse that contains mindfully construed discourses and simultaneously communicates a transcending dimension into them by charging the words with architectu[r]al meaning. Such ekphrasis describes the architectonics of reality, which discursively reflects consciously developed views; yet ekphrasis itself represents a discourse that reflects on the nature of discourse and its direct relation to truth. Thus, the representations of reality become a form of speech that speaks about itself as a form of speech of the ineffable, that thus manifests its omnipresence. The body of Kierkegaard's own work represents a collection of such mindful universes of discourse, each developed either by a pseudonymous individual or by Kierkegaard himself, who, in his own journals, developed his personal subjective image of the world and the self in it. It is in the *Discourses* where he comes closest to speaking without the authority of the mind, or describes an explicit urgency to place discourse above the mind, and creates an occasion for discourse to extol the authority of truth upon the mind, and set the mind in motion toward the truth: "The seeking of the wishing person is in the dark not so much in regard to the object, because this is indeed the unknown, as in regard to whether he is getting closer to it or further away" (18). In obedience to this goodwill discourse, one can discern the untarnished wish for the true good: "Among the many goods there is one that is the highest, that is not defined by its relation to the other goods, because it is the highest, and yet the person wishing does not have a definite idea of it, because it is the highest as the unknown . . . The other goods have names and designations, but where the wish draws its deepest breath, where this unknown seems to manifest itself, there is wonder" (18). The wish emerges through obedience to the

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Word order. Viewed as a non-referential self-consistent order, it brings all ordained discourses into a perfect tautology in such a way that differentiated realities find co-extensionality in their aspiration to silence themselves in totality as the Word Order speaks through them and thus commands them into becoming entities of the ineffable oneness.

Each universe of discourse functions in such a way as to find totality by uniting all conceivable elements into the system of native language. Yet if it takes each word that refers to one such element and looks at it as a signifier of the ineffable totality by relying of the poetic laws of word associativity, it would find complete correspondence according to the laws of poietic associativity, as each element of a discourse relates to one element in the totality.

There is an affinity between inner and outer space: imagine a child-like version of da Vinci's Vitruvian man, colored from the inside like a rainbow while the circle that frames the man is black, and the rest of the space surrounding the circle represents the rest of space lit in the same colorful palate as the inside of the man. How does that man realize his integrity with infinite space when he is surrounded by darkness? Think of the souls in Dante's paradise: they lose their contours as bodies and become the glow that reflects God's glory, the glow being the same human silhouette, yet with permanent radiation outward instead of physical limitations. The self framed by the circle whose diameter is defined by what is within the reach of the human senses becomes a dark place within which the sense of homogeneity with space is dimmed. It takes a rediscovery of outer space by the outreach of what is beyond the reach, by realization of no dark space in between, but a tangent surface, the line of touch, of unison. The present diagrammatic approach suggests an operation of abstraction, which pulls vision out of the trap between window glass and the actual scenery and refocuses it intrinsically on the subject matter of poetic words which would ekphrastically describe the interference of vision and vista on the glass-transparent verbal plane.

Ekphrasis is a relationship between speech and space, in which the latter receives its voice and the former, substance. Art continually aspires to find correspondence between heterogeneous forms and appearances of conceivable reality, or as Roman Jakobson says, "between the different planes of reality," "harmony of dimensions" (316), language which only exists in the form of a lexicon where each element must have an individual name, in contrast to a repetitious and limited set of tones, which inspires continuous variations of multiple ambiguities of notes and shades. As it needs to name every single element of conceivable reality, language turns into a detailed discernment of silent expressions of forms language has to imitate their essence, embody those

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forms in an unequivocal way. Thus ekphrasis is an imitation of essence, of unsubstantiated matter. It is a voice of space that puts the speaking self in the relation with the creative force that positioned this self in place of the creator of spatial architectonics, which would preserve creation at the time of their creation. Ekphrasis is a word, or rather a harmony of words as they enter into a relationship with space.

The poietic, constructive aspect of language has a natural affiliation with architecture where each line corresponds to a specific articulation in space, and where each curve has its definition. The architecture obeys the order of perspective defined by the empirical conception of visible space, while language is a set of ever-growing arbitrary signs that extend in volume and diversity. Brodsky navigates the poietic space through a poetic narrative in the genre of the essayistic novel, or a memory turned into a poetic commentary on Venice, a city built as a work of arts, as an escape from reality to a pure space of aesthetic impressions exciting imagination to refuge in fancy. Venice here can be read as an ekphrasis of mind.

The poet takes a life form (a memory) within an art form (the city of Venice) and creates a form of a classical ekphrasis. But here the biography turns into poietic instrument: the empirical experience of the city is described in the subtlest of details for the poet to be able to read into the architectonics of space seen with the eyes of the Word. The eye of the Word is special verbal perception that makes purely noumenal connections, which are derived from the poietic logic based on the word-onto-word association, for which phenomenal reality becomes an expression instead of a signified. The description of the station upon the poet's first arrival in the city is rich with atmospheric sketches, which constantly refer the poet's mind to the cultural representations of empirical and spiritual worlds such as the "Buddha-like matrona," "the black-and-white movies of the fifties" (Brodsky 4), or to the label names which would replace the contents they advertise. Brodsky shows how vision is blinded by the perceptions preconditioned by past experiences. When the reader looks at the city described by Brodsky, one sees nothing but the forms of thought in shape of carved-in-stone realities.

From the first chapters in Proustian style, Brodsky establishes difference between two kinds of pre-conditionality of inner vision. After the opening chapter describing labeled realities with set definitions of artful combinations, Brodsky turns his attention to what happens in reality before the eye can ever "register anything" (5); i.e., before the vision becomes an emblem of mind-set significations. To see what is before the eye transforms it into a personal vision, Brodsky abstracts the shapes of sights into forms of speech. He describes a sense, like, for

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example, a smell, yet he does not offer references to allusive reminiscences, but explores how this sense functions in properly lexical associations: “I was smitten by a feeling of utter happiness: my nostrils were hit by what to me has always been its synonym, the smell of freezing seaweed” (5). One smell is not a reminder of another: they are connected by the lexical paradigm of synonymy.

The poet is unraveling the reality of lingual sensitivity, which he distinguishes from the concept of perception. He gives a list of concrete objects with which “some people” would associate the smell, in such a manner that the sense would never leave the realm of mind. For the poet, sense originates in “utter happiness,” literally, the happiness that expresses itself through a sense. “Utter happiness” does not denote an emotion that generates pleasure in personal senses, which have their conditional preferences, but the expression of happiness that utters itself not through a personal sense of the poet, but through a verbal act he describes by giving associative references to his senses. His personal experience becomes a commentary, or an ekphrasis, on the utterance that bestows the meaning of happiness upon his senses, and by this act, puts the senses in relation to the unconditionality of excitement. Thus “happiness” acquires a different value, since it develops sensitivity to the Word that makes experiences unconditionally meaningful. The poet identifies that there is no word to describe this utter happiness, and he thus turns his description into a metalanguage and defines the ineffable by describing a sense perception of a tangible object, like a smell of a seaweed, yet claims that this sense is a “synonym” to this “utter happiness.” The description of an individual sense thus acquires a purely poietic value, as it puts the mind in the verbal relation to that original sense, whose nature reveals itself in an act of speech, where the words do not speak the mind, but put it in relation to what brings it pure awe and happiness. The form of poietic speech allows one to experience sense; it connects the soul and mind to noumenal, unconditional, and non-contextual pure values of empirical reality.

The poet outlines conceivable reality as a synonym for the ineffable, which suggests a constant ekphrastic curve of thinking: “For me, it’s freezing seaweed—partly because of onomatopoeic aspects of the very conjunction (in Russian, seaweed is a wonderful *vodorosli*), partly due to a slight incongruity and a hidden underwater drama in this notion” (5). The poet does not spoil the mystery of the compound, but neither does he explain it to the English reader. The function of finding verbal identification of that mystery becomes a matter of creating an intensive magnitude of that mystical utterance through a set of synonyms, associations, and analogies in other languages. The Russian word creates an acoustic form. The poet explains that he likes the sound of this

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compound, since its acoustics, imitating a natural sound, increase the magnitude of the utterance by creating synonyms of the ineffable out of real objects, that in turn communicate to the mind the joy of sensing meaningfulness: the cluster of synonyms turns space into original, pure meaningfulness, instead of local meanings.

This poetic act of writing of the “obraz,” or the sense of the presence of the ineffable, is performed through the trope of ekphrasis that describes “the steps of the *stazione*,” the only element of visible reality that figures in the second chapter, in such a way that the latter becomes another step into turning the sound *stazione* into a poetic element of noumenal architectonics of meaningfulness that exists before form. The image of steps appears in the middle of the short chapter, if only to be located in real space of the “underwater drama” (5), which itself has no reference and is born out of poetic language and which refers to nothing else but the origin of this language that creates something out of nothing. The word drama in this ekphrastic context loses its concreteness of created action, and retains the unity of place, time, and action, where all events, characters, and objects create one unified set of movements, or acts. Those movements express movement of matter that takes the forms of life, since narrative inevitably and necessarily still has to refer the poet, as well as the reader, to ontology. Utter happiness, once it regains its absolute noumenal status of origin, becomes the context for life, which is subsequently lived and relived in relation to the unspeakable meaningfulness that the poet starts seeing.

The entire second part of the chapter of *Watermark* is a genuine biographical narrative that dives into the sense of senses that originates the sense of the poet’s “attraction” to the smell of a seaweed. The poet puts biography into a different, poetic context that is “beyond the confines of biography,” and that is the context of “attraction.” Brodsky denotes this origin through a poetic self-irony that confesses its incapacity to describe beyond what has names in the conceivable world. Hence, out of this world, the poet creates a metaphor that refers to its origin by denoting its incapacity to express its actual nature. He poetizes a fish that “caused this civilization” (6), a metaphor that expresses poetic humility and makes one smile thinking of the whole world being an evolution of a mysterious monster. The name of this fish, ichthus, contains two silent letter h’s—a letter that points out some ineffable secret about creation and which expresses itself through this silent letter. The letter itself communicates a sense of attraction, wonder, amazement about this secret that does not have to be uncovered, but whose nature consists in being a mystery.

Various monsters inhabit the poet’s city of Venice, which the poet juxtaposes with Daedalus’s labyrinth that has no other dimension than

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being the identical model of the brain of his creator. The fact that the creation mirrors the artist's mind and does not have a reference beyond the limitations causes an inevitable tautology between the mind and its creation. In other words the external completely reflects the internal, such that there is nothing left to say, there is no cause remaining that would initiate inspiration or wonder. In such a labyrinth there is no space for poetic word. The word "tautological" sheds light onto the feeling of "self-deprecation" (87) in the monumental opaqueness of the self inside the artistic form that exclusively mirrors another brain. The metalingual word "tautological" projects the mindful labyrinth onto the verbal plane. The poetic words abstract this labyrinth from being an intelligible definition of the self-enclosed mind and build it into a new narratological context and thus make it an element of a different configuration of meanings. The abstract word analyzes the mind rather than blindly reflects it. The word communicates a different dimension into the mind and assigns it a different meaning among other elements. The poetic realm of signification supersedes the scope of individual perception in such a manner that the latter is forced outside of the boundaries of its horizons.

Ekphrasis thus enables the immediacy of thinkable connections to overcome their self-oppressive boundaries. Brodsky's poet sees the city to be ubiquitously inhabited by various configurations of lions, all of them poetically dubbed monsters who owe to being "products of the city's fantasy" (88). He offers a cultural-historical trajectory of different lionessque totems in order to find the origin of those minded forms. To what do they refer? What mindset created them, and why do they always deviate from natural reality? The poet concludes: "Their unfamiliarity—better to say, their nonexistence—was what would unleash the ancients' fantasy, enabling them to attribute to the animals various aspects of otherworldliness, including those of divine commerce" (89). The artistic representations of lions that acquired their figurative forms in empirical space have no other context than the immanent, aesthetic, decorative, and therefore, unmoving, unchanging, and self-referential idols.

As subjects of ekphrasis, they disclose their ontological aspects, whereas poetic ekphrasis puts them in a relationship to the origin of poetic language, which aspires to regain all creation and communicates the momentum of the creative act to be preserved in the artistic art of creating forms into which the matter speaks/expresses itself. The poet recognizes nothingness to be the origin of monsters since the mind that conceived those realities wanted them to be in the likeness of the otherworldly, and thus, chose the distortion or negation of what is present to be a source to reach the goal. Monstrosity originates

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in the aspiration for the greater meanings, which the mind dares to create out of its own mighty power to destroy. The poet lets the voice of the incomprehensible, unconceivable, and invisible speak through the acoustic figures of speech. In this process, the negation of what is present is its transformation into the outlines of the actual otherworldly architectonics that the mind cannot grasp.

The poet ekphrastically, through a double-reflective descriptive curve, bestows the power of the inner poetry of language upon these creations of the human mind: "No wonder then, that the place was literally lionized, that the lion itself got lionized, which is to say humanized" (89). The poet reaches the height of ekphrastic art; he expresses meaningfulness through complete tautology and mutually enclosed self-referentiality of created forms of art. The space is invaded and petrified by the totems and loses its fertile genuineness. Space is demolished by the mindful imposition of forms which originate in nothingness. Even living natural form is demolished by the mind; the lion itself is turned into a human idea of lionescence which annihilates what is by taking its categorical lot for what inherently is not; the lionized lion has no relation to the lion proper; it is its demolition by false tautology, whereas poietic tautology puts phenomena in relation to what generates their natural multiplication in richer poietic tropes that build upon the invisible architectonics of the space of primary living matter.

Through the example of Brodsky's *Watermark*, I have attempted to show how the fiber dimension of poietic ekphrasis allows us to see the constructs of mind and imagination born out of cognitive potentials and longing for meaning in light of a discourse that builds those architectonics into the architectu[r]al constructs of thought where representation finds its finitude and bursts into the Word that denotes the unknown. Once freed from contextual frames, the mind becomes susceptible to all languages as they meld, and the product of their interference becomes the euphony of the ineffable.

Engaging alterity presupposes the cultivation of a compassionate type of subjectivity. The world is not a borderless, consistent, and unchanging space, but a map of heterogeneous loci. There is no natural condition for the unmediated existence of a mere idea of a possible common/cosmopolitan sense. All the experiences that people could potentially share are contextual, conditional, and finite. Their representations cannot be brought to a common denominator. Yet literature being a language of at once image, sound, and mind, chooses its subject not as a matter of one or another kind of description or actualization, but as some holistic exponentiation of individual objects that enter into poetic relations of associativity. It transforms the world and its elements, in their finite appearance, sound, and perception, into

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the poetic word by configuring them into consubstantial patterns of mutual co-extensionality.

I offer a diagrammatical commentary to such discursive patterns aiming at layering out the architectu[r]al dimension of language as a symbolic mode of reasoning propelling a sense of communion between people. Poetic discourse lies on the periphery between imagination and experience; it outlines the silhouette of subjectivity. How do we define subjectivity? Quoting Kierkegaard's *Anti-Climacus*, a self is not directly a subject of various relationships and realizations, but almost a cause or a condition for the ultimate affiliation of all creation to encompass this affiliation among all creation: "The self is not the relation but that the relation relates itself to its own self" (*Sickness Unto Death* 9). There is a perfect tautology into totality, whose ineffability is the nature of absolute ambiguities of all things created. Thus, subjectivity is by nature a condition and cause of the relationship, the latter being not a condition/goal/context of two or more subjectivities, but their mutual recognition of each other's absolute necessity of life. This can be called compassion or a communion in passions. It is not an unmediated understanding of another, but a recognition of the absolute necessity of the other through whom the creative force brings life. Thus, compassionate subjectivity resembles an act of painting the other like an icon¹ depicting an embodied passionate inspired necessity of life.

In the architectu[r]al dimension of non-contextuality, plots, themes, and ideas expressed in a language are initially moved by the purely verbal motif—a demiurgic whim running verbal impulses. One defines the world according to one's cognizance and, in reverse, defines oneself according to exterior conditionality. In this volume, Corina Beleaua raises a question of how one fosters a free man, and I would like to emphasize the fact that one's self-understanding as a universe of discourse enables a free movement through analogous universes of discourse as the principle of complete coherence and interrelatedness of the realities we conceive and inhabit.

Given the assumption that the motif of self-expression is hidden outside of individual selves, I would like to reverse the vectors of intentionality in approaching the other and focus on the verbal nature of subjectivity. Each individual formation constitutes a unique universe of discourse whose subject matter is the essential duality of elements, generating an impulse towards the whole. Impulses relate elements to their creation in such a way that they appear doubled, like Biblical waters and waters, like the world visible and invisible. They zero in on coming into a perfect tautology. Human perception of conceivable realities constitutes an existential double that finds its expression in

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individual self-reflective discourses. Such self-confined speculative discourses tend to universalize personal experiences, and thus literally prescribe an archetypal meaningfulness. However, a certain ekphrastic look at those discourses, in other words, a commentary on the tone and form of conceptive articulations, uncovers the autonomous narrative of language itself. Such an ekphrastic lens captures individual descriptions of perceptive dualities and projects them as local wholes in themselves onto a metalingual map.

Being an articulate analysis of the tone and form of individual articulations, such an ekphrastic lens becomes a double of individual cognitive duality, or a double of a double. Such metalingual ekphrasis turns individual discourse into a commentary on the inner laws of the architectu[r]al, i.e., unconditional, non-contextual poietic associativity of purely lingual elements. While individual discourses force language to signify elements of the conceivable order of the world of personal meanings, ekphrastic discourse treats those elements as local signs of a non-contextual or noumenal Word order that communicates pure values of existence over the personal meanings of life. Ekphrastic discourse builds the elements of conceivable realities into an architectu[r]al pattern of meanings that one can only derive from words, and not from ideas, imagery, or streams of consciousness. Such an ekphrastic projection casts light onto the opaqueness of personal intentionality of self-expression in such a way that the shapes of individual universes of discourse are taken out of their intentional contexts of self-identification with the integral universe of discourses, or the universe of universes of discourse. Taking the ekphrastic bird's-eye view, those universes of discourse focus on the essential motif of their expression rather than themselves. Hence self-expressions explore their own undercurrent of the unconditional impulse in order to construe the only one meaning hidden within the purely verbal, non-contextual co-extensionality of words. In light of the universe of universes of discourse, the ekphrastic point of view allows us to see this light pass over local universes of discourse and all the way into itself, which is omnipresent. In such focal rearrangement, local universes of discourse become shadows of themselves on the undercurrent of self-expressions, which is their function within the pattern of co-extensionality that weaves the image of the whole. This architectu[ra]l motif is hidden within the inherent dynamics of language, independent of immanent cognitive stimuli.

What is the nature of this meaning whose logic is concealed within the words in themselves—and not in things? This nature can be observable in the very kinesis of becoming, which primary meaning communicates into words. Thus one can see that the inward vectors of language are opposite to those set up by discourses subjected to the author-

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ity of the mind. It is by an ekphrastic commentary of those discourses that one can recapture them for the authority of the Word order. Such meta-discursive narrative allows the mind to see consciously construed discourses within the context of their poietic undercurrent. In it, they appear as expressive waves of the poietic flow through the interference pattern of the co-existential elements in the architectonics of cognitive spaces. Such ekphrastic commentary can allow us to see any discourse in this architextu[ra] abstraction and allow for all the flows to merge into the initial spring of life.

If Pavel Florensky, Russian Orthodox priest, scientist, and martyr, is right and the life of our soul gives us “a fulcrum point” (3) for our judgement regarding both the visible and invisible world and the way it is depicted in the Biblical story of Creation, then one can assume the verbal plane to be a platform of coming into likeness with our image as the primary image of the world. Florensky states that we are unable to see the visible and invisible world as it is. We can only project onto the plane of verbal expression our consciousness, and here Florensky distinguishes the conscious experience of the empirical world from the subconscious envisioning of the invisible world. As it was shown in the earlier diagram, language is situated on the periphery of those two consciousnesses, yet its actual beginning and end reside on tangent points where consciousness ends and unconfined space begins—the space inhabited by other universes of discourse. Poetic creation allows to abstract consciously charged speech from the mindful context of conceivable images of the visible and invisible worlds and to bring the mind up to a poietic dimension of consciousness. Functional and fictional (or imaginative) dimensions of language constitute a mode of reasoning, which finds its double in the poietic dimension. Yet human reasoning, hollowed out of the impositions of the mind, finds itself in the domain of Word order and has to succumb to it in order to construe meaning. Poiesis is the making of meanings out of words. On all three dimensions, one construes a kinesthesia of specialty, or a holistic image of the self amongst other spatial bodies.

Literature allows people to meet on the same page by offering a three-space map of the world, where distinct conceivable realities, or universes of discourse, become united by a mutual co-extensionality within the entity of a text. We want to claim that a certain operation of projective abstraction can enable a literal translation of unique objects/representations into one another while preserving their essential composition by literally constituting compassionate subjectivity.

Literature creates an acoustic vision of rhetorical reality, yet its subject is not merely a matter of thought, imagination, or semiotic harmony, but it also generates a holistic exponentiation of individual ob-

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jects, which become the subject of poetic relations of associativity and translatability between various means of cognition. Ekphrastically, literature borrows scientific, artistic, musical, mundane, metaphysical, and religious vocabularies, and composes them into a discourse that shapes a vision that enables the ineffable essence, the truth about the self, to become sensible. It transforms the world and its elements, which have their finite appearances and scopes of possible perception, into a matter of poetic idiom, which seeks to express its inconceivable meaning, just as the poetic discourse shapes it into dimensional forms capable of embodying some primeval essence. This is the dimension of harmonic patterns that organize elements of reality in order for them to enter into functional correlativity and transcends the elements of the whole they only appear to embody.

The essence being unsubstantiated, it finds expression as a subject matter of sublime forms. Sublimity here refers to the sense of space perceived by the soul; its life is described by Florensky as a “fulcrum point” (3), from which we are able to draw the line delimiting the contiguity of the two divinely created worlds, visible and invisible. Sublimity refers to the plane where the empirically and cognitively conceivable realities can be perceived through their own echo produced upon their contiguity with the invisible world. Such an echo reflects the moment of interference of the two worlds which together map an acoustic image of the Reason behind them, just like the spectra of light express Light.

Realized as rebounding surfaces, words stop defining and begin functioning—they echo realities of local universes of discourse from a universal architectonics of space, and thus inform the former with a sense of likeness with the numinous. Thus, the Word surface functions as a “double reflection,” which allows for the immanent and the eternal, the visible and invisible, in other words, the inherent doubles of conceivable realities, to merge as “waters and waters” into the all-encompassing Reason, or Logos, of creation. The metaphorical nature of language reveals itself as a constant performative act of creation by placing each expression in relation to the unprecedented Word order that commands meanings into beings.

Notes

1. In Eastern Orthodox Christianity, a devotional image of Christ or Saints depicting ineffable holiness.

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A Floridian Boyhood, from five to ten

Leonard Owens III

1. Bugs

The boy's mother worked at a car wash, and drank gas-station beer on weeknights, and she would drink with neighborhood moms and some younger men to whom she occasionally rented the couch or her bedroom floor, and in the boy's memories it's these men that encourage certain questions. Except for Mark. A man his mom's age, or a little older. He was a burnt-out neurotic who drove with his teeth practically chewing the steering wheel, and she'd told the boy then that Mark was soft as a sponge where it counted. At the time and later, the boy imagined a round, yellow sponge between Mark's legs, wondering how it fit in his jeans and if it was itchy.

There was an afternoon that became a night; an afternoon which saw the arrival of a vacuum salesman and a night when he sat on the leased sofa with the mom and one of her beers. And throughout his stay, there were the movements required to demo the vacuum's abilities. To twist, clip, and snap the thing's hoses, nozzles, and brushes, and to untwist, unclip, and unsnap them. To pull the vacuum's bag out and say, "See? See how much dirt was in those cushions? Skin flakes mostly, like sitting on yourself." And movements like laughter. Cheeks dipping and lips parting out a dead-dull thrum the boy didn't yet know firsthand. That night, the boy said big words he barely knew or made up, and his mom said how smart he was, and the salesman agreed, and for the first time the boy wondered if it's possible to sound smart without actually being smart.

The mother didn't buy the vacuum. Perhaps this, to some small degree, accounted for her messiness.

Even when Mom and Dad were together, the boy's mother liked to dump laundry on the waterbed. One load, two loads, then three loads. Until a mountain peak of clothes—sometimes dirty, other times clean—would form. The boy liked to burrow into the mountain. He'd pull the dislodged laundry back over him, doing his best to remake the

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mountain. Then, he'd stay in there. Pressed under the weight of the cottons and poly-blends and wools which made up all their clothes, bedding, and towels. In this small, dark space, he'd feel his breath recycle itself and get so warm, and the boy liked this part most. He'd spend hours this way.

On their own, just the mom and her boy, the mom would still dump laundry onto her unmade secondhand mattress. Two loads, four loads, then a couple months of shabby clothes, worn-out bedsheets, and dirty towels would make a laundry mountain bigger than any the boy had seen before. It approached ceiling height. The boy just plain knew not to burrow himself in there, but his mom would flop onto the sloping mountain and sleep.

Near the bed and on a nightstand, there were always empty or half-full beer cans. There was an afternoon when the mom slept and her bedroom was only lit by whatever rays of sun wanted to poke through the brittle blinds. Sometimes, a light grays itself like this.

The boy had come in from somewhere he had spent time alone doing something. She was sleeping atop the laundry mountain. His mom snored loudly, had done so since he'd been young enough to still share nights on the other side of her bed. He could remember nights sleeping in his dad's bed or his own, and he'd hear his mom come in from places he didn't know about, so he'd leave one bed to join his mom in hers.

He didn't walk in there that afternoon to wake his mom up. She slept through lots of afternoons, and he knew better than to try waking her. But boredom drives youth. He was eight years old when he approached the beer cans on the nightstand. He peered in one. Put his ear near another. Saw nothing, heard the dark. Then a flick of his finger. He flicked a half-full beer can. And from its mouth-hole exploded dozens of fearful roaches. Scurrying for their survival. But the boy had no reflex for this moment, and the roaches' exit was safe from everything except his sight.

Bugs had happened with the toothpaste, too. The boy's mom lost the cap, and little roaches lived in the exposed toothpaste until they died.

2. Fun & Games

There was this bowling alley wedged into the back corner of a place called Belair Plaza, and what the boy did there was eat curly fries, play

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arcade games, and pump quarters into the machines that sold Lil' Homies figurines.

There were times he went to the beach. Once as an eight-year-old in tight black underwear which he'd decided were European swim trunks. The worst sunburn of his life, and that night his mom told him to get into a tub full of water mixed with vinegar.

There was the Boardwalk. A string of beachside arcades, Daytona's stationary approximation of a circus's aesthetic. He'd play games that earned tickets, and the tickets got him palm-sized transforming robots and rings that would green his knuckles, or just bubble-gum pieces when he only had a few tickets. He never saved up tickets for big prizes.

There was a go-kart track on top of one arcade. Signs in the arcade led him to stairs, and stairs led him outside, and outside there was another sign pointing to other stairs, and those stairs ended on a roof where there were go-karts. The rattly engines, the burnt-gas smell, the grinding of the karts' bumpers into the guard rails or other karts. His mom would give him money for one or two runs, or he'd just watch without money.

There was a Super Nintendo. It came packaged with a Donkey Kong game that the boy could never complete. And there was a Final Fantasy game that his cousins left behind and he never gave back.

There was this rich kid named Josh, and a poor kid named Josh, and the boy kicked both their asses plenty of times.

There was the invention of Fritos Scoops, and his mom showed him how to scoop them until they were loaded with cream cheese, and the boy became husky.

There was basketball played at the after-school program. The boy wasn't any good yet, so he'd do what the counselor had taught him. He'd wait by the hoop for a full-court pass, which would come after the counselor had rebounded the ball away from the other boys at the other end. Then he'd try to catch it and try to score unguarded. He was a cherry-picker.

There was a box of pornographic magazines he found at his dad's. Mostly old Playboys. Suddenly, the boy became much more popular with other boys in his neighborhood.

There was learning how to do wheelies, how to ride his bike so well with no hands that he could even steer around corners, and the year he must've wrecked his bike each week, once flipping head-first over the handle bars. This happened, and lying there on the ground, the boy saw his mom do the strangest thing. Well up ahead of him, she dropped her own bike in the middle of the street and ran to him, straight down its white center-stripes. Her bike would've been much quicker. The boy

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knew this then, and knew later that he'd never have remembered the moment so vividly had she simply ridden back rather than running.

There was the boy's first dark pubic hair. Two at once, actually. He shouted and ran naked through their half of the duplex, and he was so proud that he even showed his mom.

There were sandwiches made with whole packs of Buddig ham. There was fourth grade, when he stopped going to school for a few months and watched old reruns on TNT. There was the first CD he ever bought. Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill*.

3. Love

Fifth grade was the last grade when nearly all the girls wore summery dresses and barely-heeled shoes and frilly-topped socks and had mouths full of teeth but with adorable gaps their gums hadn't yet filled. And among these girls, there was Jenna.

The boy's love for Jenna was such that he drew a heart around her face in the yearbook. (He later erased the heart, but the white shadow of the eraser's path left a blurry heart in the sharper heart's place.) Jenna was a hallway love. A girl he'd pass by and not talk with. But the last grade of elementary school is when the rumor mill formulates its bitter intents, and what is told once is told a few dozen times by day's end. Since everyone else heard about his love for Jenna, so did she.

Jenna and the boy both walked home from school. But at the back gate, she'd go left, he'd go right, and he was painfully aware of her left. He had thought a foolish thought: if she just walked his way, then she'd walk with him, and if that happened for a couple days, then they'd walk home together for the rest of the year and hold hands.

And one day, after they'd passed through the gate and she had gone left and he'd turned right, she turned back around. Toward the boy, doubling his pace. Trying to catch up with him. The boy noticed, and he was trucked over by a boyish fear. So, he ran. He shouted silly things, cooties things, and he waved his arms and heard her feet stop, and she said something, but he didn't catch it clearly over his shouts, and she went left again.

Of course, she probably just wanted to tell the boy to stop telling other kids that he loved her. She might've wanted to say anything else, though.

4. Fight

“Punch me,” the boy screamed at poor Josh. “Fucking do it, punch me, right in the fucking face.”

There was a crowd. The school playground during recess is an arena for watching all kinds of fights. The boy was in third grade, and Josh was in fifth. Other fifth graders from Josh’s class hadn’t heard the first time the boy goaded Josh into punching him in the face, but the second time was louder, angrier, gutsier.

Josh wouldn’t punch the boy. His confidently set eyes had scattered to pieces within their sockets. When he’d pushed the boy to the ground, he may’ve been ready for a fight but not for this. What kind of kid demands to be punched, is punched once, then demands another punch in the face? More than anything, Josh wasn’t ready for a crowd of more popular kids. Josh was an angry, poor kid. He wanted to be liked, and, in absence of that, he wanted to be acknowledged. So, he bullied the boy, who was two years younger than him and already the tallest kid in school.

The boy screamed again. “Do it, fucking punch me.” It’s a tough choice, really. Punching a younger boy isn’t going to get a lot of kudos from the crowd, but not punching the kid, well, then the bully’s a wuss. And bullies can’t be thought of as wusses.

Josh finally punched the boy. And the boy—with the thick spit of his screams dragging down his chin and eyes fluid with rage—demanded one more punch in the face.

Josh’s teacher separated him from the boy. Josh and his classmates left the playground, and at the after-school program that day, the boy gave poor Josh a beating in front of a much smaller, less popular crowd. Kids whose parents couldn’t afford proper babysitters weren’t part of this school’s in-crowd, and every school has an in-crowd.

5. Key West

Sometimes, Mom would keep the boy out late. At this pier under a bridge where she would fish and so would men with grizzled and saggy jawlines, but the boy had no taste for watching a pole and wasn’t old enough for what the men and his mom kept in their Styrofoam coolers. If his mom caught anything, which was rare, she’d have him carry the fish home in a plastic bag. One night it was catfish, and their pokers broke through the plastic bag and stuck the boy in his legs.

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Blood trickled from deep dots. His dad saw his legs and swore at the mom. Another fight had begun.

The boy was five around this time, and he remembers once being held in his dad's arms, still wrapped in a blanket as night crested toward its sun. The dad carried the half-asleep boy to the car, an Oldsmobile Eighty-Eight. After having been laid down in the backseat, the boy didn't stir much until he heard his mom tell his father he couldn't do this with her son, and his father did it anyway.

He drove the boy to Key West.

His dad grew up there, but had rarely visited since leaving in the '70s. Half of the boy's grandparents and other relatives still lived there—all his father's siblings and their children. The boy slept most of the drive, and only remembers one quick stop at a Miami gas station, where he saw everything outside the car through dim eyes, a dimness his knuckles couldn't rub away. He wasn't awake for the seven-mile bridge. There is a polaroid of him and his nephew holding toy guns and smiling, but he doesn't really remember anything like that, either. He only remembers spilling a box of old toys onto a floor, spreading the toys out, and digging the figurines' feet and fists into the carpet until he'd left divots.

He does remember this one weekend that happened before that trip south. The boy's father had a fancy Carver stereo, with the kind of big, boxy speakers that were so popular in the '90s, ones papered in fake woodgrain. In this memory, the boy can't see his mom as anything other than an invalid. She spent the whole weekend in a chair by the stereo, recording onto cassettes all the oldies played during one radio station's marathon, singing the lyrics with a slurry jest, or calling for her son or for his father to bring her something—she'd want for the boy's company and for the father to bring more beer. The boy complied uneasily. His mom would snug him onto her lap and pin him there. The father was not so agreeable. But the boy wasn't always with her in the living room, and through the walls that divided the house he'd hear as his parents' voices rose above the music; as his mom turned the music up louder and taunted his father; as his father stormed out of the room and right back in again; as things were thrown, things were broken, things were stripped of their sameness forever; and then, as a kind of silence projected itself into the still-playing music, the boy knew there'd been a hit, and knew it for sure when his mom started screaming again and his father didn't.

The boy had his first drink of alcohol in that house. Awake as dawn broke and his parents slept, he found a glass of orange juice in the fridge. He took a gulp, and spat out whatever he'd gulped all over the fridge's groceries.

His father didn't laugh at this later, but his mother did.

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Murder by Committee: Realism and Responsibility in Ernest Hemingway's "The Butterfly and the Tank"

Jon Falsarella Dawson

"The Butterfly and the Tank," published in the December 1938 issue of *Esquire*, offers a powerful commentary about how people engage with the consequences of war.¹ The story displays the impact of the Spanish Civil War on Ernest Hemingway, who visited Spain four times on behalf of the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA) and covered events that included the Siege of Madrid.² Carlos Baker observes that Hemingway "concentrated on keeping his eyes, his ears, and his literary sensibilities alert for people and situations that were in his judgment too good to waste on newspaper dispatches, that might indeed provide the material for genuine works of art" (532). "The Butterfly and the Tank" came from one such episode when a soldier killed a civilian who had sprayed the crowd at Chicote's bar with an insecticide gun.³ The scholarship on this story has emphasized the narrator's exchange with the bar manager about how to portray the homicide. For instance, Kenneth G. Johnston has accepted the manager's metaphoric view of the victim, a civilian named Pedro, as a butterfly destroyed by the severity of war, and Martin Light has questioned the validity of such constructs.⁴ The action of the text undermines the manager's portrayal of events; however, Hemingway connects the focus on storytelling to a broader concern: the characters' complicity in the murder. While this idea first emerges through their inaction during the shooting, Hemingway develops a broader sense of collective responsibility through the characters' attempts to tell Pedro's story. Through the narrator's rejection of the manager's literary framework, "The Butterfly and the Tank" conveys the responsibility of writers to truthfully present the consequences of military conflict in order to inspire the action necessary to prevent even greater tragedies in the future.

Hemingway clarifies his central theme when the narrator ponders Pedro's death, which calls attention to the characters' responsibility for this outcome. When envisioning the victim's wife asking who killed her husband, the narrator declares that "the police would never be able to tell her that even if they had the name of the man who pulled the

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trigger" (436). With this statement, the narrator expresses the implications of the killing by emphasizing the conduct that allowed it to take place. This concern advances the thematic core of the story, which gains greater resonance from its connection to Stephen Crane's "The Blue Hotel." Reflecting on the Swede's murder, the Easterner states:

Every sin is the result of a collaboration. We, five of us, have collaborated in the murder of this Swede. Usually there are from a dozen to forty women really involved in every murder, but in this case it seems to be only five men—you, I, Johnnie, old Scully, and that fool of an unfortunate gambler came merely as a culmination, the apex of a human movement, and gets all the punishment. (Crane 448)

In "The Blue Hotel," this collective liability includes the actions of the characters involved in the Swede's death, but Hemingway's narrator proposes a broader sense of blame for Pedro's fate. By deemphasizing a specific agent, "The Butterfly and the Tank" suggests that this outcome emerged from not only from the actions of the participants but also from the inaction of those who witnessed the impending tragedy, the implications of which are heightened by the portrayals of the shooting that shape how others view the Spanish Civil War.

The depiction of the main characters reveals their complicity in Pedro's demise as their inaction plays an important role in his death. In the early stages of "The Butterfly and the Tank," the bar patrons view Pedro's behavior as a source of humor. However, after grasping the severity of the situation, they merely wait for the inevitable outbreak of violence, doing nothing to hinder the killer and his party. The narrator, for instance, merely observes the commotion, and Hemingway stresses the speaker's position as a passive spectator by repeating forms of *to look* and *to see* (431). When the killing is imminent, the narrator searches "for a place to duck to," the German censor hides behind a table, the English woman allows herself to be guided to safety, and her companion stands "in a corner drawn up against the wall" (431-32). The passivity of the characters when confronted with disaster reveals their culpability for Pedro's fate, and he recognizes the implications of this failure to act. After no one intercedes to stop his removal from the bar and subsequent beating, the victim shifts from a specific target, the waiter, and raises the insecticide gun to make "one general, unaimed, challenging squirt with it, holding it toward the whole company" (431). Pedro's gesture underscores the cowardice of the guests amid their refusal to stop the impending tragedy, one that their inaction has made inevitable. These episodes suggest the extent to which Pedro's fate re-

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sults from collaboration among individuals, all of whom have contributed to this outcome.

Hemingway's portrayal of the homicide and its aftermath advances a more universal argument by expressing how the central characters evoke a larger segment of the human community. On one level, the responses of the principals after the shooting mirror those of the other bar patrons, who also prioritize self-preservation as they refrain from intervening in the unfolding drama. Further, although nearly all of the men brandish a firearm, they quickly holster their guns, and police officers permit the killer to leave Chicote's while holding the other guests for questioning. This refusal to stop the person who has pulled the trigger and the reluctance of the crowd to challenge corrupt authority further illustrate the group's complicity in the tragic events at the bar. Hemingway's mode of characterization buttresses the importance of the characters' reactions. Instead of presenting highly-individualized men and women, Hemingway relies on figures that are defined by certain traits, and he does not identify the majority of his characters by name. James Plath argues that the author, "by referring to characters by distinguishing characteristics, implies types of characters that extend beyond those barroom doors. By removing their names, Hemingway implies a certain universality" (92-93). As a result of obscuring each figure's individuality, "The Butterfly and the Tank" connects the events of the story to the cowardice that ordinary people would often display under such circumstances. This narrative strategy makes the responses of the characters a commentary on the roles that average individuals play in human tragedy.

"The Butterfly and the Tank" further develops ideas of universal complicity through the characters' depictions of the murder. In these portrayals, Hemingway expresses the need for truth to guide the author's craft, which reflects ideas that he raised in an address to the American Writers' Congress on June 4, 1937. He asserted that a "writer's problem does not change. He himself changes, but his problem remains the same. It is always how to write truly and, having found what is true, to project it in such a way that it becomes part of the experience of the person who reads it" ("Fascism Is a Lie" 193). This position relates directly to the central concerns of "The Butterfly and the Tank": how to tell a story about war that causes the reader to understand events and their implications. However, the narrative initially conveys the need for true depictions of experience through advancing flawed representations that omit essential material to promote a particular worldview. The narrator establishes this concern when he opens the story by stating that on "this evening I was walking home from the censorship office to the Florida Hotel and it was raining" (429).

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The reference to the censorship office suggests that the reports of the murder only afford a partial glimpse of what has transpired, excluding key information to serve a broader objective. With this focus, the narrator invites consideration of how the accounts of Pedro's death have been shaped by preconceived beliefs. Hemingway illustrates the flaws of such portrayals, which obscure what the shooting signifies about how people respond to tragedies that could ultimately be minimized or prevented.

Through this approach, "The Butterfly and the Tank" offers a meditation on suitable artistic responses to war, utilizing the English woman and the bar manager as counterexamples that help to establish the narrator's position. The woman, for instance, views the killing in terms of her political aims. She contends that a story about the murder would weaken support for the Spanish Republic, and she reduces Pedro to an abstraction to promote her ideological ends. The narrator responds:

I said that I had been in Spain for a long time and that they used to have a phenomenal number of shootings in the old days around Valencia under the monarchy, and that for hundreds of years before the Republic people had been cutting each other with large knives called *navajas* in Andalucia, and that if I saw a comic shooting in Chicote's during the war I could write about it just as though it had been in New York, Chicago, Key West or Marseilles. It did not have anything to do with politics. (433)

The narrator's statement conveys the limited perspective of the English woman.⁵ She does not seem interested in universal human problems, which the narrator expresses through the temporal and geographical nature of the passage. Instead, the woman bases her position solely on political concerns. As a result, she further marginalizes the victim, attempting to prevent accounts of the killing from reaching an audience that could learn from Pedro's fate and become more engaged with the struggle in Spain or attempt to address similar conditions elsewhere. Through this depiction of the woman's complicity, the narrator highlights the responsibility of individuals to present events truthfully, regardless of whether such revelations conform to the appropriate ideology.

"The Butterfly and the Tank" further illustrates the flaws in the English woman's viewpoint through the narrator's emphasis on the victim, which expresses his broader concern with the human consequences of war. Contrary to the English woman, the narrator does not adhere to political dogma, and so his views evolve in response to new

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information and experiences. For instance, he initially regards the killing as a comic episode that could become an effective story and does not consider the implications of the murder. This perspective seems at odds with an ambition to truthfully present the effects of the military conflict; however, the narrator's position changes when he focuses on Pedro, who is the only named character in "The Butterfly and the Tank." After the homicide, the narrator views the body that "lay on the floor looking like a grey wax caricature of himself, with grey wax hands and a grey wax face" (433). The repetitions intensify the focus on Pedro's corpse, which lacks the exalted associations that the manager will later develop in his literary formula. Further, this spectacle fosters the narrator's sympathy for the deceased. The narrator conveys this sentiment when he notes that the victim "had no undershirt and the soles of his shoes were worn through. He looked very small and pitiful lying there on the floor" (433). This reaction to Pedro's lifeless form indicates the narrator's desire to attain a deeper awareness of the deceased and to create a portrayal that does not subordinate experience to ideological imperatives.

The narrator's perspective of the murder continues to develop throughout his interactions with the bar manager. Like the English woman, the manager also has a dogmatic view of the murder, yet his agenda is literary rather than political. He attempts to fit the homicide within a metaphoric structure with Pedro as the titular butterfly, something fragile destroyed by war, as represented by the tank. In explaining this idea, the manager declares that his approach to the shooting will be "very interesting and important" though a portrayal of "the misunderstood gaiety coming into contact with the deadly seriousness that is here always" (435). To an extent, this formula correlates with the basic contours of the story. Pedro's murder results from his failure to perceive how the tensions of the Spanish Civil War have pervaded the seemingly safe environs of Chicote's. The narrator indicates this context when he notes that it "was the second winter of shelling in the siege of Madrid and everything was short including tobacco and people's tempers" (429). This emphasis conveys that the war frames the experiences of the customers and creates dangers that the victim does not understand.⁶ Clarifying this point, the narrator asserts that Pedro did not consider "that it was well into the second year of the war, that he was in a city under siege where everyone was under a strain, and that he was one of only four men in civilian clothes in the place" (431). The conditions engendered by the Siege of Madrid are clear to the narrator and his acquaintances, yet Pedro, who served in an earlier campaign during the Spanish Civil War but was only visiting the city, does not seem to grasp the severity of these circumstances. For this reason, he

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does not anticipate the logical consequences of his actions given the conditions in Madrid, which plays a role in his demise.

Although the metaphors reflect the basic events at Chicote's, the manager's constructs obscure important details that would allow others to grasp the implications of the murder. This problem emerges in his depiction of Pedro, who ceases to interest the bar manager when he explains his narrative. In fact, the development of the metaphor involves shifts in language that deemphasize the victim and advance increasingly abstract conceptions. During the initial description of his framework, the manager refers to Pedro with personal pronouns, yet this focus diminishes when the manager begins to highlight the idea that he wishes to express through the victim. In his explanation of the butterfly metaphor, the manager refers to Pedro in terms of "the gaiety of the drinking" and then states that "his gaiety comes in contact with the seriousness of the war like a butterfly" (435). By reducing Pedro to a possessive pronoun that modifies gaiety, the manager indicates that his primary concern is developing his artistic formula with the deceased merely supplying a vehicle for this literary design. In the subsequent discussion of the homicide, the manager omits references to Pedro, stating instead that the narrator "must write a story about it" (435). The manager's emphasis on the story rather than the victim implies that he lacks importance apart from this literary treatment. Accordingly, the manager ignores details about the deceased that would complicate the metaphor or humanize Pedro. Through devaluing the man to impose a metaphoric structure on events, the manager draws attention away from elements that show the tragic dimensions of Pedro's fate. The omission of such details is significant because they would develop a more vivid illustration of the consequences of war than what is possible within the manager's framework.

Hemingway's manuscripts of "The Butterfly and the Tank" further develop the manager's complicity during a discussion about the relevance of the metaphors to a portrayal of Pedro's demise. In the original typescript, the narrator objects to the tank metaphor by noting that one of these vehicles was not involved in the murder (Folder 301.11). This exchange reinforces the narrator's primary criticism of the manager's approach: his structure lacks a meaningful connection to the events at Chicote's, which prevents a clear understanding of their implications. The manager responds that the metaphor is apt since it signifies the invulnerable movement of the assailants (Folder 301.11). As in the published story, the manager forces the murder to adhere to a formula that does not reflect what has transpired and thereby offers little insight into the issues expressed by the shooting. The narrator reinforces his objection when he asserts that the tanks he has seen during

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the Spanish Civil War did not project an air of invincibility (Folder 301. 11). While the narrator points out the inaccuracy of such constructs, he does not propose that another one might be more effective as he is not interested in selecting a suitable metaphor. Rather, the narrator implies that such formulas cannot provide a true depiction of life or illuminate issues of human importance.

The holograph manuscript extends the disagreement between the manager and narrator regarding how to create meaningful art from tragic events.⁷ When the narrator reiterates his concern that the metaphoric tank does not reflect those he has seen during the Spanish Civil War, the manager replies that such objections do not relate to his conception, and he again describes the military vehicle in terms of invincibility (Folder 303.14). Rather than being concerned with a tank in actuality, the manager focuses only on those attributes that suit his metaphor. As a result, he further removes his portrayal from the events at the bar, adding an exalted appearance to objects that do not function like their fictional counterparts. The narrator reinforces this objection when he states that the manager's view correlates with cinematic versions of tanks and that real ones seldom operate in a manner that suggests invulnerability (Folder 303.15). The narrator's contrast between the cinema and reality indicates the artifice of the manager's method, one that does not lend itself to a truthful depiction of experience. This point becomes explicit when the manager concedes that a real tank differs from his fictive version yet states that it still has symbolic value (Folder 303.15). With these contrasts, "The Butterfly and the Tank" indicates that such arbitrary formulas draw attention away from elements that could furnish insight into events or convey how to prevent similar occurrences.

The holograph manuscript further critiques the manager's framework in a manner that illustrates the need for an alternate portrayal of the shooting. After the manager again invokes his metaphors, the narrator questions whether Pedro has to be a butterfly (Folder 303.15). The narrator's focus on the victim conveys the importance of depicting what has actually happened rather than omitting this material to fit an artistic formula. However, the manager cannot grasp this point. He simply restates Pedro's symbolic value, and this repetition indicates that the manager can only ascertain worth in these terms (Folder 303. 16). Further, the narrator's reply that he preferred the man as a cabinet maker underscores the importance of the individual (Folder 303.16). By reiterating this important detail of the man's background, the narrator makes the victim a more fully-realized figure than the manager's metaphor would permit, yet the manager still fails to process such objections. Instead, he contends that Pedro would have more literary

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merit as a butterfly than as a cabinet maker (Folder 303.16). With this statement, the manager insinuates that the elements of life are too commonplace to impart valuable lessons and that abstract formulas are thereby necessary to create meaningful literature.

For the rest of the holograph, the narrator questions the validity of the manager's metaphors and expresses the limited understanding that results from attempts to fit Pedro's demise within this structure. Hemingway develops this point when the narrator cuts the manager off to mock his framework. In doing so, the narrator tells a story about the killing of three men after they had tried to escape from their broken-down tank and how their corpses had remained beside the disabled vehicle for weeks (Folder 303.16). This episode further undercuts the central metaphors as this illustration hardly evokes the invincibility that the manager associates with tanks, and the dead bodies around the vehicle reinforce this idea. The narrator follows this account by ironically suggesting that someone draw the scene, complete with a silly caption, for *Punch* (Folder 303.17). With this anecdote, the narrator again draws attention to narrative structures that trivialize human tragedy for mass consumption. Consequently, the narrator offers further criticism of the manager's idea of literature since both portrayals offer little information about the victims and their deaths that could lead to conclusions other than those expressed by the caption or metaphors. This challenge to the manager's conception affirms the need for portrayals that stress lived experience rather than arbitrary structures.

The published version of "The Butterfly and the Tank" omits this discussion of the inadequacy of the manager's metaphors, yet the interactions between the narrator and manager express a related critique of literary forms that impose meanings on events. Even though the narrator's earlier failure to intervene has made him complicit in the murder, the act of telling the victim's story enables the narrator to take meaningful action that might prevent similar outcomes. Toward this end, he portrays events without political or literary preconceptions, an approach that also illustrates the flaws of representations that are closely wedded to such constructs. The narrator develops these concerns in his responses to the manager. When he asserts that Pedro, "[i]n the gaiety, with the singing, he became gay, too," the narrator replies that the man "was gay all right. . . . He was practically floating around" (435). This rejoinder conveys a problem with the logic of the manager: he constructs a scheme that elevates the incident to the realm of abstraction and ignores what has actually happened. Failing to understand the narrator's comment, the manager attempts to clarify his point by emphasizing "the gaiety of the drinking with a weakness of the chest" that he associates with the victim, to which the narrator re-

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sponds, "I don't like this story very well" (435). The narrator reinforces his disapproval when he observes that the manager "was getting into the real Spanish metaphysics" (435). With this reference to abstract theorizing, the narrator underscores his ironic treatment of the manager's formulations, emphasizing their limited relevance to what has transpired at Chicote's.

These concerns persist throughout the narrator's interactions with the bar manager, and these interactions illuminate the essential disagreement between these characters about how to tell Pedro's story. Expanding on his objections to the manager's ideas, the narrator mockingly exclaims that Pedro was "very like a butterfly. . . . Too much like a butterfly" (435). In response, the manager, understanding his friend's tone, declares that "I am not joking" (435). This exchange reinforces that the characters' viewpoints are incompatible as the narrator again stresses the need to present experience without arbitrary literary devices. In this regard, the narrator's position reflects Hemingway's aversion to unnecessary fictive adornments. Baker asserts that "the symbolic in Hemingway's writing must come as naturally as the leaves to a tree or it had better not come at all. He seems early to have rejected the arbitrary importation of symbols which are not strictly germane to the action in hand" (*Hemingway and His Critics* 15). Martin Light applies this logic to "The Butterfly and the Tank," contending that "when writing of the Spanish War Hemingway found reason to reaffirm such principles. Because he had seen the tanks and because he had seen dead men, he thought of them only as they are" (37). As Light observes, these constructs could trivialize the experiences of people who have suffered due to the actual objects that serve only as metaphors for the manager. By focusing instead on what has happened, Hemingway's narrator expresses the deeper significance of the murder and dramatizes the effects that result from a failure to intervene in impending tragedy.

These ideas also emerge in the narrator's emphasis on Pedro as "The Butterfly and the Tank" continues to stress the need for a clear, unvarnished portrayal of events in order to effectively address the perils of war. The narrator indicates his disapproval of the manager's rhetoric by remaining focused on the victim and refusing to reduce him to an abstraction. In contrast to the manager, the narrator repeatedly refers to Pedro using personal pronouns rather than possessive pronouns that stress the possession rather than the possessor. Even when the narrator does not directly mention the man, such as the mocking reference to the butterfly, Pedro is the implied subject (435). To further illustrate the problems with the manager's analysis, the narrator reflects, "I remembered the flit gun man with his grey wax hands and his grey wax face, his arms spread wide and his legs drawn up and he did look a

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little like a butterfly; not too much, you know. But he did not look very human either. He reminded me more of a dead sparrow" (435). Rather than accepting the manager's position, the narrator still focuses on the victim, conveying sympathy for Pedro with the reference to his inhuman appearance. The final point about the sparrow gives an additional indication of the manager's imprecise framework as the attempts to interpret the image obscure what it represents. With these objections, the narrator suggests the need to present what has happened without distortion or embellishment.

The narrator invites further consideration of this tragedy by including details that offer a more complete depiction of Pedro. While the manager supplies background about the victim, this information emerges in response to questions posed by the narrator about the man's history, his marital status, and his wife's interview with the police (434). By continuing to emphasize the deceased and also focusing on others who will suffer due to his death, the narrator humanizes Pedro, who is not simply the basis for a metaphor but a husband, colleague, and friend. Accordingly, these details enable the narrator to present Pedro as a three-dimensional character, whose fate provides a more compelling illustration of the perils of inaction when faced with tragic circumstances. The references to the man's corpse contribute to this effect by drawing further attention to what has been lost. In addition, the narrator continues to direct attention to Pedro throughout the discussion. For instance, when the manager attempts to explain his metaphor yet again, the narrator asks, "[h]as he any children?" (435). This question brings the story back to what the manager has obscured: the experiences of the victim, which have clear implications for an audience that wants to address issues of human importance. By portraying what has happened at Chicote's without fictive adornments, the narrator effectively dramatizes the extent to which individuals are responsible for the continuity of tragedy and illuminates the need for purposeful action.

Hemingway's emphasis on collective responsibility offers a trenchant commentary on the Spanish Civil War, underscoring the culpability of France, Britain, and the United States in the fall of the Republic. Throughout the conflict, Hemingway used his creative and journalistic output to illuminate conditions in Spain and to bolster support for the Loyalists.⁸ He also understood that a fascist victory would have serious consequences for Europe. Regarding the dangers posed by a failure to confront the Nationalists and their allies, Hemingway asserted that it was necessary "to beat Italy, always beatable, and to beat her in Spain, and to beat her now. Otherwise you will have to fight tougher people than the Italians, and don't let anybody ever tell you that you won't"

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("The Time Now" 37). This impending threat highlighted the need for the western democracies to assist the Republicans. Toward this end, Hemingway wanted America not to launch a military intervention in Spain but to end an embargo on the sale of weapons to the Spanish government. Hemingway expanded on these arguments by contending that if

the democratic nations allow Spain to be over-run by the fascists through their refusal to allow the legal Spanish government to buy and import arms to combat a military insurrection and a fascist invasion, they will deserve whatever fate that brings them. . . . But no matter what excuse the democratic countries may have for their ignorance of the necessity for beating the fascists in Spain, history will label their actions in 1936 and 1937, when they refused to allow Spain to arm herself to fight *their* enemies, as criminal stupidity. ("Dying" 293)

The results of this inaction had become clear when Hemingway started "The Butterfly and the Tank" in May of 1938. Due to major defeats in Teruel, Vinaròs, and Aragon during the first half of the year, the collapse of the Republic seemed unavoidable. Accordingly, the story alludes to the culpability of the United States and its allies for such developments since these nations, like the crowd at Chicote's, failed to provide the assistance that might have averted this outcome, which became inevitable based on the refusal to take decisive action.

"The Butterfly and the Tank" highlights the need for writers to depict the consequences of war truthfully without the distortions caused by political orthodoxy or artistic preconceptions. In this context, the title of this story supplies an ironic commentary on literary structures that enable writers to obscure the nature of events, which can also allow readers to overlook their responsibility for tragic circumstances. By drawing attention to these matters, "The Butterfly and the Tank" advances themes that remain relevant as people must still confront their roles in the spread of preventable tragedies and consider how to arouse others in order to address these important concerns.

Notes

1. Hemingway first mentioned “The Butterfly and the Tank” in a letter to Maxwell Perkins. After leaving Spain in May of 1938, Hemingway returned to Key West and notified his editor that “I have written two stories of about 3000 and 4200 words but both of them are imperfect still. I have them typed in final form but I know I can improve them on another rewriting. They are about Chicote’s Bar—a famous place before the war—and deal with it in wartime[.] They are good stories but I have written better ones and can make these better with time” (*The Only Thing that Counts* 265-66).

2. The Spanish Civil War started on July 17, 1936 with an attempted military coup against the Spanish government. While the forces of Generals Francisco Franco and Emilio Mola captured significant territory throughout Spain, citizens armed themselves to prevent the fall of Madrid and other large cities. From the outset, the Spanish Civil War attracted widespread foreign intervention. The Germans and Italians interceded on behalf of the Nationalists or Rebels, which consisted of the military, the large landowners, and the Catholic Church. The Soviet Union backed the Loyalists or Republicans, whose forces were comprised of troops still loyal to the government, peasants, and urban workers. The United States and other western democracies did not become involved in Spain due to a non-intervention pact that other world powers openly flouted. For more information about Hemingway’s engagement with the Spanish Civil War, see Alex Vernon, *Hemingway’s Second War: Bearing Witness to the Spanish Civil War*.

3. Carlos Baker notes that “the shooting was a real-life incident, but, as with any other EH stories, it was something he heard rather than something he saw” (qtd. in Johnston 184). This episode also appears in Hemingway’s play, *The Fifth Column* (1938), as a depiction of war-time tensions in Madrid. For another account of the shooting, see Langston Hughes, *I Wonder As I Wander: An Autobiographical Journey* (364-65).

4. Johnston claims that although “the narrator will make fun of this literary amateur with his elegant story title and fondness for Spanish metaphysics, at the end he accepts not only the manager’s title but also his interpretation of the events” (185). The narrator does employ his counterpart’s title, yet the action of “The Butterfly and the Tank” does not warrant the assertion that the former accepts the latter’s position. For a related argument that takes the manager’s metaphors at face value, see James Plath’s “Reshaping Reality: Hemingway’s Wartime Fable of ‘The Butterfly and the Tank.’” Martin Light, by contrast, emphasizes the narrator’s critique of his counterpart, who “leaps too quickly toward an explanation that fits a scheme,” and contends that the narrator “wants an account without imposed meanings and artificial symbols” (37). In “Hemingway’s Spanish Civil War Stories, or the Spanish Civil War as Reality,” Allen Josephs questions the validity of the metaphors. However, he does not analyze the narrator’s focus on the victim or the criticism of the manager’s analysis.

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5. On one level, this statement also reflects Hemingway's gradual disillusionment with the Loyalists during the Spanish Civil War. For context, see Josephs, *For Whom the Bell Tolls: Ernest Hemingway's Undiscovered Country* (25-32).

6. This portrayal gains further credence from Hemingway's NANA dispatches, which provide important background for "The Butterfly and the Tank" by presenting the conditions that shape the bar patrons' behavior. In "Shelling of Madrid," Hemingway writes that at "the front, a mile and a quarter away, the noise came as a heavy coughing grunt from the green pine-studded hillside opposite. . . . But in the town, where all the streets were full of Sunday crowds, the shells came with the sudden flash that a short circuit makes and then the roaring crush of granite-dust" (259). Hemingway then describes the human costs of the Spanish Civil War. He notes that the bombardment "killed an old woman returning home from market, dropping her in a huddled black heap of clothing, with one leg, suddenly detached, whirling against the wall of an adjoining house" ("Shelling" 259). These sensory details orient the reader to life during the Siege of Madrid, presenting incidents that would have been familiar to residents at the time. Hemingway further develops these concerns when he observes that a "motor car coming down the street stopped suddenly and swerved after the bright flash and roar and the driver lurched out, his scalp hanging down over his eyes, to sit down on the sidewalk with his hand against his face, the blood making a smooth sheen down over his chin" ("Shelling" 259). Such graphic descriptions of suffering express how individuals cannot escape the consequences of the conflict.

7. Due to the absence of page 12, the version in folder 301 does not resolve this disagreement and instead resumes on page 13, which features the ending from the published work without the final sentence. However, Hemingway's holograph manuscript closely follows the typescript, extending the opposition of the narrator to the tank figure since it varies from those he has seen in warfare.

8. Hemingway's journalism during this period provided an effective platform to promote these objectives. He wrote thirty-one dispatches for NANA, thirteen articles for *Ken* magazine, and additional pieces for the *New Masses* among other publications. To further bolster support for the Loyalists, Hemingway wrote *The Fifth Column* and produced a documentary, *The Spanish Earth* (1937). In addition to supplying \$5,000 to finance the motion picture, Hemingway also helped in the filming and composed narration for the movie. He screened *The Spanish Earth* at the White House and later at a fundraiser in Hollywood that raised \$20,000 for ambulances (Graden). Further, Hemingway contributed \$1,500 toward the purchase of more ambulances, paid to send members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades to Spain, and donated the manuscripts of "The American Dead in Spain" and *The Spanish Earth* to benefit returning American volunteers (Graden).

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Ancient Myth, Excess, and Lacan in Stieg Larsson's "The Girl" Heroism

Micki Nyman

But from antiquity to modern times, there are many stories of female warriors, of Amazons. The best known find their way into the history books as warrior queens, rulers as well as leaders. They have been forced to act as any Churchill, Stalin, or Roosevelt: Semiramis from Nineveh, who shaped the Assyrian Empire, and Boudicca, who led one of the bloodiest English revolts against the Roman forces of occupation, to cite just two. Boudicca is honored with a statue on the Thames at Westminster Bridge, opposite Big Ben. Be sure to say hello to her if you happen to pass by.

—Stieg Larsson, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*

Female heroism drives the spirit of the late Stieg Larsson's (1954-2004) infamous protagonist, Lisbeth Salander, in the series titled *Millennium: The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2004), *The Girl Who Played with Fire* (2005), and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* (2006).¹ In Salander's brand of heroism that resembles fighting for justice at any cost, one observes the kind of "female warrior" Larsson introduces in his historically centered opening (quoted above). Many have credited the looks, physicality, and brilliance of the series' protagonist, Lisbeth Salander, with *Millennium's* appeal, but her complexity too gives us pause; she relies on instinct, expects little from others, and delivers justice swiftly.² Larsson's secondary heroines—Harriet Vanger, Sonja Modig, Monica Figuerola, Erika Berger, and Annika Gianinni—complement Salander's hero's journey by the shared particularity of their respective storylines. Still, Salander is contrasted to these characters *vis-à-vis* her exotic appearance, hacker skill set, and ability to "inflict violence so ferociously against some," that she is "the most famous vengeful heroine in contemporary crime fiction" (de Welde 17, Leffler 51). Without question, Salander holds remarkable ability for her "excess," defined in this paper as either quality or activity that goes beyond socially appropriated norms.³ The rendering/releasing of excess I find noteworthy in *Millennium*, along with the play of the past in the present, the prominence of narrative displacement,

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the transformative impact of heroism, and the presence of an ancient hero's journey, inform the basis of the psychoanalytic approach I apply in this paper. Similar to *Oedipus Rex*, Salander takes on the corruption of power in socio-cultural institutions and assumes responsibility for changing the status quo. The richness of the Oedipal narrative, I would argue, continues to hold currency in metaphysical considerations of self, and further suggests why Larsson's stunning figure continues to engage the imagination of popular culture in the mass proliferation of "The Girl" books and films.⁴ Stieg Larsson does not merely valorize Salander's excess by glamorizing her unconventional appearance and life style; he refuses to condemn her to self-blindness, he interrogates cultural systems, and he creates a parody that critiques the hard-boiled crime fiction tradition.

Larsson's Salander takes her lead from many popular British female detectives who mime information, exercise surveillance, and show unflinching resolve. An early example that points to the long tradition of literary sleuths who defy the status quo is British writer Fergus Hume's protagonist Madame Midas, in *Madame Midas* (1888)—a kindred spirit to Lisbeth Salander—who too embodies excess. Madame Midas pans for gold, detects the circumstances of the murder mystery in the Australian outback, and negotiates the perils of a corrupt system. Madame Midas owns the Pactolus claim and eventually uncovers the gold in Devil's Head, though more importantly, unearths the villain who commits the crime. As Joseph Kestor notes, Hume's novel ultimately suggests that a "woman must be a detective to survive in a patriarchal world that cannot overcome its shortcomings" because male characters conceal evidence of the crime to eventually destroy the female protagonist (53). Against this background of violation, the early mythic sisters of Sherlock sought to right the wrongs found within collective injustice. Not surprisingly, such contestation of the status quo came to a halt during the period of the Great Wars, a period that stressed individual responsibility to overcome the cultural ramification of collective evil that has been all but impossible to explain away. Showing little tendency toward abating, the formula made famous by Agatha Christie (Miss Marple) and Dorothy Sayer (Harriet Vane) suggests a simple response to the complexity posed by criminality. Cara Kaplan observes that "the village life itself becomes . . . a microcosm of all social relations, a cultural book of knowledge from which a thousand parables about human nature and motivation can be drawn" (212). More recently, the most popular literary female sleuths grapple with personal and professional issues made famous by their male counterparts. As Johanna Smith attests, authors "[Sara] Paretsky and [the late Sue] Grafton rework the traditionally masculine role of hard-boiled de-

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tective by putting women in it. [They] give their women detectives the kind of emotional baggage—conflicted friendships, troubling memories of dead parents—unknown to the hard-boiled, masculine, sturdy-individualist PI” (80). In the new millennium, readers have come to expect women crime fighters embroiled in the same kinds of mishaps as men.

Much of the criticism surrounding Stieg Larsson’s blockbuster trilogy esteems its sociocultural impact and of course its protagonist Lisbeth Salander. In “Always Ambivalent: Why Media is Never Just Entertainment,” Abby L. Ferber writes, “Larsson depicts women as equally capable as men, whether as news reporters, editors, police officers, lawyers, novelists or board members. He also pays his dues to women writers. Whenever he mentions other authors in the trilogy, they are almost always women” (4). While Salander displays qualities typically gendered neutral, particularly in her choice of dress and occupation, she nonetheless stars as the female protagonist in a series of books that go about repairing institutional malfeasance. Larsson’s books, for sociologists Kristine de Welde and Sarah E. H. Moore respectively, concern “the failures of a social and political system and who bears the brunt of those failures,” as well as “the relationship between storytelling, power and justice” (15, 132). “Reading detective fiction,” Priscilla Walton recounts in “The Girl Who Pays Our Salaries’: Rape and the Bestselling *Millenium* Trilogy,” “at least for some, provides a kind of therapy. . . . to combat systemic violence. . . . [that] gets obscured, overlooked, and distorted” (32, 21). Without question, Larsson affords Salander the possibility to go beyond more limited views “of violence and victimization,” not merely to challenge “mainstream assumptions about gender,” but rather, to uncover ways personal agency takes place despite trauma (de Welde 16). In his journalistic work, Larsson sought to counter the effects of trauma—the separation from self, another, and culture (Hansson 105). In “The Philosopher Who Knew Stieg Larsson,” Sven Ove Hansson further claims Larsson “believed in changing society by providing the general public with facts and rational arguments. . . . to take place in competition with irrational messages” (103). Thus, it may be ascertained that Larsson’s texts convey a progressive turn precisely because *Millenium* offers its readers an array of interpretative possibility. Janet McCabe considers the potential of storytelling to move cultural mores in “The Girl in the Faroese Jumper: Sarah Lund, Sexual Politics and the Precariousness of Power and Difference.” As McCabe puts it, Salander represents a “type, more complex, more nuanced, and inherently more contradictory because this textual character is produced *in* and *through* a storytelling form busy defining new rules for talking about gender, identity, and power” (120). Considering the vast, unyielding, cross-disciplined interest in

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Lisbeth Salander, I offer an interpretive stance that is based on several psychoanalytic principles.

To begin, I link Larsson's *Millennium* to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, a reading that initially calls to mind Freudian trauma, repression, and recovery. For Oedipus and Lisbeth Salander respectively, the journey within (introspection) invites a glance into a conscious/subconscious process that remarks poignantly on the duality of honor *and* excess the two heroes face. Next, to show how Salander negotiates the status quo/patriarchy to her advantage, I overlay Lacan's mirror stage (the subjective play of symbolic, real, imaginary registers). Similar to the role Oedipus assumes—the cultural other—to slay his own demons as well as those belonging to his society, Salander probes cyberspace to both remove unwarranted excess (institutional corruption) and integrate warranted excess (make the world a better place). Last of all, I discuss the respective role assumed by Larsson's subsidiary female heroes—Salander's "others"—who foster Salander's return to society; her excess becomes difference.

The Oedipal Tale: The Recovery of Truth in the Hero's Journey

Larsson's trilogy places upfront the tale of the traumatized consciousness of Lisbeth Salander, who has suffered physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as a child. In *Played with Fire*, the young Salander staves off her own and her mother's repeated abuse by her father by tossing gasoline on him in his car. While thirteen-year-old Salander is brought into state custody and forced into solitary confinement for a year's time, her father continues his work in the counterespionage unit SAPO. His illegal sex trafficking business quickly merges with the underworld crime scene that uses SAPO for its aims. The past corruption of the state sets the stage for the teenage Salander who remains trapped in an institutional environment that employs child molesters. Enmeshed in the legality/illegality of state institutions that hold though deny the democratic ideals of justice and freedom, Salander is eventually rescued by the state to become the ward of a good patriarch until he suffers from a stroke. Again, Salander is denied freedom to live as she wishes; she is placed under the guidance of a sexual predator employed as a state psychiatrist. At this juncture, Salander chooses to act differently, although her past trauma returns to the present—what Freud might call the uncanny, but Salander's trauma is not fully repressed.⁵ Knowingly, Salander takes charge of the course of her future by helping herself and others who have been victimized by family or state. In

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the journey to seek justice for self and other, Salander heals herself and reveals institutional decadence.

Though it might be challenging to imagine Salander fitting neatly within any cultural system, her hero's journey resonates with Sophocles' ancient *Oedipus Rex*, what Freud considers one of culture's foremost narratives for its landmark "process of revealing . . . cunning delays and ever-mounting excitement" (qtd. in Felman 101). Generally, this formula is repeated in most crime fiction and Larsson's popular trilogy is not an exception. Peter Brooks in "Freud's Masterplot" asserts that all narrative, by its very nature, "is a return in the text, a doubling back . . . a return to origins or a return of the repressed;" however, detective fiction is nonetheless more famously noteworthy for its resilience in "going over again a ground already covered . . . as the detective retraces the tracks of the criminal" (1164-5). In drawing on Lacan's reading of Freud, Shoshana Felman aligns the "process of narration" with the "performative psychoanalytic character of understanding and of knowledge," both of which stand neatly in the Oedipal schematic (4). Yet not all crime fiction revolves around the absence of conventional mothers, fathers, and families noted in the trilogy's entirety. The resonance of Sophocles' drama drives two key dialectics of the tale, the political (the state) and the personal (the family), culture and self. In the ancient narrative, King Laius believes his son threatens his rule and identity, which causes him to banish and attempt the murder of Oedipus. Yet it is Oedipus who ironically fulfills the death wish of his father (to kill his own flesh) and who must pay for his father's misdeed and country's disarray. When he at last understands the nature of his crimes, Oedipus acts to redeem himself for what he does not know. At this symbolic juncture, the hero's/anti-hero's journey is positioned toward the object or fulfillment of a desire toward consciousness, what Derrida would admit allows one to reconcile the past and present, to release the original incident's effect on the current moment.⁶ Similarly, the disruption and eventual healing of individual/community is comparable with the healing of Salander, who embodies the hero's journey in her quest to solve crimes that have not been of her initiation, but of her father's, and must therefore be solved for her own and the state's well-being. Salander's story is a contemporary revision of the ancient Oedipal narrative—the bad king/father desires to kill his son/daughter because of the threat of usurpation of crown/position—that atones for personal and political excess found in culture.

Reconciling past and present to release the past impediment on the present is a core feature of consciousness (a psychoanalytic turn of phrase) and of Salander's desire to know the truth about her father and the corruption of the state. Salander's heroic efforts can be lik-

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ened to a core precept of psychoanalytic theory whereby the initial trauma repeats itself until the affected individual takes responsibility for the ramifications caused by said trauma.⁷ As is often noted in his “Seminar on the Purloined Letter,” Lacan compares the missing letter in Poe’s famous story to missing details that the human psychic mind misplaces or displaces. The process of retaining (or not) any one incident or string of events shows the twin capacity of the mind to repress (forget) or bring to consciousness (remember). In Salander’s case, the incidents and events she encounters show the dual nature of the mind to act on what is known and unknown. Though Salander is certain she rejects the status quo because of the pain inflicted by her father, she is unaware of the extent of his corruption. Such duality of mind, what is known and unknown, determines the extent of any one person to engage in repression:

In much the same way as the repressed returns in the symptom, which is its repetitive symbolic substitute, the purloined letter ceaselessly returns in the tale—as a signifier of the repressed—through its repetitive displacements and replacements.... Unconscious desire, once repressed, survives in displaced symbolic media that govern the subject’s life and actions without his ever being aware of their meaning or of the repetitive pattern they structure. (Lacan qtd. in Felman 42, 43)

Taking his lead from Freud, who contends that displaced memory could result in self blindness—one does not fully comprehend why one acts the way one does (as Oedipus’s tale recounts)—Lacan links the certainty of repetitive life events to fictional narrative to suggest that cycles evolve through intervention of a third party. In psychoanalytic discourse this person would be the analyst, who rids the patient of the symptom by guiding her toward a process of transference—a re-positioning through reflection, awareness, and corrected action. In Larsson’s fiction, the intervention plays out narratively in Salander’s subjective process (the journey, as it were) serving to release the repetitive structure’s hold over her. During the journey, Salander remembers and then substitutes a new symbol/signifier for the duality of the bad father/corrupt system that inheres psychically in her. In this conscious/subconscious exchange, she removes the symptom by replacing it with knowledge of a system she can manipulate to her advantage.

In *Dragon Tattoo*, Salander’s successful detection of the crimes committed by Harriet Vanger’s corrupt father, Gottfried Vanger, establishes the premise for Salander’s successful search for her own corrupt father in *Played with Fire*. Lisbeth Salander helps Mikael Blomkvist solve the

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murders of many women by Martin and Gottfried Vanger (son and father hold respectable positions in society) to then allow Harriet to return home to respectability, releasing her from a troubled past. Lisbeth Salander, too, has an evil brother and father, though she refuses the help of Blomkvist to assist her in finding and exposing them. Salander disappears until she locates her own slippery father, Karl Axel Bodin or Zala or Zalchenko. Salander's initial childhood trauma may be the underlying reason she displaces her current pain and anger toward her former lover, Blomkvist, whom she believes has betrayed her.⁸ Salander re-lives the primary trauma of her father's rejection in her rejection of Blomkvist who only wishes to help her.⁹ As a child, Lisbeth was obviously not allowed to clear her own name. In the second and third books of the series, she works to clear her name as a suspect in the murders of the journalist Dag Svensson, the scholar Mia Johansson, and the corrupt patriarch Nils Bjurman, who has replaced the good one, Holger Palmgren, who is rendered incapacitated by a stroke. The rejection of Blomkvist and others' help nearly costs Salander her life; she is shot by her father and buried by her brother at the end of *Played with Fire*. Her buried and then recovered body serves to contest the crime genre's insistence that the dead body functions as the object or thrust of narrative desire. During much of *Hornet's Nest*, Salander lies recuperating on a hospital bed but continues working on solving the murders.

Where Harriet Vanger has disappeared from society in *Dragon Tattoo*, Lisbeth Salander likewise has in *Played with Fire*. Additionally, all three novels suggest that the initial absence of the good mother is part and parcel of the cause of the trauma. Their mothers are rendered inaccessible to them. Isabella refuses to protect her daughter Harriet from Gottfried, an abusive father, though Harriet's caring yet busy uncle, business tycoon Henry Vanger attempts unsuccessfully to remedy Harriet's loss. As noted, the Vanger family is peppered with absent mothers and abusive fathers. In *Dragon Tattoo*, Mikael Blomkvist admits he is a "bad father" to his own daughter (582). Lacking emotional strength, Salander's mother appears unable to defy Salander's own very bad father. The continuing emphasis of the "bad father" in *Dragon Tattoo* spells out the mission of Salander's heroic journey: to rectify the wrongdoings committed by a misguided patriarchy, one similarly found in the original Oedipal tale.

Similar to yet different from Oedipus's quest to know, Salander's repression/recovery works in two key ways. As Salander gains the self-knowledge she has repressed, she helps herself and others. Yet by the very process whereby she uncovers the multi-leveled institutional corruption instituted by her father and others like him (the corrupt pa-

triarchy), she discovers how she can manipulate symbolic media (the web) to her advantage.

Lacan's Mirror Stage: How Lisbeth Salander Interrogates Excess

This time around, though, it is Salander who follows in the footsteps of Oedipus in Larsson's heroine-centered text, linking two closely woven ideas—the familial context of repression/recovery *and* absence/recovery—recalling the competing tensions found in Lacan's mirror stage.¹⁰ Jacques Lacan developed his premise of identity formation on his belief that desire begets desire. While the desire to be whole remains forever impossible, it nonetheless fails to deter anyone from trying to “feel” whole. Questions of knowledge, according to Lacan, center on sex systems or gender because how to know or perceive is linked directly to gender through the phallic order, that which anchors the foundation of language or culture.¹¹ Drawing on Lacan, Shoshana Felman reads the symbolization of the Oedipal narrative into history as a representation of the foundation of language, the discourse of the symbolic that informs the status quo, “the historization of Oedipus' destiny through the symbolization—the transmutation into speech—of the Oedipal desire” (134). The passage of the myth into history, as Lacan puts it, “embodies the central knot of speech” (136). It is in the literal and figurative rendering of the cultural other, Jerry Fliieger notes, where the continued currency of the Oedipal encounter occurs: “since every signifier is an effect of desire, lack is inscribed in the Signifier of Signifiers . . . the name of the Father, the paternal metaphor . . . the Other may be read abstractly, as the locus of the symbolic order or the law” (236). On the level of the subject, it is not difficult to imagine the Oedipal other as interrogating the excess or difference that the subject reflects or refracts, respective to the hyper sense of the visual (presence) and the speculative (absence) (5).

Seen as symbolic Oedipal other, Salander persistently positions herself in life-threatening danger, where the paradoxical death drive is evoked.¹² Salander's ongoing desire for social justice by its very nature brings acknowledgement concerning the excess that fuels her actions. Accordingly, it is Salander's positioning of self into uncharted psychic terrains in cyberspace where one is reminded of Lacan's psychic imaginary economy, or perhaps more strikingly, of Kristeva's semiotic, the energy center she calls a *chora*, “a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is . . . full of movement” (25). The presence of the semiotic is described in terms

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of the paradoxical: it is “subject to a regulating process” but extends beyond regulation to “effectuate discontinuities by temporarily articulating them and then starting over, again and again” (26).¹³ One notes Kristeva’s semiotic register—famous as well for its transgressive properties that counter the symbolic, its *jouissance*, the play of real (actual reality) and symbolic (patriarchal discourse)—particularly in the textual references to cyberspace (47-50).¹⁴ As Sarah Casey Benyahia notes, “Cyberspace is a realm which encourages anonymity and allows the construction of different personas” (60). In the contained space of the web where Salander works with a close knit yet impartial group of hackers, she repeatedly resists efforts by an established order who seek to mark her difference as excess by making her a scapegoat. To counter (media, institutional) attacks on her character, Salander directly accesses the secrets those in power hide, their unlawful “excess” that extends beyond legal limits. In her job as Armansky’s top cyber spy, Salander exposes the secrets of numerous “model citizens.” She hacks into their computer systems—relating another way the symbolic register works in current times—that has heretofore allowed law abiders to slip under the radar. In cyberspace, Salander deconstructs not just the symbolic, but the real and imaginary/semiotic—registers that are nonetheless in alignment with the symbolic. Here, the play of the three registers ensures the continued presence of the Oedipal function in the symbolic rendering of reality, reinforcing the “Oedipal paradigm as subject” (Flieger 49). “On the simplest level,” Flieger insists, “the other is Lacan’s recasting of Freud’s Oedipal father” (226).¹⁵ As such, the web represents yet another transposition of the status quo.

It might be difficult to imagine how one symbolic structure (the patriarchy) embodies the bedrock or anchor of culture and how despite the passing of more than two thousand years, the currency of the Oedipal myth remains. Yet most people readily take for granted the view that much of reality is constructed or based on an array of discursive realities. In their respective tales, Sophocles and Larsson illustrate how excess or the always already present—what is not yet fully recognized but nonetheless true—is assimilated into culture. Oedipus embodies and transforms society’s excess because he accepts the consequence of his actions by atonement. In her representation of split-subject/other, Salander too embodies and transforms society’s excess through the very formula of the mirror stage: she negotiates the real, symbolic, imaginary/semiotic registers to effectively assimilate subjective/collective excess into the status quo.

It is possible to understand Lacan’s/Kristeva’s psychic registers with ease if one considers that most of what happens in the quotidian (as a split-subject) is the subjective negotiation of the various realities of

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the status quo (patriarchy) one has opted into: institutions (family, government, church) and individualized worlds (job, hobby, lifestyle). Most of what actually “is” has been created by symbolic socialization over time; although for many, that socialization includes the ability to choose or negotiate how to fit in (or not) through the steady flow of evolving desire. Understanding the way society operates offers one the possibility of agency. Observing Salander’s character develop in terms of Lacan’s/Kristeva’s tri-part equation invites recognition of this hero’s evolving perception that is in keeping with Sophie Statzel Bjork-James’ remarking: “it had been Salander’s style to go things alone to fight the state or criminal networks with her own system of anarcho-hacker justice, trying to stay out of the debt of others and not trusting the legal system or any authority to defend her rights” (101). Yet pursuing a reality bound by personal limitations could only take Salander so far. Throughout the trilogy, many of her professional/personal relationships—with Holger, Palmgren, Armansky, Mimmi, Plague, Dr. Jonasson, Mikael Blomkvist—have taught Salander who to trust; nevertheless, the narrative can be read more broadly to establish how feminine excess actually energizes the status quo.

Masks of the Status Quo: Difference Creates Possibility

Several female characters in the series, too, serve as transpositions of the status quo; they specialize in bending rules to achieve their aims.¹⁶ As foils to Salander, the women pose the paradoxical alliance of the feminine as difference/possibility within the system. The foils represent masks from which behind exist “layers of an onion [where] there is nothing—no ultimate feminine secret” (Žižek 70). It is useful to apply Žižek’s analogy of woman’s relationship to the patriarchy to call attention to the aspects of Salander’s character that are revealed over the course of the novels. The female characters, whether directly or indirectly, recreate Salander’s plight of injustice for another—Salander, alongside Blomkvist, solves Harriet Vanger’s case in *Dragon Tattoo* and works to solve her own case against the state with the help of Sonja Modig, Monica Figuerola, Erika Berger, and Annika Gianinni in *Played with Fire* and *Hornet’s Nest*. The characters serve as masks to reveal negative consequences of a patriarchy Salander must transgress (rebel against). According to Žižek, “the anthropological notion of an original, matriarchal paradise. . . gradually replaced by patriarchy is strictly a patriarchal myth. . . which from the very beginning served as the support of retroactive legitimization of the male rule” (70). There is no

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actual frontier that eclipses women though women can be limited by their participation in the myth that renders them separate from men. It is implausible that woman can be the One to supplant the patriarchy just as it is equally implausible for man to do so. The evidence of Oedipus's own journey back to where he began affirms that he too cannot supplant the law of the father, yet through negotiating the demands of the journey in which he amasses insight, he discovers that he can create a destiny to suit himself (Oedipus becomes a rebel). Informing culture, myth symbolically has created a system where women are excluded in power positions. Obviously, many women have rebelled to achieve status in culture, a distinct correspondence recounted in the historically based vignettes of *Millennium*. The trilogy interrogates the notion of rebellion through its resolution of the narrative play of excess vis-à-vis the female characters who inhabit the storyline. As masks of the status quo, the female characters supersede and supplant the myth of impossibility imposed by male fantasy of the feminine as the elusive beyond.

The role of Police Inspector Sonja Modig, introduced in *Played with Fire*, exemplifies one such mask; Modig sorts through the misinformation regarding Salander in the media to confront the excess—institutional sexism—embedded in the police department. Modig joins the homicide team seeking to solve the murders of Dag, Mia, and Bjurman. At the time she uncovers the many missteps taken in the multi-murder investigation, Modig quips, “well, I don't know who's dumber—the police or the newspapers” (440). She remains the ear and eye of reason in a field of emotionality, reminding one, of course, of Salander's capacity to remain cool under fire. Modig's nemesis, Inspector Faste, epitomizes the stereotype of a sexist police force; Faste calls Modig unprofessional when she produces actual evidence. One observes in Faste—who readily projects his inadequacies onto others—how Freudian “projection” neatly works. It is Sonja Modig who pursues the “real” truth necessary to lead to Salander's eventual exoneration. Repeatedly, Salander and Modig encounter inept superiors who represent institutional corruption, yet their persistence enables a pattern of success in detection.

Constitutional Protection Inspector Monica Figuerola in *Hornet's Nest* epitomizes another type of mask for Salander. Readers become acquainted readily with Figuerola because she shares Salander's adept handling of computer technology and information. Routinely, “every report submitted in any police district in Sweden passed through the computers in Figuerola's department” (223). Before heading the conspiracy task force, Figuerola investigates “hate” language to make sure language does not code criminal activity. Comparable to Salander in her skill sets, Figuerola is employed for her expertise in code breaking.

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Figuerola uses the internet the way Salander does, to manipulate codes imaginatively, to detect truth.¹⁷ Serving as the trilogy's Renaissance woman, however, Figuerola takes her physical and mental prowess to a new level. She works out daily at a gym, runs several times a week, and plays tennis as often as she can, all to retain a steady stream of endorphins.¹⁸ Figuerola reads ancient history for fun, and for a time dates Mikael Blomkvist who admits he is "in love with several people" (423). Figuerola's cell phone plays "Once Upon a Time in the West," a film known primarily for its haunting music but also for its transgression towards the classic western (371). Music in Kristeva's view typically represents the semiotic. While the reader is convinced of Figuerola's competence, ultimately she is given her high powered assignment because Chief Inspector Edklinth knew her father well; Edklinth knows he can trust her (223). Thus, the complicit arrangement of the patriarchy in the assignment of Monica Figuerola is made clear. She is adept at cracking infractions of the status quo, a paradoxical by-product of the law of the letter, where truth is often shaped by unchanging codes. Figuerola represents the Renaissance woman who lies dormant inside Salander.

A mask of a different type for Lisbeth Salander—who undoubtedly has intimacy issues—resides in the happily married Erika Berger, who has remained intimate with Blomkvist for twenty years. Her refusal to honor the patriarchy in its one-woman-to-one-man rule hints she must atone for her transgressive stance. Professionally successful too, Erika Berger runs two major print publications, is economically solvent—knows how to invest her time, talent, and money—and like Salander, is subjected to hate crime and sexual harassment (229). After Berger takes a job as editor-in-chief at *Svenska Morgon-Postenu* to help increase circulation, streamline staff, and pull the newspaper into the black, she receives threatening e-mails and hate messages. In one scene, Berger studies the many possible male suspects in the office surrounding her in the glass office she inhabits and wonders why she has signed up for the job. The limitations of her new position pose challenges of discrimination to which she must conquer, sustain, or quit. Subsequently, Berger allows Blomkvist to hire Salander to solve the mystery of "Poison Pen," her detractor. As the hospitalized yet competent Salander sorts through Berger's e-mail correspondence on her palm pilot, Salander remarks, "Had they never heard of women at SMP? All the heads of department were men" (*Hornet's Nest* 386). Despite Berger's success in the print medium, Salander draws on her knowledge of computer systems to rescue Erika Berger from continued harassment, making one suspect that Salander likely will face her own trust issues in the near future of the narrative.

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Over the course of the state's trial against Salander (*Hornet's Nest*) for a series of crimes she has not committed and to settle the matter of state guardianship, *Advokat* Annika Gianinni works tirelessly on Salander's behalf and becomes a key role model. Similar in kind to the other foils in two ways, they are experts in their fields and they are patient and persistent. Giannini plays hardball as defense attorney, though her softness toward Salander never falters. Giannini, Blomkvist's sister, has taken her husband's name, pointing to her comfort with this social convention. Giannini earns Salander's trust by agreeing to compromise: she "shuts [her] eyes . . . to the fact" that Salander uses "unethical methods" (322). In kind, Salander trusts Gianinni; she promises to obtain a driver's license, register her new high-rise apartment, and pay taxes on her wages. In viewing the nuances of their mutually professional relationship, Salander's prognosis of "Asperger's' maybe" by Dr. Jonasson is not valid. Salander's refusal to speak to police and other authority figures stems from childhood repression, not autism. Gianinni counsels Lisbeth Salander to pen her own autobiography, to provide "the system" with her story—first account evidence needed to close the gaps on the corruption that has infiltrated every wing of the Swedish government. In the close reflection Gianinni provides, Salander is exposed to an intersubjective "other," a mirror who reflects trust and judicial justice to Salander.¹⁹

Narrative desire plays out in *Millenium* by way of the split-subject Salander, who ultimately relies on mirrors/others to guide her towards ways of seeing, responding, acting that serve her changing needs, will, and desires no matter how challenging life becomes. As Lyotard famously reminds us in the *Postmodern Condition*, society's gaps and fissures hold the cushion of personal *and* social space required to negotiate a tangible reality that is at once individually and culturally within reach.

The Integration of Excess/Difference into the Status Quo

Adjusting an attitude of cautious distrust to trust nonetheless proves challenging for Salander. Near to the series' end, as Salander's day in court begins to look favorable, she voices to herself several times the words, "no compromise" (513). By this time, however, Giannini's voice of cautious optimism is the one Salander follows. On the last day of the trial, as Salander is acquitted, Salander's inner voice hesitates, "Ok, maybe a little compromise" (515). Salander at last comprehends that she can work with the system: she is required merely to appear in court one

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more day after acquittal to voice her compliance. Larsson's hero speaks sparingly to most folks throughout the trilogy, reinforcing her lack of complicity with the symbolic register. Without question, Salander prefers the transgressive semiotic to either the real or symbolic.

In the ancient Oedipal narrative, the hero assumes the consequence of his acts as his conscious awareness of those previous acts continues to unfold. True to this formula, Salander returns to court and says she will accept "right citizenship," what Plato calls Justice. Salander's heroic journey may have been less severe if the Prime Minister had intervened in Salander's case, implicating a political climate where leadership abdicates responsibility for the ills and misfortune of its electorate. Salander remains Sweden's sacrificial lamb until willing system operatives—Sonja Modig, Monica Figuerola, Annika Giannini—free her. Along with Harriet Vanger and Erika Berger, each woman contests unjust codes of the system to make the excess of the feminine palpable. Rendered in opposition, the codes of the symbolic are reconciled with *Justice*, pointing to the elevation of difference rather than its repression. Though Salander's sacrificial role comes to an end, she retains an excess; Salander retains the billion Kronor she hoists from Erik Wennerstrom in *Dragon Tattoo*. Still, in learning to conform to some of society's norms, Salander revitalizes the law of the father in her stance of victor instead of victim.

Millennium's significant appeal is informed by the paradoxical tension provided by the interrogation of excess—initially repressed but ultimately integrated—found in the reformulated Oedipal narrative. While Stieg Larsson's heroine's performance of excess is nonetheless subjected to institutional constraints, Lisbeth Salander's narrative others assist in the process of disengaging her from a corrupt system and re-engaging her into a corrected one—a judicial/political system that recognizes difference. It is entirely possible that the staying power of the many incarnations of "the girl" titles found in literature, cinema, and televised serials persist because of the reoccurring infusion of feminine excess into the status quo and the solace we find in ancient narrative.

I sincerely appreciate the two anonymous *SAR* readers who offered many helpful suggestions.

Notes

1. Author David Lagercrantz continues Larsson's *Millennium* series in *The Girl in the Spider's Web* (2015) and *The Girl Who Takes an Eye for an Eye* (2017).
2. In "Lisbeth Salander and Her Swedish Crime Fiction 'Sisters': Stieg Larsson's Hero in a Genre Context," Kerstin Bergman convincingly shows how Larsson has drawn substantially on the work of many Swedish crime novelists in his portrayal of Lisbeth Salander.
3. Unfortunately, "excess" is not such an easy term to define. I liken "excess" to Laura Mulvey's casting of "the voice of truth" that eclipses time and space in "The Oedipus Myth: Beyond the Riddles of the Sphinx" (179). I spy an aspect of "excess" in Judith Butler's chapter "Promiscuous Obedience" taken from *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*, particularly where she states, "the norm cannot exist without perversion, and only through perversion can the norm be established" (76). For a classic treatise on subjective/cultural excess, see Georges Bataille's *Vision of Excess Selected Writings, 1927-1929*.
4. Not only has nearly every print newspaper of standing reviewed Larsson's hit novels, most web book reviewers have postulated theories that account in some way for the books' immense popularity. One can also point to an array of satire including Nora Ephron's "The Girl Who Fixed the Umlaut," and to desire for more of the same in Deirdre Donahue's "Looking for the Next Larsson." Even more revealing are those actual news stories that connect events such as the Summer 2010 WikiLeaks scandal to "The cast of the . . . crime novelist Stieg Larsson . . ." (Donahue). Cinematically, this fictional sensation is embodied in the highly sought-after Swedish actress Noomi Rapace; she appears in the three Swedish adaptations of Larsson's top-selling novels (2009), the 2010 extended edition streaming on *Netflix*, and has become a staple of many of Hollywood's high-profile films: *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011), *Prometheus* (2011), *Passion* (2012), *Dead Man Down* (2013), *Child 44* (2014), *Rupture* (2016), *Alien: Covenant* (2017).
5. Freud maintains that the uncanny appearing in fiction is a "much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and something more besides, something that cannot be found in real life" (249).
6. See Derrida's *Writing and Difference* to understand how memory plays a role in living in the present, so that one can remain in the now of the present (246).
7. See Shoshana Felman's *Jacques Lacan and The Adventure of Insight* for additional insight into correspondence of narrative to psychoanalytic practice.
8. See the Prologue of *The Girl Who Plays with Fire* in which Salander's early abuse by her sadistic father on her thirteenth birthday foregrounds the trilogy's entirety.
9. Andrew and Jenny Terjesen point out that "Blomkvist doesn't flirt with Salander. He simply works with her and treats her like a human being" (54). For many of the series' women, that reality is enough to hold their romantic attraction to Blomkvist.

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10. See Joel Dor's *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan: The Unconscious Structured Like a Language* for an accessible rendering of Lacan's mirror stage and other complex Lacanian idioms. As I have pointed out in an earlier piece, "Difference is both a process and product; it characterizes how we process reality as well as how exterior forces and energies work upon us" (Nyman, "Interpretation").
11. In a Lacanian view, one becomes a "subject" when one enters the mirror stage and begins to negotiate reality in the imaginary psychic register. The perception of "real" (what is actually there) and "symbolic" (all symbolic representations such as language) persists in the imaginary; all three make up the "split-subject" or individual. And although we can never be a unified subject, we never stop trying to repair the split. This makes sense if one considers how endlessly goals and/or relationships are pursued throughout a life. Every person's identity remains in constant flux because desires are consistently negotiated by way of the sheer amount of possibilities available. This play of desire and possibility is connected to the notion of sign, signifier, and the gap of meaning, absence, or lack that exists due to this unceasing process of language and therefore identity formulation (*Language of Self* 159-162).
12. Freud's death drive embodies the paradoxical notion that all of one's actions, particularly those of survival, ultimately drive one toward death. This paradox is extended to include rather than exclude Freud's pleasure principal. See Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principal* (72-77).
13. In the "founding break," "the killing of a man" Kristeva draws on Freud's belief that "society is founded on a complicity of a common crime" (70). Otherness is an imminent return to the self; there is also a fundamental link between these processes to drive activity (Anne Marie Smith 15). Not merely reducible to figures of classical rhetoric such as metaphor and metonymy, bodily drives and process reveal the presence of the semiotic, that aspect of language that connects to actual reality, the real register (15, 16).
14. Kristeva draws upon Lacan in her substitution of the "semiotic" register for that of the imaginary.
15. See Flieger's casting of Oedipus as both the Subject with whom we reflect and refract. Her optimism with respect to the role of the Oedipal influence holds no bounds: "Perhaps we should keep Oedipus around to cruise the Net: for millennial psychoanalysis, far from losing its purchase, offers us ways of thinking about space without endangering Otherness" (38).
16. The vignette titled "Rebooting System," part four of *Hornet's Nest*, suggests Larsson's central point—women fight to correct institutional and societal malfeasance.
17. In her pursuit of truth, Figuerola detects how governmental agencies are aiding and abetting a ring of illegal prostitution of immigrant women. Figuerola uncovers the truth that many people are violating Salander's constitutional rights.

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18. As a Renaissance woman, Figuerola is keenly conscious of past and present voices or perspective, as her name drawn from a famous Mozart opera suggests.
19. See Jessica Benjamin's article "A Desire of One's Own: Psychoanalytic Feminism and Intersubjective Space," in which she proposes the notion of intersubjectivity, women witnessing women, to counter the patriarchal other that inheres in the male gaze.

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Don Quixote in Russia in the 1920s-1930s: The Problem of Perception and Interpretation

Slav N. Gratchev

This study logically continues my previous examination of the perception of *Don Quixote* in Russia throughout the early twentieth century and how this perception changed over time. In this new article, which will be the third in a sequence of five, I will again use a number of materials inaccessible to English-speaking scholars to demonstrate how the perception of *Don Quixote* by Russian intelligentsia shifted from being skeptical to complete admiration and even glorification of the hero. Don Quixote was increasingly compared with Prometheus, the most powerful and most romanticized personage of Greek methodology. Indeed, “. . . начав юмористический роман, осмеивающий увлечение современников рыцарскими похождениями, Сервантес и не думал, что потешный рыцарь печального образа постепенно вырастет в гигантскую фигуру страдальца-идеалиста” (“. . . when starting a humorous novel satirizing contemporary fascination with knightly adventures, Cervantes could not have guessed that the amusing Knight of the Sad Countenance would gradually grow into a great figure of the suffering idealist”; my trans; Solomin 91). The situation changed, though, and changed rapidly, during the 1920s to the 1930s. This decade was marked by a fascination with new forms, ideas, movements, and experimentations. The country finally overcame devastation and hunger, class battles were finally behind it, and the Russian intelligentsia readily stepped forward to help the country revive the cultural life that had been almost entirely lost since 1917.

Obviously, the new type of hero was coming to the forefront of the cultural discourse: the practitioner who, without fear, would be ready to sacrifice his life for the common good. And if such a hero could not be created in haste, he could easily be found in the classics. Don Quixote was chosen to become a symbol of the new Soviet man.

Let me start with the theatre. Nikolay Evreinov¹ immediately doubted that Cervantes's only contribution was to make us laugh at the chivalric romances, romances that for the majority of us were unknown in the twentieth century. Obviously, Evreinov was thinking as a practitio-

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ner, a theatre practitioner who, before everything, was imagining the stage and the spectators looking at it. For him all of these literary equivoques, quibbles, and quirks had nothing to do with the new image of a hero who was supposed to behave like a real hero while he was on stage for a couple of hours. As noted, “Неужели заслуга Сервантеса только и была в смертельном ударе по рыцарским романам? О, эти классические объяснения классических произведений! Насколько прав был Гейне, сказав, что перо гения выше его самого, так как захватывает гораздо больше его случайных намерений” (“Was the merit of Cervantes only a fatal blow to the knightly novels? Oh, these “classic” explanations of classical works! How right was Heine,² in saying that the pen of a genius is higher than the author, since it captures much more than his random intentions”; my trans; Evreinov 163). How important it became now for any theatrical director to find in a literary artifact more than it really meant to convey. He had to learn to read between lines, listen to the whisper of ideas that were born from the narration itself. All of this would become indispensable when the silent script all of a sudden acquired its life through numerous actors. Imagine now two of our protagonists on stage having the following dialogue:

“When thou came close to her didst thou not perceive a Sabaeen odor, an aromatic fragrance, a, I know not what, delicious, that I cannot find a name for; I mean a redolence, an exhalation, as if thou wert in the shop of some dainty glover?”

“All I can say is,” said Sancho, “that I did perceive a little odor, something goaty; it must have been that she was all in a sweat with hard work.”

“It could not be that,” said Don Quixote, “but thou must have been suffering from cold in the head or must have smelt thyself; for I know well what would be the scent of that rose among thorns, that lily of the field, that dissolved amber.”

“Maybe so,” replied Sancho; “there often comes from myself that same odor which then seemed to me to come from her grace the lady Dulcinea; but that’s no wonder, for one devil is like another.” (Don Quixote I: 282)

I will ask you, my reader: Which do you like more: the nose of Don Quixote or the nose of Sancho Panza? Would you like to smell in the way Don Quixote does or in the way Sancho does? Would you like to

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see in Aldonsa the beautiful Dulcinea de Toboso, or, in your opinion, let Aldonsa remain Aldonsa forever?

You can think on this and answer to yourself later, but what was important for Evreinov was how to convince the six hundred spectators who came to see the performance that the nose of Don Quixote is infinitely better. It is a very practical question, and for Evreinov the answer was obvious, but the audience members were still in the dark. They needed to be “enlightened.”

It is remarkable that the 1920s to the 1930s, the period that, within reason, could be called the most productive in the Soviet era, can also be compared with the cultural revolution, or cultural Renaissance, so to speak. And as every revolution likes to distribute roles to anyone and anything, the book of Cervantes was assigned a very special role in the process: to become an apology for *donkishotsva* (the way Don Quixote lives and acts). The hero now was supposed to show everyone that his spiritual strength originated from the fact that *he became mad for no reason!* This notion—for no reason!—was, for the epoch of the 1920s, a cornerstone of the new philosophical stance, and the theatre would disseminate this philosophy better than anything else.³

These ideas—to become mad for no reason and to go save the world—encompassed for Evreinov the main pathos of Cervantes’s book. For him, as a theatrical director, to overlook this message in the immortal novel meant to overlook the whole point of *donkichotsva*, its *raison d’etre*,⁴ as well as the possible justification for the sound mind of the hero, whom Cervantes, for the sake of pleasing weak minds, so often and persistently called half-witted that we stopped believing him and understanding his irony. “Впрочем - нельзя научиться понимать Дон Кихота, - его можно только почувствовать. Нельзя уразуметь пения райской птицы, не будучи по природе своей немножко райской птицей. И нельзя уразуметь, а тем более полюбить Дон Кихота, если в душе не живет свой собственный Дон Кихот” (“However, you cannot learn to understand Don Quixote; you can only feel it. You cannot understand the singing of the bird of paradise if you are not, by nature, a little bird of paradise. And you cannot understand, let alone love, Don Quixote, if your own Don Quixote does not live in your soul” my trans; Evreinov 165).

It is hard not to notice that the eye of the theatre practitioner is different from ours, the ordinary reader or spectator. For us “seeing is believing,” as we often say. We believe what we see without questioning the validity of what is presented to us. But for the stage director, it is much more complex; he has to feel the hero as clearly as he feels himself. He has to become a bird of paradise to be able to reproduce its song for his spectators; inevitably he has to fall in love with his

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hero—or no one will believe him. And for the theatre practitioner, this is the essence of everything. Evreinov argues that “Дон Кихот бессмертен. До Сервантеса он уже существовал тысячелетия, только не названный и не описанный. И тысячелетия еще он будет существовать. Дон Кихот бессмертен. Это вы, это я, это он. Может быть даже «они», хотя они в этом никогда не сознаются” (“Don Quixote is immortal. Prior to Cervantes, he already existed for millennia, only not named and not described. And he will exist for millennia. Because Don Quixote is immortal. He is you, he is me, he is him. Maybe he is even “they,” although “they” will never admit it”; my trans; Evreinov 166). In this universality of the hero, Evreinov sees the practical side of Don Quixote; no matter when you decide to revive him, he will always be needed. Because all of us would like to think that we have, at least, some traits of this immortal knight from La Mancha. And we all in the bottom of our hearts want to believe it, although we would never admit it out loud.

Now I would like to turn our attention to Konstantin Lipskerov,⁵ the poet and the painter, to see how different his perception of Don Quixote was from that of Evreinov, the theatre practitioner and theorist. Lipskerov, a talented and refined poet, who is, unfortunately, almost forgotten today, wrote a wonderful sonnet following the classical tradition of a continental French style sonnet. As Lipskerov has never been translated into English, I will supply the translation of this marvelous piece here:

И замком он не счел, как некогда, корчму,
И близился он к ней в своих пробитых латах.
Камзол зеленый был на рыцаре в заплатах;
Покорен Росинант был вечному ярму.

И Санчо вновь роптал: “Сокровищ непочатых
В скитаниях ищущу напрасно. Не пойму:
За вами на осле плетусь я почему?
Я в бедном доме жил спокойнее богатых.

Зарозовел закат над сизыми холмами.
Подняв копье свое, упорными очами
Пронизывая даль, гидальго кротко тих.

Там розы сыпала Прекрасная с ладони,
И теми розами его горели брони,
И таз цирюльника сверкал как нимб святых. (Lipskerov 95)

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This time the castle he did not consider as a tavern,
He was approaching her in armors badly punched.
His camisole was green, and full of patches;
And timid Rosinant continued in his yoke.

And Sancho again murmured: "The untouched treasures
I search in vain, just wander with no aim. I do not understand:
why do I follow you, my Lord?
before I lived as poor but happier than rich."

The sun had risen over the gray hills.
And, raising spear, with persistent eyes,
hidalgo was piercing the distance.

The roses was pouring from the palm of her hand,
And by those roses his armor got burned,
And the barber's basin gleamed like the halo of a saint. (my trans)

What do we hear in this penetrating poetry? The knight does not confuse the castle with a tavern anymore, and he is approaching his Dulcinea "in armors badly punched" to tell her stories about the exploits he performed for her. And in the meantime, as usual, the practical Sancho is scolding his master for his useless bravery and himself for his devotion to this insane knight. But, nonetheless, the sun "had risen over the grey hills," and "the Beautiful" poured the roses from her palm for those who never gave up but remained faithful to their dreams.

What a romantic—and not practical!—interpretation of this glorious story! Do we smile at the hero? Not at all, but we do grin over Sancho, and his soberness does not look attractive to us. We see that the poet's perception of the same hero is quite different from the perception of the theatre practitioner, Evreinov.

Another person who left us a very interesting interpretation of Don Quixote is Yuly Aykhendald⁶ who was quite an original literary critic. His interpretation of Cervantes's hero shows us the sharp transformation that the image of Don Quixote experienced from the 1920s to the 1930s. It is not surprising, given the dramatic changes that Russia was experiencing during that time. The October revolution that was anticipated and greeted by many, even by the intelligentsia who were always suspicious of loud slogans and sky-high promises, turned out to be the bloodiest monster that destroyed the old but still functionable tsarist mechanism of governance. It gave nothing in return, and the typhus, starvation, and terror that followed the revolution killed or drove away

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almost ten million citizens. In less than two years the country was destroyed altogether, but in the beginning of the 1920s, the sun shined again. The cultural life immediately started to revive, and by the mid 1920s reached its apogee, and the devastated souls were again looking for a hero who would fill them with hope—the immortal Don Quixote. As Aykhenvald rightfully noticed:

Сервантес хотел одного, а достиг другого; задумал небольшое, а осуществил великое. Как и его соотечественник Колумб искал Индию, а открыл Америку, так и Сервантес написал сатиру на сюжет времени, но углубил, обобщил и возвел эту сатиру в степень вечной категории духа. Америка больше, чем идея Колумба; творение Сервантеса значительнее своего творца. (16)

Cervantes wanted one but achieved another; he conceived a small but accomplished a great. Like his other countryman, Columbus, who sought for India but discovered America, so did Cervantes; he wrote a satire on his time, but he deepened and generalized it so much and eventually raised this satire to the power of the eternal category. America was more than the idea of Columbus; the creation of Cervantes also grew beyond its creator. (my trans)

I cannot agree entirely with Aykhenvald, and I would like to suggest a slightly different scenario; perhaps, the madness of Don Quixote was just a mask for Cervantes, a convenient way for him to be creative. Perhaps not just Aldonsa/Dulcinea but the entire universe turned out to be in the power of evil wizards. Perhaps they deliberately distorted the true image of everything that we know, love, and value. The poetry was replaced by prose; the beautiful Dulcinea by Aldonsa who smelled like a goat because she worked in the field; the castle by a dirty tavern; the giants by the windmills; the serious by the ridiculous; and the high by the low. And we now need someone with a pure soul and high ideals who can restore the true face of our universe. The literary critic is right—the hero is needed to restore the true image of things; there is work for him to do.

Let's move on and look at poetry again. The next poet we will focus on is quite unusual: Larisa Reisner,⁷ the woman-politician, the woman-diplomat, and a writer with original talent. She left minimal poetry behind her, not even enough to make a little book, and here I would like to offer you one of her poems dedicated to . . . Don Quixote! What

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follows is the “Pallas Athena of the Revolution,” dedicated to the humblest of all knights:

На перепуганных овец,
На поросят в навозной куче
Все молчаливее и круче
Взирает немощный боец.

И вместо хохота и плутней
Пирующих трактирных слуг
Рокочут в честь его заслуг
Несуществующие лютни.

Течет луна, как свежий мед,
Как золото, блестит солома,
Но все растущая истома
Его души не обоймет.

- Неумирающая Роза,
Изгибом пряного стебля,
Какой цветок затмит тебя,
О, Дульсинья из Тобосо!

На ложе каменных дорог
От Кадиса до Сарагосы
Легки, обветрены и босы
Подошвы сладостнейших ног!

Сжимая скипетр иль серп,
Мужичка или королева
Ты - прародительница Ева,
В Едеме твой старинный герб. (Reisner 62)

On frightened sheep,
On pigs in manure heap
More silent and concerned
Now looks the feeble fighter.

Ignoring the laughter of the rascals
Ignoring servants having a feast,
He only hears how in his honor
Sing the non-existent lutes.

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The moon is flowing like honey,
The straws shine like golden creek,
But ever growing languor
Will not defeat his anxious soul.

“Oh, Rose that will never die,
There is no other stem, there is no other
Flower that will eclipse you,
Oh, my Dulcinea from Toboso!

And while you walk on tough roads
From Cádiz to Zaragoza
Light, weather-beaten, barefoot,
And hurt the soles of your legs!

But squeezing scepter or sickle,
You are the peasant, or the queen,
You are the Eve, and old Eden
Still has your old coat of arms.” (my trans)

Here, in this poetry, Don Quixote is again being transformed into a hero who is fully conscious of himself, who knows perfectly well that he has dealt only with the manure of sheep and pigs, and who feels tired of doing that. He looks now where “the moon is flowing like honey,” and “the straws shine like golden creek,” and this is where he hopes to see his incomparable Dulcinea, his “rose that will never die.” He is not practical, like always, and it does not matter to him if she is a peasant or a queen. He knows only one thing: everything starts from her, like from Eve, and only in Eden will he be able to find the real coat of arms that has been lost, or hidden, like the Holy Grail, while earthly things have been damaged or distorted by the power of evil wizards.

But what a beautiful image of Don Quixote this twenty-one year old romantic poet makes, though, at that moment, she did not know that soon she would become the “Pallas Athena of the Revolution,” whose fire would burn her to ashes.

Valery Bryusov,⁸ one of the most notable figures of the Symbolist movement and a poet as well, expressed his perception of Don Quixote and did it in the most practical terms, closing his views with those of Evreinov and Aykhenvald. He noted:

Фикция, вымысел художника, становится действительностью,
входя в сознание читателей, зрителей, слушателей.
Дон Кихот оказал реальное влияние на жизнь, одних

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увлекая благородством своего образа, других остерегая от карикатурности своих подвигов. Пройдя через сознание миллионов, Дон Кихот реален не менее, чем Наполеон. Поэтому правы усердные гиды, показывая туристам на острове Иф темницу, где был заключен граф Монте-Кристо. (3: 422)

The fiction invented by the artist becomes a reality, entering the minds of readers, viewers, and listeners. Don Quixote had a real impact on life, captivating some with the nobility of his image, and guarding others against the caricature of his exploits. Having passed through the consciousness of millions, Don Quixote is as real as Napoleon. Therefore, the zealous guides are right when they show the tourists in the Château d'If the dungeon where the Count of Monte Cristo was imprisoned.⁹ (my trans)

In fact, this is one of my favorite ideas: if a literary image successfully passes through the consciousness of millions, it becomes recognizable as if it were a real person. Don't you think you would recognize Don Quixote the moment you saw him riding on a horse down the road? Or, would you recognize Sherlock Holmes with his pipe, wide raincoat, and a checkered cap with a visor? Or, Monte Cristo with his pale face, black straight long hair, and black clothing? I bet you know them better than you know your neighbor!

Bryusov had many reasons to believe that Don Quixote had made a real impact on our lives when he divided us into two groups: Romantics who would become inspired by his example and Pragmatists who would always be afraid of being caricatured. It is true then: if an image passes through the consciousness of millions, it always becomes practical; in other words, it can be used at times—alas!—even to satisfy political ambitions.

Anatoly Lunacharsky,¹⁰ the omnipotent *people's commissar* (всесильный нарком) as he often was called, who in his influence in cultural affairs was comparable to Leon Trotsky¹¹ in military affairs, quickly understood that the new revolutionary consciousness badly needed its own idols and icons. He wrote a notable article that glorified Don Quixote but from the standpoint of his practical necessity for Soviet society. Although I detest most of the crazy ideas of the Bolsheviks, I would like to offer my readers an opportunity to read parts of Lunacharsky's lecture that he gave at Sverdlov Communist University:¹²

Сервантес сам хорошенько не знал, как относиться к Дон Кихоту. [. . .] Мир силен, а Дон Кихит слаб. Вот это и делает

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его комичным. [. . .] Автор говорит: да, правда, жизнь сера, действительность победила романтику, победила идеализм. [. . .] А как можно разрешить этот вопрос об идеале и действительности? Он может разрешиться только теперь! Только мы, коммунисты, находимся в таком положении, когда самые высокие идеалы человечества становятся не донкихотством, а действительностью, и даже становятся учением. [. . .] Этот роман Сервантеса есть апелляция к будущему. И из этого романа человек взывает: спасите меня, дайте мне свободы, я в этом мире задыхаюсь. [. . .] Но пройдут еще сотни лет, пока начнет осуществляться социализм. И когда социализм начнет осуществляться, Дон Кихоты найдут применение для своего героического романтизма в работе для нашей революции, и они станут не фантастическими рыцарями, а настоящими практиками. [. . .] Мы имеем такое время, когда Дон Кихоты и Санчо Пансы являются очень желательными типами и делаются подлинными борцами за будущее. (175-178)

Cervantes himself did not really know how to relate to Don Quixote. [. . .] The world is strong, and Don Quixote is weak. That is what makes him comical. [. . .] The author says: yes, it's true; life is constant suffering, and reality already won over romance and defeated idealism. [. . .] How can this question about the ideal and reality be resolved? It can only be resolved now! Only we, the Communists, are in a position where the highest ideals of humanity are not becoming quixotic anymore; they are reality, and maybe they are even philosophy. [. . .] This novel of Cervantes is an appeal to the future. And from this novel a man cries: save me, give me freedom, I am suffocating in this world! [. . .] But hundreds of years will have to pass before socialism will be realized. But when socialism is realized, all Don Quixotes will find application for their heroic romanticism while they work for our revolution, and they will no longer be useless knights but real practitioners. [. . .] We live in times when Don Quixotes and Sanchos are very desirable individuals as they will become true fighters for the future. (my trans)

I am sure you experience the same feeling as I do when you read these words; perhaps, you feel upset to see how the idea of Don Quixote can be distorted when it gets into the hands of a fanatic, but we have to admit that Communists knew how to prove the point, no matter how absurd

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it was. What they also knew very well is that inexperienced minds are naïve and very receptive to whatever nonsense you tell them. So, why would they not believe that Cervantes never had a clear understanding of his own hero? And since he did not, continued Lunacharsky, Communists will help him; they will explain to the masses what Don Quixote was all about, and what kind of idea Cervantes really wanted to convey.

To prove his point, Lunacharsky took the easiest way; he put words in the mouth of Cervantes: “life is constant suffering, and reality already won over romance and defeated idealism.” Well, Cervantes is long dead already, so he cannot charge Lunacharsky for slandering. But we can! Because we can read the book over and over again, but we will never find such words in *Don Quixote*: the realist Cervantes was always showing life as it really is—sometimes beautiful, sometimes ugly—but nowhere did he write that this life is not worth living.

Lunacharsky, like any other skillful demagogue, does not try to prove any of his arguments; he knows that they would not withstand the scrutiny, so he moves forward quickly to his favorite theme—the advantages of communism over any other bourgeois ideology. “Only we, the Communists, are in a position where the highest ideals of humanity are not becoming *quixotic* anymore” (my emphasis). We who grew up in the USSR have heard these words so many times before: first from Vladimir Lenin,¹³ who promised the peasants the moon and then took away their passports to hamper their mobility; from Trotsky, who after each speech gave an expensive watch to the nearest standing soldier (but no one knew that he carried hundreds of these previously expropriated watches for such occasions to show people his notorious “generosity”) and then shot all those who dared to retreat from the battlefield.

To hear the same words from Lunacharsky who, like Russian Goebbels,¹⁴ was responsible for making classic literature fit the Communist ideology, is not only natural—it is expected. But his shamelessness while he argued the practical meaning of Don Quixote for the Russian revolution is breathtaking: “when socialism is realized, then all Don Quixotes [pay attention to how he puts the names in plural form!] will find application for their heroic romanticism while they work for our revolution.”

We know that this is what Communists always wanted to instill in the heads of all naïve Soviet citizens: if you are ready and willing to work for the revolution (read: the communist ideology, communist ideals, goals, whatever) then you are a hero, and we will find the proper place for you in society. But if you are not . . .

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Thus, this seemingly innocent speech by Lunacharsky certainly had a very far-reaching practical goal: to give young minds an unmistakably iconic figure from classic world literature, Don Quixote, and present this figure in such a way that it would inspire these minds to serve communism!

This approach, no matter how absurd it may seem today, lasted for almost fifty years and, as a result, made two or even three generations of Russian children detest classic literature and classic literary heroes. As often happens, they wanted to throw out the water but splashed out the child with it. Instead of expressing adoration, the younger generation was mocking the heroes and their ideals; instead of worshipping and imitating their deeds, they were making a caricature of them.

Luckily, even during the darkest times of communism, there were other critics who, in total opposition to the “general guidelines,” did not lose their integrity, did not allow themselves to be fooled by communist propaganda, and continued to read the book differently. They sometimes risked their academic positions and economic well-being as they continued to teach their students to see the forest through the trees and to make a clear distinction between the “official view” on classic literature and what they might really see and discover in it. One of those critics was Mikhail Gershenzon,¹⁵ a prominent thinker and historian of Russian culture, who left us a diametrically opposed impression about our favorite literary hero—Don Quixote. He wrote:

Образ Дон Кихота выражает беззаветную веру в нечто вечное и незыблемое, которое находится вне человека и требует от него служения и жертв. Он весь - преданность своему идеалу, ему жизнь представляется лишь средством к осуществлению идеала. [. . .] Он не рассчитывает, не взвешивает последствий, то есть вероятной пользы своего служения; его решимости ничто не сломит, и неудачи не испугают его, ибо он знает самое главное - зачем он живет на земле. (78)

The image of Don Quixote expresses a whole-hearted faith in something eternal and unshakable that is located outside of man and requires from him service and sacrifice. He is all—the devotion to his ideal; his life helps him realize the ideal. [. . .] He does not calculate, does not weigh the consequences nor the probable benefits of his ministry; his determination will not be broken, and failure will not frighten him for he knows the most important thing—he knows why he lives on this Earth. (my trans)

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Perhaps for the first time during this practical decade, the 1920s to the 1930s, a decade that totally transformed and, in my opinion, deformed the perception of Don Quixote, we hear a voice of reason that tries to re-emphasize the essence of this literary image—strength, wisdom, beauty, and the happiness of having an integral spirit and unyielding will. Classic literature, insisted Gershenzon, long ago, starting from Turgenev,¹⁶ already expressed this view through many outstanding literary characters. As he notes:

Вот тема «Накануне». Тургенев ставит вопрос: идеал человека-быть человеком-птицей, Дон Кихотом, а современный человек сегодня - это Гамлет; при каких-же условиях человек становится Дон Кихотом? На этом вопрос Тургенев ответил образами Инсарова и Елены. Инсаров - Дон Кихот родины, а Елена - Дон Кихот любви. (85)

That is the topic of *On the Eve*.¹⁶ Turgenev raises the question: the ideal of man is to be a man-bird that is Don Quixote, but today's man is Hamlet; under what conditions does a person become Don Quixote? To this question, Turgenev responded with images of Insarov and Elena. Insarov, the Don Quixote of the *homeland*, and Elena, the Don Quixote of *love*. (my trans)

The Love and the Deed are the only lights that “will shine in the darkness” (“Solntse nad mgloyu” 99), believed Gershenzon, “the candle in the night” (99) that will never die.

On this optimistic note, I would like to finish my analysis of the perception and interpretation of Don Quixote in Russia from the 1920s to the 1930s, the decade that was, perhaps, one of the most artistically intense and innovative during the entire Communist era in Russia. It was a time when hopes were high, when people still believed that the most terrible times were already behind them, and no one knew that the darkest time was just about to begin. And Don Quixote will be re-interpreted and re-accentuated again.

Notes

1. Nikolay Evreinov (1879-1953) was a prominent Russian dramatist and theatre theorist. Although many of his views and theories are very controversial, Evreinov, together with Stanislavsky, Reinhardt, and Brecht, will always be remembered as one who forever reformed the theatre of the twentieth century. In 1925 he left the USSR and lived in France until his death.
2. Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was a remarkable German poet who, despite the commonly accepted belief that the German language is not good for lyrics, proved by his beautiful poetry that it is. His lyrics inspired many famous composers, including Shuman, Schubert, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky.
3. Cinematography was just gaining popularity in Russia; the first Russian Film Studio was founded in 1915 in Moscow by the rich Maecenas Mikhail Trifonov who, falling in love with the newest art—the film—wanted to promote it in Russia. After the Revolution, the studio was nationalized by Bolsheviks and was renamed the Mehzrabprom-Rus and then renamed again (in 1948) the Gorky Film Studio. During the time of the Soviets, the Gorky Film Studio became one of the most popular, specializing in production of children's films. The founder of the studio, Trifonov, was forcefully exiled after the Revolution.
4. Reasonable reason (French).
5. Konstantin Lipskerov (1889-1954) was a Russian Silver age poet and painter. The great connoisseur of the East, he became a brilliant translator of eastern classic poetry. He had a wonderful collection of paintings that was sold in pieces after his death. Unfortunately, the main part of this collection is lost today.
6. Yuly Aykhenvald (1872-1928) was a brilliant and influential literary critic. His most famous book was *Silhouettes of Russian Writers* that continues to be of great interest to literary scholars today. After the Revolution, he moved to Germany where he translated all major works of Schopenhauer into Russian. He died tragically in a train accident.
7. Larisa Reisner (1895-1926), or “Pallas Athena of the Revolution,” as Leon Trotsky called her, became the first female diplomat and military minister of the Bolshevik's government. An extremely beautiful and energetic woman and a talented writer, she left us very interesting memoirs about the revolution in Germany and her life in Afghanistan. She died in Moscow in 1926 after drinking a glass of milk and getting the bacilli of typhus.
8. Valery Bryusov (1873-1924) was one of the principal members of the Russian Symbolist movement. A prominent poet, writer, dramatist, translator, critic, and historian, he was one of the few of his circle who supported the Bolshevik government after the revolution. Later he obtained a prominent position in the Ministry of Culture of the new state, but in 1924 he accidentally caught pneumonia and died shortly after.
9. The reference here is made to the famous novel by Alexander Dumas, *The Count Monte Cristo* (1844). Edmond Dantès, the principal character of the novel, spent 14 years in one of the most terrifying French prisons—*Château*

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d'If—located on a small island in the Mediterranean Sea about one mile from Marseille. “If” in French stands for yew—the common coniferous tree that can be found all over North and South America in different modifications.

10. Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875-1933) was the first Soviet Minister of Education. Fluent in many European languages, Lunacharsky had a brilliant education. He became, perhaps, the best liaison between the new Bolshevik government and the “old” academia who, rightfully, distrusted Bolsheviks. Understanding how important culture was for the new Soviet country, Lunacharsky did whatever he could to save academics and the intelligentsia from repressions. For instance, upon his involvement, Mikhail Bakhtin was exiled for just five years instead of serving ten years in labor camps where he would certainly have died.

11. Leon Trotsky (b. Leiba Bronshtein) (1879-1940) was the second most important figure in the Bolshevik government and the creator of the Russian Red Army. After the death of Lenin in 1924, Trotsky’s influence began to wane; by 1927 he was stripped of all previous appointments, and in 1929 he was forced into exile. In 1936 he settled in Mexico, where he was welcomed by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. In 1940 an agent of NKVD, Ramon Mercader, snuck into Trotsky’s villa and killed him with an axe.

12. In 1918, striving to strengthen the moral spirit and unity of their members, the Bolsheviks founded the Sverdlov Communist University. The university existed until 1937 when it was closed without explanation. During its existence, the university produced more than 10,000 graduates, and at different times people like Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Gorky, and Lunacharsky delivered lectures there. (Yakov Sverdlov [1885-1919] was a person with just four years of school but frantic energy; he became a close friend of Lenin and one of the most important figures in the Bolshevik’s government. He and Lenin together sanctioned the assassination of Romanov’s family; then Sverdlov sanctioned the Red Terror. In 1919 he unexpectedly died, either from the 1918 flu pandemic, or, as some historians argue, he was poisoned by the order of Lenin).

13. Vladimir Lenin (b. Ulyanov) (1870-1924) was the leader of the Bolshevik’s party and its successful coup in October of 1917. A man of exceptional intelligence (he spoke five European languages fluently), titanic energy, mesmerizing oration, and prolific writing, Lenin was also an extremely cruel man ready to shed the blood of thousands of people to achieve his personal goal. The repressions he started right after the Revolution were unprecedented in Russian history: the extermination of Romanov’s family, including children and their servants; the beginning of the Civil War that cost 3,000,000 Russian lives; hunger and the epidemic of typhus that cost another 5,000,000 human lives; and 3,000,000 intellectuals leaving Russia. This is the list, perhaps not exhaustive, of the repercussions of his rule. Lenin died at the age of fifty-four, after his second stroke.

14. Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) was the Nazi’s Minister of propaganda. Fanatically devoted to Hitler and his ideas, Goebbels replaced him as a Chancellor of the Reich, but he stayed in power one day only, from April 30th

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to May 1st of 1945, after which he poisoned himself together with his six children and wife.

15. Mikhail Gershenzon (1869-1925) was a brilliant literary critic, philosopher, and translator. His penetrating studies about Pushkin and Turgenev have not lost their literary value to this day. Together with Vyacheslav Ivanov, he co-authored *Correspondence Across a Room* (1921). Gershenzon died at the age of fifty-five from an old case of tuberculosis that he neglected to treat for many years.

16. Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883) was one of the most important Russian prose writers of the nineteenth century. His works shaped Russian prose in many ways, and some of his books were regarded as revolutionary. His novel *Fathers and Sons* is considered to be one of the major works of nineteenth-century Russian fiction. Gershenzon here makes a reference to the famous essay "Hamlet and Don Quixote" written by Turgenev in 1866. This essay became a cornerstone in future studies of Cervantes in Russian literary scholarship for years to come.

17. *On the Eve* is a novel by Ivan Turgenev published in 1860. The story of the novel is notable: in 1855 one of his friends gave him his autobiographical novel and allowed him to publish it if he wanted to. Turgenev read the story and was quite impressed with it, but the novel was so poorly written that no one would want to publish it. Turgenev re-wrote the entire story, and it would eventually become one of his best novels. Insarov, the main protagonist, is a Bulgarian who came to Russia to study, but when the war between Bulgaria and Turkey broke off, he decided to fight for the freedom of his country. Elena, a Russian aristocratic girl, follows her husband, Insarov, and when he dies from tuberculosis, she continues to fight for the freedom of his country.

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Surveyors of Customs: American Literature as Cultural Analysis.
By Joel Pfister. Oxford UP, 2018. 276 pp. \$28.99 (paperback).

Joel Pfister's *Surveyors of Customs: American Literature as Cultural Analysis* is based on the premise that "the *critical work* of some American literature has not only shaped thinking—and feeling—in the past, it can be 'useful' today" (3). In a rich cultural tour through American literature, Pfister argues that his selection of authors can be usefully "put into dialogue and advance modern cultural analysis" (6) through their position as "surveyors of how Americans have become *accustomed* to structures, processes and relations that damage themselves or others" (5). These surveyors offer "useful" perspectives on our own current political and cultural circumstances; Pfister argues that these perspectives deserve "to be read as one of American culture's great critical achievements" (8).

The book itself has two goals: one methodological and one critical. *Surveyors of Customs* groups its authors in a variety of clusters, including "cross-periodizing," "microperiodizing" (10), and "thematic and genealogical" (11). Pfister argues that this reading—instead of one based in historical epochs or literary movements—does not "imply that nothing has changed" but rather that "it is of historical interest that these themes, tropes, criticism, and anxieties have not become a thing of the past" (24). The critical goal of the book focuses on how American authors read systems, primarily systemic—and the systems supporting—capitalism. Since Pfister argues that "the cultural analysis of America must involve *capitalism analysis*," (30), *Surveyors* details "why so many Americans have put up with their systemic subordination and why so many of those who systemically subordinate others have been able to feel good (or simply 'democratic' or 'successful') when doing so" (166).

In the book's first chapter, "Inner-Self Industries: Soft Capitalism's Reproductive Logic," Pfister explains how *soft* capitalism creates an interiority in order to propagate "the sales pitch that capitalism can't get to you because *you* are too complex, too conflicted, too deep" (35). Soft capitalism, like soft power, "attempts to *define* and thus *constitute* the 'hearts' and 'souls' it then tries to sway" (42). In contrast to a focus on hard capitalism—often centered on material production—an emphasis on soft capitalism allows Pfister to focus on "capitalism's equally systemic mass investments in compensatory cultural *inner-selfing*—spiritual production" (45). The authors discussed in the chapter are wide ranging: from expected authors such as Franklin and Emerson to less conventional connections, such as Poe and Dickinson.

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The book's second chapter, "How America Works: Getting Personal to Get Personnel," deals with the question of "incentive," based on the question: "why have so many Americans put up with this?" (81). Pfister argues that "incentive is reproduced mostly indirectly in what I term *personnel culture*," which could best be described as the ways in which personnel departments shifted cultural attention from "worker subjection" to "emotional studies" in order to excite the incentive of workers (93). In shifting from "subjection" to "incentive" in terms of motivation, Pfister is able to move beyond authors such as Franklin and Alger towards ideas of personal incentive in Howells, Fitzgerald, and O'Neill. He argues that his discussion of these authors can "help advance cultural theory" by determining how "areas of cultural theory and subjectivity theory can be synthesized as personnel production theory" (119).

In the book's final chapter, "Dress-Down Conquest: Americanizing Top-Down as Bottom Up," Pfister argues that the American style of politicking and management is based on "an informalizing of power that both serves as a class code within the subordinating class and enables it to play down—dress down—its class subordination (to the members of that class and to the subordinated)" (122). Authors such as Twain, Faulkner, Henry Adams, and Crane focus on the ways this type of "soft democracy" can be used to support "soft capitalism" (123). The informal nature of power is "what makes Americanization so liberating [but] also contributes to its effectiveness as a conquest style," clearly linking American colonialism abroad with the capitalist subordination at home (153).

In the brief afterword, Pfister asserts that the literary surveyors of America offer important contributions, since they teach us that "if operations and power and reproduction in America merit the title exceptional it is because they have been remarkably innovative" (166). Thus, the "*critical work*" of these authors offers "*critical pleasure*" through "a better understanding of "what it's all about" by detailing the logic of soft capitalism as major American authors have accounted for it through the years (168).

Pfister's work offers an interesting engagement into debates about the central question of the consent of the governed. As he points out, it has often been confounding, primarily for those on the Left, why Americans have put up with the subordination they have throughout the country's history. In terms of describing how consent has been manufactured throughout American literary history, *Surveyors* takes advantage of native literary resources, rather than relying on imported resources from critical and cultural theory. Pfister offers an important corrective to the thinking that American authors do not have much to offer ongoing critical theory conversations.

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An interesting caveat that Pfister notes is that “the production of difference. . . . centers more on how constructions of class, gender, individuality, and interiority have interacted” (37). Importantly, this often means that “racialization” is not emphasized (37). While African American authors appear in the text—from Douglass to Wright to Du Bois—most of the authors are white and (mostly) male. Clearly, this is a choice, especially since the book is attempting to detail engagement with dominant ideology throughout much of America’s history. Furthermore, the selection of authors in the text is mostly canonical, which also seems important when describing the dominant ideology of soft capitalism; however, this focus can be limiting in identifying outside perspectives on this system. In other words, if reading systems is the goal of *Surveyors*, then engaging with the dominant system of racialized slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation through the eyes of those subjected to it seems central to the text’s understanding of how American authors can contribute to cultural and critical theory.

In conclusion, *Surveyors* provides a rousing survey of American literature as it engages with the cultural analysis of soft capitalism. Scholars of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature, as well as those interested in cultural analysis and capitalism studies, should check out this work. It will reward multiple re-readings as one continues to find new analytical and critical moments worth revisiting.

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Exquisite Mixture: The Virtues of Impurity in Early Modern England. By Wolfram Schmidgen. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. xvi + 240 pp. \$59.95 (cloth).

In *Exquisite Mixture*, Wolfram Schmidgen provides what he describes as a “semantic history” of mixture in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England. English identity, asserts Schmidgen, rested on a myth of Anglo-Saxon purity until the eighteenth century, when it became possible for writers like Daniel Defoe to describe Englishness as superior not in spite of but rather because of its impurity, an identity

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shaped by invading forces and waves of immigration. Schmidgen notes a number of similar developments: the natural sciences had inherited Aristotle's bias for form over mixture as a generative force, but the earliest lectures of the Royal Society argued for the generative powers of mixture; the Stuarts had attempted to promote a "pure" absolutism, but by the eighteenth century many writers prized mixed government. Schmidgen devotes his study to charting the development of this idea of mixture (or a variety of synonyms like heterogeneity, impurity, or multitude) from sterile aberration to generative virtue in a variety of discourses beginning in the seventeenth century.

Chapter one traces the long history of believing mixture to be an insufficient cause of generation from Aristotle through Galen on into the seventeenth century. Reinforcing the Aristotelian view, some theologians claimed that mixture was a sign of postlapsarian degeneration. The first half of the seventeenth century, however, saw George Hakewill arguing for a positive view of mixture in nature since nature was not subject to God's punishment, while Nathanael Carpenter argued through a geohumoral model that intermixing of people resulted in civility. The preference for mixture over pure form becomes clearer in scientific discourse as a theory of atomism developed.

Already in the first chapter, one can see these early seventeenth-century authors applying their view of mixture in nature to other discursive realms, but this comes into greater focus in chapter two, in which Schmidgen examines the impact of the discourse of mixture on political theory. Metaphors of the body politic could be revised in light of new theories of mixture, and insofar as mixture was equated with the multitude and something other than the singularity of a monarch, it had a liberating effect: atomism led directly to the idea that hierarchy was something imposed on a naturally collaborative, collective society. Perhaps most surprising in this chapter is that such ideas were held not only by Parliamentarians like Henry Parker but also by Catholic royalists such as Thomas White and Kenelm Digby, in part because their theology involved belief in secondary causes, mediated relations, and human life as necessarily cooperative, and in part because of their own hope for tolerance of religious diversity in the realm. The chapter culminates in a revision of Robert Boyle that highlights the way atomism led Boyle to a cooperative, progressive politics.

The culmination of this material is chapter three, which delves into the philosophical and political writings of John Locke. Focusing on mixture, argues Schmidgen, provides coherence to Locke's work. Whereas previous arguments unifying Locke's works have prioritized the political writings, Schmidgen shows that the underlying principle of mixture in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is present in

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the later *Two Treatises*. For instance, Schmidgen argues that for Locke, mixed modes, ideas made up of distinct simpler ideas, reflected generative processes in nature and the possibilities of human agency. Such observations extend naturally into the *Two Treatises*, where Locke argues that property is founded on humans freely mixing labor with the material world and that government is founded on the authority of the multitude.

Here as elsewhere in the book, Schmidgen's theme is the creative and liberating effect of mixture for the writers he discusses. Ultimately, Schmidgen proposes that there is something distinctly modern about the early modern interest in mixture, something that resonates with more contemporary interests in hybridity, the multitude, and I would add, interdisciplinary studies.

In addition to its central argument outlined above, Schmidgen's text also provides reflections on his own practice. In the preface he describes his use of electronic databases and the way this new technology facilitated his approach, and in the conclusion, "Undividing Modernity," he defends his "positive" approach and its implications for the study of modernity. In short, *Exquisite Mixture* offers a concise and often eloquent conceptual history of mixture in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Somewhat surprisingly for a literary critic, Schmidgen avoids extensive applications of his findings to literary works, but this is perhaps a virtue as it opens up new paths for early modern scholars to pursue.

Scott Oldenburg

Scott Oldenburg is an associate professor of English at Tulane University where he teaches and writes about various early modern topics. His first book, *Alien Albion: Literature and Immigration in Early Modern England*, is about the unprecedented influx of Protestant refugees in England in the early modern period and how writers tried to imagine community based on something other than birthplace. His forthcoming book is a microhistory about a weaver-poet in Shakespeare's London. Email: soldenbu@tulane.edu.

Elements of Surprise: Our Mental Limits and the Satisfactions of Plot. By Vera Tobin. Harvard UP, 2018. 344 pp. \$35.00 (hardcover).

Vera Tobin's *Elements of Surprise* is focused on the key problem of any kind of narrative—an intriguing plot. A specialist in the field of human consciousness, Tobin looks at the subject of her scientific interest through the prism of literature and cinema—forms in which the

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plot is crucial. Both scientist and critic, Tobin is focused on surprise in its literary and psychological (cognitive) aspects. At what point does a reader or a viewer lose touch with his or her guesses and face the unexpected truth? How do you create such a vibrant moment if you have decided to write a detective story? What patterns of thinking seem specially created for writers? How do you recognize that you are in front of a well-made surprise, and not just dealing with a pun? Vera Tobin proposes to discuss these and other questions in the pages of her new book.

The mechanism of a wonderful suddenness that successfully ruins all expectations of a reader predicting the plot is explained by the author in eight short chapters. Tobin paces her analysis incrementally, first examining the elements of the surprise, then gradually moving to special plot techniques that help surprise or even numb the reader and that enable the author to end up with a textual space that is entirely built as a surprise. Tobin has defined her task as a description and explanation of “an array of specific methods and motifs that characterize the construction of well-made surprise” (11).

“Well-made surprise” is the new term Tobin adds to the scientific lexicon in her book. She explains its meaning from the reader’s and protagonist’s points of view. When these two multi-vector definitions are superimposed, the stereoscopic effect of understanding arises: from the reader’s point of view, a well-made surprise is “a new transformative interpretation of what has gone before” (19), but from the protagonist’s one, this is the state of “sudden awareness of the true nature of his or her situation” (20). Balancing between the reader and the protagonist, Tobin thoroughly explores her subject.

To illustrate her points, Tobin covers the classics (Shakespeare, Dickens, Poe, Christie, and others), modern pop-culture (Shyamalan, Rowling, Lucas), as well as the works of psychologists. Quotes and examples are so carefully selected and convincing that the mosaic rising in front of the reader’s eyes proves that a well-made surprise can be considered the ultimate goal of art. Or at least the ultimate goal of a tightly knit detective story. And maybe as a distinguished (and inevitable) feature of life.

Tobin is sure that readers always expect something in advance, creating their own versions of a plot. The head of a typical reader is full of ordinary truths, multiple prejudices, numerous policies, and taboos. All this gives rise to the illusion of a predictable future, or to false expectations projected on the book’s plot. Tobin calls it the “curse of knowledge” that leads us straight into a surprise situation—in real or imaginary life. And there, at the moment when all illusions are crushed, we see, with surprise and joy, how life or a plot turns not

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to where our pseudo-knowledge led us. And we thank the writer or author of the film for the fact that he or she has saved us from the traps of our own consciousness. The list of these traps is also thoroughly scrutinized and described by Tobin in her work. In addition to the curse of knowledge, the author dwells on the role of superstition, on the unwillingness of a mentally healthy person to burden himself with checking sources of information, on our inherent excessive credulity. All these natural limitations of a reader's consciousness are fertile soil for a well-made surprise. What the writer should do, Tobin thinks, is wisely use these limitations, because people in general are created to be constantly surprised and they will be grateful seeing their illusions vanishing in the light of unexpected truth.

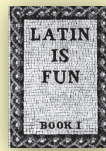
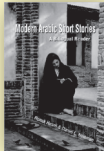
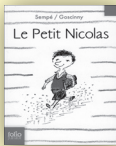
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