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Book Reviews by Asunción López-Varela

How Could Tolkienian Mythology Be Inspiring for Spiritual Leadership ?

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Abstract

In this paper, the author would like to check to what extent Tolkienian mythology could be inspiring for spiritual leaders. In order to understand Tolkienian mythology, we must unveil its structural components. Mythogenetic processes explain how given myths are created throughout time. These have cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and ethical dimensions. Tolkienian mythogenetic processes could improve the way business leaders are addressing issues of transcendence, holism, and systemic thought. And that could be done in three basic ways. Firstly, business leaders could better circumscribe the way they understand transcendence. Secondly, business leaders should put attention to every metaphysical questioning that could constitute the basis for ethical reflection and behavior. Thirdly, business leaders should be able to grasp the ultimate outcomes of ethical dilemmas. In brief, spirituality and transcendence could be closely linked to leadership, while taking mythogenetic processes into account.

1. How Could Tolkienian Mythology Be Inspiring for Spiritual Leadership ?

Spirituality has never been so popular and its meaning so vague than nowadays. Insofar as spiritual leaders put more attention to organizational members' spiritual needs, they could increase organizational performance (Salehzadeh et al. 2015). The problem is that the notion of "spiritual needs" remains quite vague. Any increase of organizational performance could be more generally caused by the way leaders have individualized consideration for organizational members, without necessarily taking into account the variety and nature of their spiritual needs. Chen and Yang (2012) found that the effects of spiritual leadership can vary from an industry to another. Such effects could be stronger in the retail industry than in financial services. The effects of spiritual leadership could also be different in large, small and medium-sized enterprises. Hicks (2003) rightly asserted that spirituality (as well as ethics) could be defined instrumentally in terms of productivity. Spirituality (and ethics) should never become a tool for increasing profitability, since it is closely related to human well-being and to meaning of life. Neither human well-being, nor meaning of life should be used as an instrument to improve financial results.

What does spirituality actually mean? Mitroff and Denton (1999) made an intrinsic link between spirituality and the transcendence. However, transcendence is defined as "the mystery that is at the core of the universe and of life itself" : "there is a transcendent power that is responsible for the creation and care of the universe" (Mitroff and Denton 1999, 24). Monotheistic religions would agree with such definition of spirituality. Even Hindus would agree. However, Mitroff and Denton (1999) have included a religious component although they believed that spirituality should never be confused with a particular religion. Their notion of spirituality could then create more misunderstanding than discernment. Spirituality could be experienced in religious as well as in non-religious settings. Hindu sacred texts could even be used for leadership development (Jain and Mukherji 2009). However, when dealing with spirituality in a non-religious context, we should be more cautious in the way we are defining the subject matter. Individual spirituality basically influences a spiritual leader to perform spiritual behaviors toward his/her subordinates, although the whole organization could be explicitly led by spiritual principles and values (Pawar 2014). However, organizational spirituality is probably the subproduct of leader's individual spirituality. Moreover, it could be quite difficult to prove that leadership spiritual behaviors could directly and clearly influence subordinates' behaviors. Phipps (2012) concluded that leader's spiritual beliefs basically influence the strategic leader rather than his/her followers.

Novels, stories, dramas as well as autobiographies could be used to unveil lessons of leadership in the organizational setting (Ferris 1998). Some could choose Proust, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, and Hemingway to find out how their literary works could be inspiring for leaders. Other would prefer Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Mann, Iris Murdoch, and Gao Xingjian. Those writers have produced very different kinds of literary works so that nobody could claim that they would necessarily converge on the same components of personal and social life. When dealing with transcendence, spirituality, and leadership, the literary works of J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973) could be particularly inspiring for leaders. The purpose of the paper is to see to what extent Tolkienian mythology could be inspiring for spiritual leaders. Firstly, the structural components of Tolkienian mythology will be explained: the cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and ethical components of the way myths are created (the mythogenetic process). Secondly, the Tolkienian mythogenetic process could improve the way business leaders are addressing issues of transcendence, holism, and systemic thought. The originality of the paper is to unveil how spirituality and transcendence could be closely linked to leadership, while taking the mythogenetic process into account.

2. The Structural Components of Tolkienian Mythology

Carl-Gustav Jung looked described mythologies as subproducts of human soul. Myths make an integral part of every religion (Jung 1978). The function of religious myths is to heal human beings from their suffering and anxiety, whether they are

caused by war, sickness, or death (Jung 1964). Tolkienian mythology does not absolutely need gods. God could be the original Principle of everything-that-is. However, it is the only thing we could say about God. Any other discourse about God would be the projection of human mind. That's why Tolkienian mythological eras are not impregnated with the Divine Presence. Tolkien could talk about the origin of the Universe. But even the Creator (Eru, Ilùvatar) did not play any historical role. God did not intervene in human/Elf temporality. According to Tolkien (1978), fairy tales are stories dealing with Faërie, that is, the Perilous Kingdom in which elfs, sorcerers, trolls, giants, and dragons live and have their own being. Peoples of the Faërie could contribute to human happiness as well as to human tragedy, since they could deeply influence the way human beings deal with their desires. That's why coming close to the wonders and mysteries of Faërie is always risky (Tolkien 1978b). As Janet Brennan Croft said, "Faërian drama is a form of Elvish art a human can almost but no quite grasp and understand" (31). Faërie makes possible to be in touch with the depths of space and time and to be in harmony with all living beings. So, Faërie could contribute to make environmentalism continuously evolving.

When analyzing Tolkienian mythology, we could define the way myths are created (the mythogenetic process). This process includes cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and ethical components.

3. The Cosmogenetic Component, or the Interconnectedness Between Divine Creation, Reincarnation, and Mortal/Immortal Beings

Knowing the myths is learning the origin of things (Eliade 1963). Tolkien's world is theocentric (Wood 2003). Ilùvatar, the Father of everything-that-is (Eru, the One: Tolkien 2012) has created the Universe. Eä is the material universe, the High Wall of Everything (Ilurambar) (Tolkien 1999). We cannot see the High Wall of Everything (Tolkien 2012). Ilùvatar used His thought in order to create the Ainur, who are the pagan gods inhabiting the world. At the real beginning of the Universe (Eä), Ilùvatar said "This is", or "It must be like that". Ilùvatar has sent given beings in the visible Universe (Eä). Ilùvatar is the origin of thought (Tolkien 1984, 13-18, 21, 32-33, 51-59, 132). Ilùvatar is the Creator of the Universe and is living outside of the whole Universe. Before the beginning of Time, Ilùvatar lived with the Ainur(Tolkien 2012a). The world is in the midst of Kuma (Voidness), the formless and eternal Night. We can only cross the High Wall of Everything through the Door of the formless/eternal Night. The Door of the Night is safeguarded by Eärendel. Only the greatest gods (Valar as Lords of the World) could reach the Door of the Night (Tolkien 2012). Ilùvatar is the One who was, is and will always be. That's why Ilùvatar can never be grasped by anybody. His Divine Heart is always hidden (Ridoux 2004). Ilùvatar's children are suffering beings. They have spirit, and are thus able to elaborate artistic works (Tolkien 2012a). Elfs (Ilùvatar's oldest children) and human (mortal) beings are Ilùvatar's sons (Tolkien 2012). The Children of Earth are the First-Born beings. They were originally powerful and beautiful. Ilùvatar (Eru) has given to His Children the power to rule over the Earth. He is generous. Originally, Elfs (Eldar) were more wise and powerful than human beings.

They did not suffer from any sickness (Tolkien 2012). The specific home of Elfs and human beings was created by Ilùvatar (Tolkien 2012a). Elfs still own more scientific knowledge than most of human beings (Tolkien 2009).

Ilùvatar has given gods their powers and home (Valinor, Aulë's home). Any human wisdom comes from the Lords of the World (Valar). Valar (gods) know a lot of things about future. However, their knowledge is limited. Some Valar decided to stay in the world and thus to be substantially shaped by Time (Tolkien 2012a). Human beings considered the Valar as pagan gods (and servants of the Ainur), while Elfs call them Powers, that is, immortal beings. Immortal beings are known as the Powers and Guardians of the World and the Lords of Valinor (Poveda 2003-2004). Valar talked about countries in which death does not exist. According to Tolkien (1984), there are nine Valar. Firstly, Manwë, Lord of gods (Head of Valar), Lord of Goodness. Manwë's spouse is Varda, the Lady of the Stars, who is particularly loved by the Elfs. Manwë and Varda live in Valinor/Asgard (Valar's land). Secondly, Ulmo, the Lord of Waters, loves as much the Elfs as human beings. He lives alone. Thirdly, Aulë, the Lord of Earth, Master of the Arts. Aulë's spouse is Yavanna. She loves every living being on earth. Protecting the environment is thus an action that is godly approved. Fourthly, Oromë, the Lord of Forests (Oromë's spouse is Vana). Fifthly, Tulkas, the Lord of Courage and Struggle. Sixthly, Ossë, the Master of Oceans (Ossë's spouse is Uinen). Seventhly, Mandos, the Master of Fate and of the House of Dead. Eightly, Lorien, the Lord of Dreams. Ninthly, Melko, the Lord of Evil. The most powerful Valar are Manwë and Melko (Morgoth) who are brothers. Manwë is the Lord of Valar (the Being of Goodness), while Morgoth is the Being of Evil (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth is the only Vala who could experience fear (Tolkien 2012a). Melkor/Melko/Morgoth is no longer a Vala. He rebelled against Ilùvatar and was guided by envy, jealousy, and hate. That's why Melko is a fallen Vala.

4. The Metaphysical Component, or the Dialectics Between Death and Freedom

Elfs and human beings are free beings. They could refuse to be guided by Valar, although such refusal could cause them deep unhappiness. Elfs have been created in order to be closer to Valar than human beings actually are (Tolkien 2012a). Unlike the people of Elfs (Eldalië), human beings do not have access to reincarnation processes. Reincarnation implies a time of waiting (in Mandos' rooms) before gods (Valar) could give access to new lives (Tolkien 2012). Elfs could have thousands of lives. If they want, they could die and go to Valinor, in the Mandos' Palace (Tolkien 1984). Any Vala, Elf or human being has never been able to escape from Mandos' rooms, except with Mandos' and Manwë's Will (Tolkien 2012a). Indeed, the waiting duration depends on Mandos' Will (which must be confirmed by Manwë's Will) and the merit of the dead being (Tolkien 2012; 2012a). Human beings are mortal beings. They have received short existential duration (Tolkien 2012a). That's why human beings are free. Existential finitude is the real origin of human freedom. Death is human destiny (Tolkien 1984). Human freedom cannot exist without our having-to-die. Death is not a possibility-to-be if human freedom is not real and effective. Only Beren (Barahir's son) has come back from the after-life world. But he has then said nothing more to human beings

(Tolkien 2012). Since then, any human being has never called Beren for help and support (Tolkien 2012a). Human beings do not know what happens to their mind after their death. Nobody (even the Valar) has never come back from Hades. The Country of Living Dead (a kind of Paradise) is a human interpretation of Gods' Life (Tolkien 2012). It responds to the basic desire of an immortal happiness (Tolkien 2012a). But only those who overcome the frontiers between life and death can explain the nature of those frontiers. Only those people could know what lies beyond death. Someone who has not crossed the ultimate barrier cannot know the nature of the barrier and what is made available beyond the barrier (Tolkien 1978a).

5. The Eschatological Component, or the Dialectics Between Time and Destiny

On one hand, Destiny cannot be understood without referring to temporality. Destiny occurs within-time. Being in-time is then being subjected to a destiny, and above all, to our having-to-die. According to Tolkien, there is a circle of Destiny. There is a destiny for every being in the Universe, since every living being has been created by Ilùvatar. However, human beings have strange destiny. They can neither understand their destiny, nor avoid it (Tolkien 1984).The object of Destiny is death (Tolkien 1988a). Death is Ilùvatar's gift to human beings (Tolkien 1984; 2012a). Nobody could fight Ilùvatar's Will, who is the Master of Destiny (Tolkien 1984; 2009a). Only Ilùvatar (who has created the visible Universe) could change the Destiny of the Universe.

On the other hand, Time cannot be understood without Destiny. As it is grounded in Time, freedom cannot be grasped without the end of personal duration (destiny as our having-to-die). Tolkien talked about the depths (or abyss) of Time (Tolkien 1984). Ilùvatar's creatures are interconnected through the links of Time (Tolkien 1999). Time is running toward its end. At the end of Time, Ilùvatar will bless all living beings as His own Children, since He is merciful. The Creator of the Universe is thus the Ultimate Protector of every living being. However, a merciful God is something strange and unbelievable (Tolkien 1984). The way Tolkien addressed the issue of Time seems to mirror a sacred Time (Primordial Time), whether it is Eternity (as the Time before every temporality), or the Original Time (as the basis of every temporality). However, it is not the case. Religiosity could make somebody defining the mystery of Time, when dealing with eternity. Mysticism opens some doors that make possible for believers to avoid the worldly emprisonment (our having-to-die). Such mystical doors open our mind to unusual and amazing things that most of people are not aware of (Tolkien 1999). Tolkienian mythology does not provide precise ideas about rituals and practices that make possible to open mystical doors. As paradigmatic gestures, ritauls are nothing but repetitive actions that are projecting believers into the mythical era (Eliade 1969). During Tolkienian mythological eras, prayer was rarely practiced (Tolkien 1984). Human beings cannot know the real meaning of prayers. However, Tolkienian mythology does not give any idea about the mystical means to abolish secular temporality.According to Tolkien, mystical experience is closely linked to supernatural realities (Tolkien 2006). But non-religious people do not grasp Time as mystery, but rather as the basic dimension of human existence (Heidegger1962).

6. The Ethical Component, or the Dialectics Between Freedom and Hope

In Tolkienian mythology, Morgoth (Melkor) is the enemy of the world. Tolkienian mythology thus implies a war against Evil (Tolkien 1984), that is, a war against part of who-we-are (Tolkien 1988). Morgoth is destroying everything that is beautiful and new, and then makes people suffering (Tolkien 1984; 2009a). Melkor (Morgoth) is the origin of every evil. He is the Evil Breath. Morgoth has been created by Ilùvatar. Morgoth owned every power that has been given to the Valar (gods), but he used them in order to put evil everywhere, in every individual existence. Morgoth is jealous of Manwë's power. Manwë knows Ilùvatar's Will for each of His creatures, particularly human beings (Tolkien2012; 2012a). Morgoth's mind is always full of evil potentialities. Morgoth is called the Being of Evil, the Oppressor (Bauglir) (Tolkien 2012a). He has evil intents (Tolkien 2009). Morgoth is always lying (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth is the Spirit of Evil. He is the Being of lies, jealousy, hate, anger, violence, and destruction. Morgoth is the Being of unhappiness (Tolkien2012; 2012a). Too often, human beings have become Morgoth's soldiers. Morgoth has created demons, dragons, monsters and Orcs as the main instruments of Evil (Tolkien 2012a). Even gods (Valar) cannot get rid of all lies that Morgoth has put into the heart of human beings (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth is a shadow in human spirit and heart (Tolkien 2012a). Gods cannot control human will, although they could only be guided by good intents (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth tried to exert as much power as possible over human beings (Tolkien 1984. Unfortunately, many human beings have been deeply influenced by Morgoth and Sauron. But some are still resisting to Morgoth's power and are united in love and mutual understanding (Tolkien 1984; 1988a; 2009a). Although the world is impregnated by evil and makes it risky to decide in a way or another, it is unveiling that love is more powerful than hate, in the long run.

Uncertainties come from Morgoth. Morgoth (Melkor) was the first and most powerful Vala, while Ilùvatar had not still created the world (Tolkien 1999; 2009). According to Ilùvatar, Manwë is Melkor's brother, although he is always focusing on goodness and justice. Manwë is the King of Valar (Tolkien2012; 2012a). Manwë is the Vala of world peace. He is the Vala who is loved by Elfs and human beings in the most profound way (Tolkien 2012a). Melkor (Morgoth) is jealous and full of envy and hate (Tolkien 1984). According to Tolkien (1999), jealousy is nothing but mystery. Sauron is Melkor's lieutenant. He lived in a place which is full of fires. Sauron is denying everything human beings have learned from the Valar (their pagan gods). Melkor has created Orcs (as demons, or the people of hate: Tolkien 2012). Orcs served Melkor, but are afraid of Melkor's angry. Melkor made Orcs deeply suffering. Morgoth (Melkor) tried to be worshipped and looked like Savior, since he claimed to own the power to release human beings from their existential predicament (Tolkien 1984). Without human beings, Elfs could not overcome the power of Orcs (Tolkien 2012). Tolkienian mythology tries to find out how the universe could be saved from the total sovereignty of the Absolute Evil. It seems that forgiveness could substantially reduce the power of the Absolute Evil. But ultimate forgiveness and judgment are given by gods (Valar) (Tolkien 2012; 2012a). Too often, human beings feared the powers of Valar and were unable to

really love them. But nobody can really know what would happen if one would disobey to Valar (Tolkien 2012a).

Human beings are free beings (freedom as Ilùvatar's gift). They could choose evil or goodness, whatever their gods could say or believe (Tolkien 1988a; 1999; 2012a). According to Wood (2003), Tolkien was quite close to Augustine. Both agreed that "real freedom is the liberty to choose and do the good, and that to do evil is to act unfreely, to exercise an unslaved will" (70). Augustine believed that evil is the way the will is distorted in order to neglect and forget God's Will (Augustine 1964). A good will is then "a will by which we desire to live upright and honorable lives and to attain the highest wisdom" (Augustine 1993, 19). Evil feelings could be linked to fear/terror, shame, sadness, anger, hate, envy, maliciousness, or malevolence. Evil and bad attitudes/behaviors are actualized through three basic sources: (a) lies, tricks, and deceit; (b) cruelty, tyranny, and violence; (c) pride, greed, and covetousness. Those who are led by evil are focusing on their egoistic needs (Tolkien 2009). However, even in that case, we could find out some goodness among malicious beings (Tolkien 1989; 2009).

Tolkien (1992) distinguished despair from wisdom. Wisdom implies to acknowledge the necessity, after having identified all other solutions to a given problem. The Enemy is represented by Morgoth, for whom the desire of power is the only valuable thing in the world. Power is not expressed through arms, but rather through wisdom. With Morgoth, we are losing our hope (Tolkien 2009b). Evil and bad feelings make living beings full of despair. Wherever there is despair, believers are quite rare (Tolkien 1984). According to Tolkien (2009a), evil and despair are interdependent. Wherever there are evil and bad attitudes/behaviors, there is despair. Despair gives birth to evil and bad attitudes and behaviors. People are dying without any hope (Tolkien 1999). Despair implies to see the end of things as being indubitable (Tolkien 1992). Tenderness and kindness could make us hope about the future. Love makes us very close to Ilùvatar's Heart (Tolkien 1999). Goodness refers to beauty, freedom, wisdom, hope, happiness, and peace. According to Tolkien, goodness follows from love. But courage is not possible without wisdom. Wisdom is not possible without courage (Tolkien 1989). Courage implies reliable opportunities we could really choose (Tolkien 2010). Goodness and right attitudes/behaviors (such as forgiveness, courage, and prudence) make human beings full of hope. The whole world needs hope (Tolkien 1988a; 2001; 2009a). Dying without hope will make us curse life and death (Tolkien 2001; 2009a). There is no hope without freedom, since freedom is grounded on goodness. And goodness is a possibility-to-be that could be preferred to evil. There is no freedom without hope, since hope is the ultimate outcome of goodness. Being subjected to evil cannot give us any hope. Only goodness could provide us hope as the desire for a better future, here-and-now as well as in the after-life.

7. Mythogenetic Lessons for Leadership

In order to efficiently fight the various forms of evil, business leaders should precisely identify who is the Enemy, that is, the enemy of humankind. The Enemy is not a specific enemy, but rather the ground of every evil on Earth. Business leaders should clarify how to fight the Enemy. Business leaders will not be able to make the Enemy disappear, since human existentiality implies insurmountable finitude. However, we could reasonably expect that business leaders will show an exemplary conduct and explain how to fight the Enemy in the daily organizational life. Tolkienian mythology has made us more aware of three basic challenges.

Firstly, business leaders should circumscribe the way they understand transcendence. Leaders who want to take transcendence into account should be cautious, when defining what it's all about. C. Dean Pielstick (2005) distinguished three forms of belief systems. Transcendence implies that the ultimate reality is the Absolute, the Other. In that case, the ultimate reality is isolated from human/material reality (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). Moreover, immanence means that the ultimate reality is with and within human and material reality (pantheism, or the identity between God and Nature; monism, or the existence of a transcendent reality which is one with material reality). Finally, panentheism expresses that God is both within material reality and absolutely other than such earthly reality. Transcendental leadership seems to convey a quite frail and vague notion of transcendence. Cardona (2000) defined transcendental leadership as leader-member exchange theory. The motivation is called "transcendent" because it is a motivation to contribute to others' well-being. Transcendence then means overcoming egoistic motivation. Any other spiritual meaning of transcendence seems excluded. According to Fernando et al. (2009), transcendental leadership should be focused on the best way to shape organizational culture so that external and internal stakeholders will perceive what the organisation actually is. Some authors agree that there is a nexus betwen environmental leadership and spiritual leadership (Crossman 2011; 2010). In such case, spiritual leaders are focusing on a higher purpose, when dealing with challenging situations. They pay great attention to others' suffering and are then able to practice empathic understanding of others' pain (Klaus and Fernando 2016). Empathy basically implies a call of conscience. According to Heidegger (1962), the call of the conscience is an appeal as mode of discourse. It is an appeal to *Dasein*, that is, an appeal to choose given possibilities-to-be, while excluding others. This is an appeal to become who-we-are. Weiss et al. (2004) identified five components of the calling in the context of Christian vocation: (1) this is an invitation we are receiving; (2) we must listen to the call and use our discernment; we must be in silence, pray, and meditate; (3) the calling implies an invitation to actively contribute to common good; (4) the calling is an invitation to do something concrete and possible; (5) we are always free to accept or reject the invitation. The experience of calling does not necessarily have any religious meaning. Calling rather implies the personal commitment to higher ideals or purposes, whether they are religious or not (Markow and Klenke 2005). Such higher ideals could even be economically, politically, socially, culturally, or aesthetically induced. Ego-transcendence could then be prioritized, when endorsing an ideal that overcomes the challenges of the daily life. As Markow and Klenke (2005) rightly said, self-transcendence is required to feel any sense of calling. Transcendental thought should focus on the interconnectedness between Divine Creation, reincarnation, and mortal/immortal beings (the cosmological

component). Transcendental leaders could then open the way either to holistic thought, or to systemic way of thinking.

Secondly, business leaders should put attention to every metaphysical questioning that could constitute the basis for ethical reflection and behavior. Holistic thought should be confronted to the dialectics between death and freedom (the metaphysical component) and to the dialectics between Time and Destiny (the eschatological component). Benefiel (2005) defined spirituality as "the human spirit fully engaged", thus referring to the intellectual, emotional, and relational abilities as well as the capacity to change and develop oneself (9). Spiritual leadership is often considered as enhancing a holistic style of leadership, since it takes body, mind (reason), heart (emotions and feelings), and spirit into account (Fairholm 1996; Delbecq et al. 2004; Wu and Li 2015). According to Dede and Ayranci (2014, 3395), holism is a spiritual leadership factor which is weakly connected to altruism and trust, since it mirrors interiority. It is not focusing on others' well-being. Holistic thought should deepen the way death and freedom are interconnected one to the other. In doing so, holistic leaders would better contribute to grasp the existential character of freedom, as it is perceived and exercised in the organizational setting. Holistic thought should improve its understanding of the basic link between Time and Destiny. Holistic leaders would then redefine temporality as well as determinisms, when applied in the organizational life.

Thirdly, business leaders should be able to grasp the ultimate outcomes of ethical dilemmas. Systemic thought should deepen the way it perceives and defines hope and freedom. According to Geh (2014), spiritual organizations put the emphasis on inspiration rather than motivation. Motivation cannot be sustained in the long run without the interconnectedness between the self, the significant others (people who are significant for me), and the organizational culture and life. Inspiration could open the way to such interconnectedness. Fry and Cohen (2009) defined the basic purpose of spiritual leadership in the following way: "to tap into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual well-being through calling and membership, to create vision and value congruence across the individual, empowered team, and organization levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity" (269). Fry and Cohen (2009) believed that the spiritual leadership paradigm embraces a stakeholder approach and focuses on the best way to launch, develop, and improve dialogue with stakeholders. However, Fry and Cohen (2009) did not explain how spiritual leadership appears as a paradigm. Painter-Morland (2008) described how theories of systemic leadership are focusing on collaboration (rather than control), trust, wisdom, authenticity, and humility. Systemic leaders deeply enhance diversity in the organizational setting. They have a real sense of inclusion. Systemic leaders put the emphasis on collaboration rather than control, so that they are defining the way interdependence is actually experienced in the organizational life. According to Korac-Kakabadse et al. (2002), spiritual leadership implies attitudes of discernment, listening, and humility. Spiritual leaders accept reality as-it-is and do not play power games. They do not try to control everything in the organizational life. Systemic leaders are able to face paradoxes quite efficiently, since they consider paradoxes as springboards for self-transcendence. The paradoxical coexistence of social traits could imply hierarchy vs participation, unity vs diversity, or discipline vs creativity (Collier and Esteban 2000). Systemic leaders could unveil how hope and freedom are interconnected in the organizational life and culture.

8. Conclusion

Nowadays, spiritual leadership is not an epiphenomenon. It is more and more attracting, when business leaders have to deal with religious and cultural pluralism. However, spirituality makes room for transcendence as well as for holistic and systemic thought, without precisely defining the ins and outs. Looking at the mythogenetic process as it is actualized in Tolkienian mythology could improve the way business leaders have to deal with transcendence, holism, and systemic thought. Being aware of the deep challenges which lie behind any spiritual leadership, business leaders could more efficiently face spiritual and cultural diversity as well as the need for global human development. This study has some limitations. The various components of the mythogenetic process have not been included in empirical studies. However, the way spiritual leadership is perceived and defined by organizational members and leaders could be much more precise and inspiring, if the cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and/or ethical challenges are explicitly addressed.

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Reconstructing the Romantic Subject through Mythological Archetypes in Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*

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Abstract

This essay explores the ways in which the traditional concept of the Romantic subject is redefined throughout the novel *The Sea The Sea* by Iris Murdoch. In order to do so, we will take as reference the protagonist of the novel, Charles Arrowsby, analysing the different myths developed by the author that build the character. By means of mythological archetypes such as the Minotaur, or Adam and Eve, the author explores an alternative view of the Romantic subject. We will equally consider the new approaches of the 20th century towards traditional myths, like in *La Casa de Asterió*n, by Jorge Luis Borges. Furthermore, the mythological figures of Titus, or Theseus, will be also explored in other characters, as a way of regarding the mythological influence that is presented in the novel. This essay also attempts to trace back some similarities in *The Sea The Sea* of Romantic authors, such as Edgar Allan Poe or Henry David Thoreau, and bring them together with the already mentioned approach towards Romanticism. In this way, we will see how this novel can be compared to other types of literature that go beyond the English tradition.

Key Words: Iris Murdoch, Romanticism, Mythical Archetypes, Intertextuality, Myth-Criticism.

1. Introduction

Among the different critical readings that have been made of *The Sea, The Sea*, a large corpus of romantic interpretations has been explored in the aesthetics of Iris Murdoch (Daniel Majdiak, 1972), as well as anti-moralist (Peter J. Conradi, 2010) and moralist philosophical interpretations (Maria Antonaccio, 2000). This article proposes a reading from the point of view, not only romantic, which is intended to expand –or comment from another perspective–, but in its mythical condition.

The central character and narrator of *The Sea, The* Sea*, Charles Arrowsby, is an ageing theatrical celebrity who decides one day to withdraw from the world. In pursuance of this idea, he buys an old house by the sea, called Shruff End, and determines to live in isolation for the rest of his days. From the very beginning, we recognize in Charles the traditional pose of the Romantic loner. As the critic John Burnside says in his academic introduction to the book for Vintage Classics, what Charles Arrowsby is reproducing here is "a whole set of appealing Romantic, theatrical myths: the figure of the wise hermit; communion with nature" (21). This can be seen in the detailed description of this spot at the opening of the story, where nature initially appears as an indomitable and pleasing force. He depicts it as a sublime image, overwhelming and terrible but at the same time beautiful. The concept of the sublime, introduced to the Western literary world by Boileau's translation of Longinus' *Peri Hypsous* in 1674, must be referred to nature (*physis*), for "it is by nature that man is being gifted with speech," and "in discourse", he says, "we demand that which transcends the human" (3). "The beautiful," the critic Schiller comments in his essay *On the Sublime*, "is valuable only with reference to the human being, but the sublime with reference to the pure daemon" (210). The sadness of the location in the novel is undeniable, and the gloom and spectral feelings are prepared to flood the narration. The essential claim of the sublime is clearly evoked here by Charles:

> At one point, near to my house, the sea has actually composed an arched bridge of rock under which it roars into a deep open steepsided enclosure beyond. It affords me a curious pleasure to stand upon this bridge and watch the violent forces which the churning waves, advancing or retreating, generate within the confined space of the rocky hole. (*The Sea, The Sea* 6)

2. Charles' Unreliability

As the reader moves onwards, however, s/he starts to find inconsistencies between what is told by Charles and his resulting dialogues and resolutions throughout the novel. It is necessary from the first moment in the story to talk about a clear unreliability of the narrator. Language is used in a poetic form; poetic in the semiotic sense. In semiotic studies there are six functions of communication, being the poetic the one that chooses form over content. In his book *Manual de Semiótica General*, the linguist and semiotic Jean-Marie Klinkenberg states that:

> [This function] bastante mal bautizada, se llama *función poética*. Centrada sobre el mensaje mismo, llama la atención sobre la manera como el mensaje se ha modelado. Por ejemplo, en poesía la rima impone al enunciado una lógica muy particular. En un mensaje en prosa, nos preocupamos de escoger las palabras en función de su sentido o de su valor expresivo, y no en función de su forma. En cambio la poesía versificada cuida de hacer aparecer esas palabras teniendo en cuenta sus características puramente formales […] La función comunicativa que estas palabras tendrían en prosa queda así puesta entre paréntesis, en provecho de otro tipo de significación que le confiere su rango particular (2006: 66).

Charles relates to us everything that happens inside his head, like an interior monologue, with a remarkable fluency and rhetorical force, but the successive dialogues

between him and the other characters are notorious for lacking these attributes. Conversations, according to John Burnside's previous quotation, are presented as in a theatrical piece. This delusional play creates a sensation of constant simulacra throughout the novel, but what seems to be apparently artificial is actually the way Charles interprets reality, as he is the only narrator in the story. Therefore, we are faced with a striking conflict between the inner world of Charles Arrowsby and the outer world, which is mainly represented in the character of Hartley, his first love, whom he has not seen since his love affair with her as an adolescent. This is translated into social awkwardness within almost every interaction:

> I got the shock again of her changed appearance, since in my intense and cherishing thought she had become young again […] I had deliberately prepared nothing to say. I said 'Oh excuse me, I was passing by, returning from a walk and I just thought I'd call in for a moment. I had time before she replied to think: I ought to have let speak first! (*The Sea, The Sea* 132)

He finds it simpler to talk to himself rather than talking to others, especially intellectuals, as he says that he is "also glad to intuit that the place is not infested with 'intellectuals', a hazard everywhere nowadays." (Murdoch 1978: 14) Charles does not get along with the townspeople either, and in fact becomes a comic figure to them. A great part of the novel becomes then a delusional play, where Charles will try to reproduce a series of archetypes that are essential to explore his own Romantic attitude and the Romantic principles in general. This attitude adds to the unreliability because, according to Thomas Weiskel:

> To the eye of the present, everything in the past looks like a compromise between the still further back and the yet to be or the new. That is not how the past felt or was lived, but it is, perhaps inevitably, the way its significance is structured. A metaphor is a compromise struck between the old and the new, between the overwhelming authority of language and the irrepressible anarchy of wit, or whatever principle of unprincipled association makes wit possible. (1986:4)

3. The Romantic Character

As it has been stated, Shruff End seems at first to be a retreat of peace and spiritual rest, becoming later the idyllic place where Charles innocently believes that his love for Hartley will be consumed. It seems to epitomize those perceptions in "The Eolian Harp" by Samuel Colleridge, where Shruff End would acquire the dimension of the "Cot":

> My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
> Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
> To sit beside our Cot, our Cot o'ergrown
> With white-flowered Jasmin, and the broad-leaved Myrtle,
> (Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!) (333)

In the same way, Charles repeatedly refers to Shruff End as a "cave", where no electricity is needed, reminiscing those images portrayed by William Wordsworth in "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour" of "some Hermit's cave, where by his fire / The Hermit sits alone" (155)At the same time, rural life is presented as the notion of purity, being in line with the visions of Wordsworth in "The Tables Turned": "Come forth into the light of things, / Let Nature be your teacher (154).Just as the novel progresses, Shruff End ends up nevertheless being a kind of labyrinth that leads Charles to have to face situations and people from the past, and it is under these circumstances when Charles' romantic attitude vanishes and, therefore, his animal instincts begin to sprout. The initial mysterious depiction of the house may even give us clues about what will be represented later. The house is described by Charles as "sparsely furnished and full of emptiness" (11). At the same time, he says that the "chief peculiarity of it, and one for which [he] can produce no rational explanation, is that on the ground floor and on the first floor there is an inner room. A room which has no external window" (12). Charles is already presenting a place where there are indeed secret or hidden areas. The house is also described as full of different and individual rooms, some of them built of stone, "extremely dark and entirely empty" (13). Therefore, the apparent paradise that is initially presented will eventually turn into the place, or prison, where Charles will take Hartley as his prisoner. Charles' Romanticism seems then to be just a thought-out mask, and Charles himself reflects upon that long before those facts begin to be present. He says: "It has even occurred to me that if I wanted to live as a hermit retired from the world, a flat in London would be a far better habitat" (165).

This observation would go against Wordsworth's previous notions of city life as the sense of corruption. Charles realizes that his retreat from the world has in fact condemned him, and it is within this labyrinth where his animal instincts will be unleashed. Charles becomes so discordant with the world around him that he turns out to be locked in a labyrinth. He becomes his own beast, guided by wild instincts, and the labyrinth emerges as literal when Hartley is kidnapped by him and locked into it. However, when Charles is finally able to put rationality aside, –an attitude that would go in consonance with the Romantic dogmas–, he ends up incarnating the opposite values that Wordsworth appealed to: "Our meddling intellect / Misshapes the beauteous forms of things" (154). The event of the kidnapping is the result of his spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.

4. Kill the Beast

A large row of characters throughout *The Sea The Sea* will parade around Shruff End trying to defeat Charles; that is, to convince him to come back to his former life, but all of them are beaten, and they inevitably become his victims. Among these characters we can find Lizzie, an actress slightly younger than him whom he has been stringing along for some time; Rosina, one of his many lovers; or Titus –who evokes that other Titus that travelled to Crete–, the son of Hartley. It is only by the arrival of James, Charles' admired cousin, when Charles' primitive naturewill be defeated. James, acting like Theseus, will kill the beast side of Charles: the Minotaur inside. Therefore, it takes place a redemptive and metaphorical death in which James will eventually save Charles' life from drowning into the sea, as we will see later, but also from something

more important: he saves him from the labyrinth. Jorge Luis Borges already explored the idea of redemption in the myth of the Minotaur in his short story "La casa de Asterión". In Borges' story, the Minotaur is the narrator itself, and it says:

> Cada nueve años entran en la casa nueve hombres para que yo los libere de todo mal. Oigo sus pasos o su voz en el fondo de las galerías de piedra y corro alegremente a buscarlos. La ceremonia dura pocos minutos. Uno tras otro caen sin que yo me ensangriente las manos. [...] Ignoro quiénes son, pero sé que uno de ellos profetizó, en la hora de su muerte, que alguna vez llegaría mi redentor. Desde entonces no me duele la soledad, porque sé que vive mi redentor y al fin se levantará sobre el polvo. [...] Ojalá me lleve a un lugar con menos galerías y menos puertas. ¿Cómo será mi redentor?, me pregunto. ¿Será un toro o un hombre? ¿Será tal vez un toro con cara de hombre? ¿O será como yo?" (50)

The obsession of Charles is so frenzied that he only thinks that his redeemer will be Hartley and her love. Both characters, James and Theseus, share a military past and, curiously enough, James also proves to have supernatural strength, just like Theseus, when he rescues Charles from drowning into Minn's Cauldron, a deep whirlpool. James clings to the chasm and his powers allow him to work against the centrifugal force that pulls Charles up and out. According to some mythological sources, Theseus defeated the horned creature in a fistfight. In *The Sea, The Sea*, James saves his cousin from death by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Following this theory, the resuscitation acquires then an equal dimension to the punishing death. Each punch becomes a breath in the mouth of Charles: James saves Charles from death and, at the same time, he destroys the Minotaur, thus acting as a redemptive death. There is a long tradition of cauldrons as forces or symbols of metamorphosis, related to witchcraft and the supernatural. It is a cliché popularized not only in Renaissance works such as Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, but also used in Celtic mythology, Irish folklore or Welsh mythology. In the last one we can find cases where horned kings are dropped into cauldrons, like in the second book of *The Chronicles of Prydain*, called *The Black Cauldron*, where The Horned King is going after the supernatural powers of the black cauldron, being finally destroyed by its own force. It is true that in *The Sea The Sea*, it is not the cauldron itself the cause of the destruction of the Minotaur' side of Charles, but James. However, the appearance of Minn's Cauldron is essential for redemption to take place.

Within this mythological paradigm, it is also interesting to analyze the figure of Titus, the son of Hartley, the one that Charles always wanted to have with her. The relationship between Charles and Titus in the novel is given like father and son. The first and probably most obvious reference to Titus could be Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. The relation between *The Sea, The Sea* and Shakespeare is not unexplored, and the recurrence of motifs from Shakespeare's plays has been acknowledged by almost every critical work on Murdoch in readings such as the one conducted by Lindsay Tucker in her "*Released from Bands: Iris Murdoch's Two Prosperos in 'The Sea, the Sea.'*" Similarly, in 1979 Richard Todd also published a study on Iris Murdoch's fiction, entitled "*Iris Murdoch, The Shakesperian Interest*". In this chapter we propose a complementary theory centered in the figure of Titus that does not deny the previous ones, giving perhaps better account of certain interpretative elements of the novel.

When Titus arrives at Shruff End, we are faced with an authentic process of purification experienced by Charles. Charles feels that his role as a paternal figure is at last fulfilled: he is able to escape from the dimension in which he was always trapped. Following the trace of the Christian figure of Saint Titus, we can find the story of Titus, a missionary that goes to Crete to preach Christian

Titus goes to Charles' house to find out who is his father, even when he already has the conviction that Charles has always been his father. Charles, who thinks that Titus is his son, also shares this conviction. If we draw the analogy with the Christian myth, Saint Titus goes to Crete to spread Christian doctrines and the light of Jesus: Saint Titus basically goes to Crete to spread the word of the Real Father. The parallel with the story of *The Sea The Sea*, therefore, gains strength rapidly: Titus goes to Shruff End, a metaphorical Crete, to tell the Minotaur who the real father is. And the symbolic paternal figure, even if being not biologically true, lives in fact within Charles himself. At the end of the story, Titus dies drowned in Shruff End, which is the same place towards he has gone to preach, just like San Titus, who died on the island of Crete.

According to the New Testament apocrypha (Book of the Bee, XVII), after being expelled from Paradise, Adam and Eve were condemned to stay in a cavern in complete darkness for seven days, which is precisely the same description that Charles made of his house. Curiously enough, when Charles enters into Hartley's house, he also describes it as a cavern: "I felt her presence as a violent diffused magnetism which somehow pervaded the whole house, as if Hartley were the house and as if I had been swept into a cavern where she embraced me and I could not touch her." (*The Sea, The Sea* 133)

It becomes easy to relate this passage to the myth of the cavern proposed by Plato, where men chained from their birth see a series of shadows that pass before their eyes without understanding that there is are a bonfire that projects them. Nor do they understand that they are shadows of existing objects and und firmly believe those shadows as the real. The object of the metaphor is to make a person aware of his duty to escape and to see the true world he knows only through imperfect shadows. In the same way Charles sees the world from his cavern without understanding, he lives like the men of Plato's cave, even though he believes that his past life was the cavern and that this new life is a "true" reality. If movement is a deception, and there is no effective concordance between objects and their archetypes; if the universe is a curtain casting the shadows of shadows' shadows, Charles will be trapped no matter where he goes.

After his affair, now a frustrated love, the protagonist is enduring such pain and a sense of removal that provokes him "a permanent metaphysical crisis."(*The Sea, The Sea* 90) Then, Charles asks himself: "Did this lead me to make immorality my mask?" (91).This mask he refers is again the immoral horned creature, the Minotaur, which will

be finally redeemed. Therefore, we can recognize two archetypes in the figure of Charles Arrowsby: the Minotaur in need of redemption already explored by Borges and the mythological figure of Adam. The labyrinth and the cavern are both metaphorical places in which Charles is condemned to remain. Both archetypes are part of the immoral dimension that provokes him a permanent metaphysical crisis. Behind these two mythological figures we find a character that is trapped in need of redemption.

5. Arrowsby and Poe

We must not forget that these archetypes are developed in the novel because of the Romantic ideals that the protagonist tries to carry out from the start. This Romantic development is appreciated not only in the figure of Charles, but in multiple references during the novel to Romantic authors like William Wordsworth, or Edgar Allan Poe. There is a moment, in the chapter titled "Prehistory", when Charles is observing the sea and he is suddenly startled by what seems to be a monster that emerges from the water. This recalls the short story "The Sphinx", by Poe, where the narrator is startled from his window by the visions of a monster that is going down the mountains. At the end, the narrator realizes that this monster is nothing else but a spider that is in front of his eye; just a question of perspective.

In another passage of the novel, the protagonist is startled during the night by someone, or something, that he believes to see through a window. Arrowsby describes it as follows: "I was sitting writing the last night in my drawing room when something very disconcerting happened. I looked up and was perfectly sure that I saw the face looking through the glass of the inner room. I sat absolutely still, paralyzed by sheer terror." (74). This leads us to the event that takes place in "The Fall of the House of Usher ", when the protagonist of the story believes to see the "spirit" of Usher's sister wandering around the house and watching him. In Poe's story the event does not occur through a window, but through a door. But what is interesting here is that the ghostly figure the protagonist sees in "The Fall of the House of Usher" is described as "high and shrouded" (14). Curiously enough, in *The Sea, The Sea*, the narrator refers to it as a face that "appeared rather high up in the window and must be belonged to a very tall person, or to someone standing on something" (74).

The last three paragraphs of the mentioned chapter, describe Charles´ desire of writing overlooking Raven Bay. Evoking some of his past lovers he says: ""Can a woman´s ghost, after so many years, open the doors of the heart?" (96). Probably, this reference would not stand on its own to prove a connection with Poe, but a third remarkable moment provides confirmation when Arrowsby meets Rosina for the first time. She is one of his many lovers, and one of the victims that will try to defeat Charles in his labyrinth. When she arrives at the house, he questions her about the purpose of the visit and about the place where she is lodging. She answers that she is staying at the Raven Hostel and that she has come for him. This inevitably leads to "The Raven" (1966). She arrives at night, by surprise, to tell him how much she loves him. In that scene she plays the role of the raven, arriving by surprise in the night and taking him off guard. In the poem, the raven just repeats one word to the narrator: "Nevermore". Analyses of this particular element in Poe's poem have pointed in the direction of ambiguity: the question being whether the word "nevermore" is just a noise produced by the raven with no meaning other than the mere repetition of a learned sound, or if, on the contrary, it is inspired by a certain intelligence, and the raven means what it is uttering, acting both as a premonitory or foreshadowing element and a statement of the truth. In the novel, Rosina constantly reminds Charles that his relationship with Hartley is finished and will not get anywhere. And the most singular element of this episode comes by chance. When Rosina finally leaves, she starts the car and the headlights light up a person who at that moment is walking down the street. It is then when Charles realizes this person is Hartley and that she is living in the town. In other words, Rosina symbolizes the Raven that, metaphorically, is pointing to the narrator his particular "Nevermore". Something that will never be reached again: the Lost Paradise.

The unreliability of Charles Arrowsby, already mentioned, comes from his inability to carry out his Romantic proposal. The author precisely presents the reader through these references the mistakes and impossibilities of Charles character and, therefore, in a meta-referential exercise, the impossibility of reaching the utopian Romantic theories. The interesting part of this romantic analysis is precisely how Charles' persona is constructed and modified throughout the plot, to the point where these romantic archetypes, which he seems to reproduce at first, arefinally inverted. If symbiosis with nature and evasion of the city can be classified under traditionally romantic aesthetics, in this novel we are precisely going to find an inversion of them. This can be seen in the words of Charles Arrowsby. After having attempted to carry out his romantic retreat, he concludes that "it has even occurred to [him] that if [he] wanted to live as a hermit retired from the world, flat in London would be a far better habitat" (165). Thus, we see that being detached or escaping from society do not necessarily have to be linked to a spiritual retreat in nature. Living as a hermit in nature requires, besides a great psychological capacity, certain physical abilities that, in neither case, our protagonist possesses.

6. Conclusion

The most evident example that probably comes to mind of romantic theories put into practice is the case of the transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau. In *Walden*, Thoreau details his experiences over the course of two years, two months, and two days in a cabin he built near Walden Pond. This example has been worldwide famous because of its apparent success, but we just need to delve into the matter to realize that Thoreau's "plan" was actually full of loopholes. Paul Theroux wrote in his studies about Thoreau, entitled "Henry D. Thoreau, The Main Woods", that he made several trips from his cabin to his home in Concord, which was just a twenty minutes' walk.

> During his famous experiment in his cabin at Walden, moralizing about his solitude, he did not mention that he brought his mother his dirty laundry and went on enjoying her apple pies. His friend William Ellery Channing wrote that, after his graduation from Harvard at the age of twenty, when his mother broached the subject of his leaving home, Thoreau became weepy—and didn't leave. (23)

There are several studies about the artificiality and partial concealment of some actions that lay underneath the experiment of Thoreau, which would definitively detract it from its romantic value. Richard Smith already made similar observations in his essay called *Thoreau's First Year at Walden in Fact and Fiction*. He says that "it should be obvious to anyone who's read Walden that Thoreau was not a hermit. Just the chapter called 'Visitors' is enough to put the myth to rest" (2007: 4). The mythology of Walden Pond becomes then a partial truth. Gregory McNamee, for instance, explores this idea by stating that:

> Thoreau's notion of self-sufficiency did not involve standoffishness, then, and it made ample room for conviviality and company. Let's not incorrectly remember him, on this anniversary, as a loner, but instead as an ardent student of simplicity, pleasure, and the best of the good life, dinner and drinks included. (2012 n.p)

The idea of letting loose of the myth of the traditional "hermit", as we have already explored it through different examples within the Romantic tradition, is therefore essential to explore the reconstruction of the Romantic subject. Once reversed, we accept to acquire a new sense, or dimension, of the archetype. In *The Sea, The Sea*, Iris Murdoch accepts to invert the myth. And it is precisely through the use of different mythological figures, embodied in the character of Charles, how the Romantic archetype is finally inverted.

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Of intertextuality: A comparative study of *Doctor Faustus and The Rape of Lucrece*

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Abstract

This study makes an extended parallel between Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The parallel between the lust and honour debate in *The Rape of Lucrece* and the necromancy and life dilemma in *Doctor Faustus* dramatize the pitfalls of the idea of a renaissance man. The texts are set in the time characterised by desire for individualism especially in the renaissance, an era characterised by a yearning for private agency and personal autonomy. The study argues that the identification of Tarquin's moral dilemma as well as incidents in the poem with their Faustus counterparts extend beyond the thematic concerns of free-will and hubris to allusions such as the Greek myth of Icarus and the ancient Roman practice of equites. The equivalence in the texts is also manifest in that they exhibit parallel incidents. The study concludes that Tarquin and Faustus are classic cases of excess. They are driven by vaulting desire for self-actualisation, especially that quest for private agency and personal autonomy was key in the renaissance period.

Key words: Necromancy, narcissism, free-will, Faustian bargain, hubris.

1. Introduction

There are critics who believe that the canon under the name William Shakespeare belongs to writers other than Shakespeare himself. Such Critics include Calvin Hoffman who strongly believes that Shakespeare was chosen as a front behind whom Christopher Marlowe would continue to write. According to these criticsthe fronting was an arrangement meant to save Marlowe from possible execution was he to be convicted for subversive atheism. Critics who subscribe to this Marlovian conspiracy theory conduct 'literary homicide' investigations into the question of Shakespeare's authorship and Marlowe's supposed staged death. They delve into the intricate nuancesof stylistic similarities of the authors in an attempt to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Shakespeare became Shakespeare because of Marlowe's death. In other words, the critics metaphorically exhume the authors and conduct literary forensic investigations into Shakespeare's and Marlowe's bodies of work. However,

this study will not in any way contest or support Hoffman et al proposition. The paper will establish intertextuality between Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* based on: the theme free-will, parallel incidents and allusions.

2. The Shakespeare-Marlowe nexus

> "*Shakespeare seems to be very much aware of what Marlowe is up to and chooses to plot a parallel course, virtually stalking his rival.*"
> *James Shapiro,* **1991**

There is a striking resemblance between Shakespeare's Tarquin and Marlowe's Faustus. For example, the decisions that the protagonists make spell their ruin. Tarquin's moral dilemma, dramatised in the long-drawn-out examination of his alternatives (honour and lust), culminates in a choice that spawns psychological mayhem. One can equate the alternatives to the characters whodramatise Faustus's mental turbulence, the Good Angel and the Bad Angel. In the poem, honour is the equivalent of the Good Angel, while lust represents the Bad Angel. We witness the triumph of evil over good in the poem when Tarquin,with Machiavellian scorn, tosses morality out of the window:

> Then childish fear avaunt, debating die!
> Respect and reason wait on wrinkled age!
> My heart shall never countermand mine eye.
> Sad pause and deep regard beseems the sage;
> My part is youth, and beats this from the stage.
> Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize;
> Then who fears sinking where such treasure is?(274-280)

In these lines, Tarquin wittily portrays himself as someone against whom physiology has conspired. He renounces respect and reason as attributes of old people. He is trying to justify his failure to control his raging libido, by laying blame on his youthful exuberance. He insinuates that old people are cautious in the face of sexual temptation because they are not sexually active. Tarquin, therefore, uses his age as the first justification of his moral turpitude. The second justification comes with his use of the military image of the martial order. He isolates his body entities, both tangible and abstract, from his being. His affection, heart, eye, and desire are accorded military ranks. For example, 'affection' is the captain. His body, therefore, is in a way a battalion or a platoon with 'affection' in command. Junior 'officers' such as the eye and the heart cannot go against the command of 'affection.' The metaphor of the 'heart' and the 'eye' suggests the contrast between the physical and the spiritual. The 'eye' represents the physical, what the Bible calls the flesh. The 'heart,' on the other hand, represents the spiritual, or the soul. 'Desire' and 'beauty' in line 279 are causally linked with the 'eye.'When Tarquin makes the declaration above, we are reminded of the tragic words of Marlowe's Faustus:

Philosophy is odious and obscure,
Both law and physic are for petty wits,
Divinity is basest of the three—
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile.
'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me! (I.i.100-104)

In this passage, Faustus fails to make a wise choice. He renounces his academic attainments in Philosophy, Law, Divinity, and Medicine, and opts for necromancy, which he presents as a metaphor of a rapist who 'hath ravished me.' These speeches are not only the parallel incidents found in the play and the poem, but are also central dramatic situations that render the utterances tragic.Tarquin rapes Lucrece against his better judgement given the logical debate he has with himself about whether or not to sexually assault Lucrece. Faustus, on the other hand, loses his salvation for he chooses necromancy at the expense of his educational achievements especially Divinity.

The quotations above are not the only ones that make the characters similar. Apart from the immediate fact that Faustus and Tarquin are in similar circumstances, each man has a chance to make a good choice. Tarquin is a member of the royal family, and as such he is supposed to be exemplary in the moral sense. It is the idea of honour that is supposed to keep his raging libido in check. Faustus's moral campus' spur is his education. With his qualifications in Divinity, one would expect him not to form a pact with the devil. Yet he does. What Tarquin and Faustus do is a mockery of the qualities that are supposed to guide them to good moral choices. It is worth noting that the characters are aware of the consequences of their evil alternatives. In his debate, Tarquin makes a statement that clearly expresses his awareness of the dire consequences of rape:

O shame to knighthood, and to shining arms.
O foul dishonour to my household's grave.
O impious act including all foul harms,
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave.
True valour still a true respect should have;
Then my digression is so vile, so base,
That it will lie engraven in my face. (Lines 197-203)

Shakespeare's reference to knighthood is crucial. The use of an ancient Roman practice is intended to turn the reader against Tarquin after he rapes Lucrece. Christopher Gravatt's *The World of the Medieval Knight* (1996), states that knighthood is closely related to the Roman equites. 'Equites' is a Latin word meaning horsemen.Knights in the early Middle Ages were just horsemen, but it became a sign of nobility and social status as it grew more expensive to equip for fighting on horseback. Eventually, knight became a formal title.Knighthood was about more than just fighting, it was also about courtliness. Knights were expected to be brave and honourable, to uphold the honour of women, and to protect the weak. Tales of chivalry were very popular during the Middle Ages, but even so, many knights failed to live up to these high standards (p. 8).Tarquin argues in the passage above that if he commits rape, he will flagrantly violate qualities of knighthood such as humility, honour and protection of the weak. In other words, he would have failed to live up to the expectations of his social status.

One of the ills of the rape is to put the royal house and military into disrepute. Tarquin rightly describes the imminent rape as an 'impious act including all foul harms.' The description expresses the gravity of the misdemeanour. The magnitude of the crime is such that it surpasses all other forms of debauchery. One may argue that Tarquin is aware that, by raping Lucrece, he will not only be committing an offence against Lucrece, but also against Collatine and the whole of Rome. One of Tarquin's character traits is highlighted in the line 'A martial man to be soft fancy's slave.' When he succumbs to sexual coercion in the later part of the poem, it becomes apparent that he is morally weak. He is a martial man who reduces himself to a mere slave of infatuation. The word martial connotes 'hardness.' Therefore, it is the antithesis of the word 'soft' in the same line.

Faustus too is aware of the repercussions of choosing necromancy. Like Tarquin, he utters a statement which shows that he knows what will happen to him: 'The reward of sin is death?'(I. i. line 38). The interrogative utterance is not intended to solicit an answer, it is rhetorical. Faustus chooses to practise black magic because he wants temporary power over the world. What is particularly interesting about Tarquin and Faustus is that they are aware of the brevity of their objects of infatuation. Faustus wants pleasures for 'four and twenty years,' while Tarquin wants sexual gratification which normally lasts a few minutes. In *Rome's Disgrace: The Politics of Rape in Shakespeare's Lucrece* (2005), Peter J. Smith argues that the actual rape only occupies a perfunctory sentence. This, according to the critic, is a tiny fragment of the poem. In his opinion the poem is more about politics than any other issue (p. 19). However, in my opinion, the fact that the poem does not pay close attention to the details of the rape is in keeping with the brevity of the act itself. Although the act unleashes unforgettable consequences for the perpetrator and the victim, the act itself is brief. Therefore, we can conclude that the narcissist's self-centred tendency renders it almost impossible for him to make good decisions.

Faustus, for his part, sells his soul to the devil for a bit of knowledge in the form of juvenile pranks. From his occasional public performance of exploits of magic, he gets temporary corporeal pleasure. One may argue that, unlike Tarquin whose mental debate is fairly presented, the contest for Faustus's soul between the Good Angel and the Bad Angel favours the latter. The language of the Bad Angel is poetic and highly persuasive compared with the Good Angel's prosaic utterances. The utterances of the Bad Angel make use of poetic devices such as alliteration as shown in the first line, 'Go forward Faustus, in that famous art' (I. i. Line 71). The use of the voiceless fricative /f/ in the line suggests a conspiratorial voice, which is musical and, therefore, appealing. The Bad Angel also entices Faustus by mentioning that the 'famous art' will afford him worldly treasures,which will make him a god.

As though to underscore the parallel between the poem and the play, the openings of the works are derived from a similar allusion. Both *TheRape of Lucrece*

and *Doctor Faustus* foreground the Greek mythology of Icarus. *The Rape of Lucrece* opens with:

> From the besieged Ardea all in post,
> Borne by trustless wings of false desire
> Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host… (Lines 1-3).

In *Doctor Faustus* the prologue by the Chorus portrays a similar idea:

> So much he profits in divinity
> That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
> Excelling all, and sweetly can dispute
> In th' heavenly matters of theology;
> Till swoll'n with cunning, of self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach
> And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow! (I. i. 15-21)

According to Thomas Bulfinch's online book, *The Age of Fable*, Icarus's father, Daedalus, warned his son not to fly too close to the sun, or too close to the sea after he made him wings to help him escape imprisonment. Overcome by the giddiness that flying lent him, Icarus soared through the sky curiously, but in the process he came too close to the sun, which melted the wax used to attach the wings to his body. He fell down and died instantly.

Tarquin is like Icarus in the sense that, although he is aware of the mores of the Roman society, he transgresses against it with apparent impunity. Daedalus has warned Icarus not to fly close to the sun, but because of curiosity Icarus does not heed the warning. Tarquin, on the other hand, despite his well-reasoned debate against rape, brushes all the positive qualities of humanity and royalty aside as he commits a serious offence. When reading the poem with the mythology of Icarus in mind, the second line of the poem carries an important metaphor that foreshadows Tarquin's ultimate penalty. Tarquin's wings are trustless because they are waxed by infatuation ('false desire'). One, therefore, expects him to fall, just as Icarus does. The phrase 'Trustless wings' is reminiscent of the fate of the hubristic Icarus. Therefore, one can conclude that Shakespeare introduces the Roman theme of megalomania by alluding to Greek mythology. Faustus's craving for unlimited power also highlights the idea of hubris. His obsession with knowledge makes him lose everything that he achieved.

Marlowe also opens his play with the allusion. It is, therefore, not surprising that Faustus falls in the play because he practises more than the heavens permit. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-IV); American Psychiatric Association,* (1994), would characterise Faustus and Tarquin as narcissists. The characters exhibit the following traits:

(a) A grandiose sense of self-importance
(b) Fantasies of great success, power and brilliance;
(c) A quest for excessive admiration;
(d) An unreasonable sense of entitlement;
(e) Arrogance,
(f) Envy of others or a belief that others envy one.

These traits are some of the criteria used to deduce whether or not a person is narcissistic. Therefore, we may conclude that Tarquin and Faustus have delusions of grandeur. Tarquin sexually violates Lucrece because, as a member of the royal family, he thinks that people should admire him. The feeling that he is admired results in an unreasonable sense of entitlement, which in turn leads to rape. His quest for admiration by others is congruous with Faustus's insatiable craving for worldly power.

Although longevity is relative, in the face of their infatuation, Faustus and Tarquin are consumed by their fortunes so much that they seem to lose touch with time. Driven by desire, time becomes insignificant to them until the critical moment arrives. One can, therefore, argue that Tarquin and Faustus embrace Niccolo Machiavelli's view that the bold will succeed better than the hesitant. In his famous chapter twenty-five of *The Prince* entitled 'How far human affairs are governed by fortune and how fortune can be opposed,' the writer argues that more often than not, human actions are out of free-will as opposed to the widely held view that events are controlled by fortune and by God. He concludes the chapter with a thought-provoking metaphor to describe fortune. He writes:

> It is better to be impetuous than circumspect; because
> fortune is a woman and if she is to be submissive
> it is necessary to beat and coerce her. She is more
> often subdued by men who do this than by those who act coldly.
> Always, being a woman, she favours young men, because
> they are less circumspect and more ardent, because they
> command her with greater audacity.' (p. 81)

In the introduction to *The Prince*, Machiavelli frames an image which was often cited in his own time, and which is still cited today, that the courageous will succeed better than the cautious (1961:xxv). His view best describes Tarquin. Reading *The Prince*, especially chapter twenty-five, with Tarquin's rape premeditation in mind, persuades one to argue that the book is not only a manual for statecraft, but also a handbook of apolitical ventures. As a prince, Shakespeare's Tarquin seems to follow the teachings of *The Prince*. Although at some point hesitant, he is essentially ardent and impetuous. However pedantic, gluttonous, amorous and thoroughly foolish he appears to be after the rape, his unrelenting will to get what he wants earlier on should be emphasised. During repressive situations, as shown in his premeditation on the rape, he hurls himself forward against all impediments.

Tarquin's fortune is Lucrece's beauty. The prospect of sexual intercourse with her causes him to toss morality and caution to the winds. By so doing he proves that he is determined to rise above the adversities such as shame and disrepute, which stand between him and his fortune. To coerce Lucrece into submitting to his will, he threatens to kill her. The act echoes Machiavelli's recommendation on handling fortune. To achieve his goal, 'he himself himself confounds' (Line 160). Tarquin betrays his own words that 'True valour still true respect should have' (Line 201). In other words, he disregards the appropriate exercise of valour. He forsakes his principles because, as Machiavelli argues, fortune has enormous power over man.

The parallel between Shakespeare's and Marlowe's work extends beyond Tarquin'smoral dilemma with its Faustian counterpart: the theme of free-will and hubris, and the allusion to the mythology of Icarus. Central dramatic situations in the poem and the play are also congruent. For example,nature and/or providence seem to afford both Tarquin and Faustus a chance to rethink and repeal the tragic decisions they have made. In the poem the narrator catalogues some of the (super) natural events that attempted to thwart Tarquin's efforts to rape Lucrece. For example, the door to Lucrece's chamber creeks, 'the night-wandering weasel shrieks to see him there,' the wind blows smoke from his torch into his face, and the needles in Lucrece's gloves prick his fingers. However, Tarquin disregards these ominous incidents that seem to attempt to remind him to restrain himself. He misconstrues them for incidents intended to make his escapade even more fulfilling. Providence also comes to Faustus's redemption but its efforts are in vain. Mephostophilis tells Faustus to courageously cut his arm and use his blood to sign 'a deed of gift' to Lucifer, the latter's blood congeals and he cannot write. Faustus immediately suspects the clotting of his blood portends something sinister, however, Mephostophilis fetches fire to melt the blood and the deal is sealed.

The narrator in *The Rape of Lucrece* makes a summation that effectively captures the futility of both Faustus's and Tarquin's quests by observing that:

> Those that much covet are with gain so fond,
> For what they have not, that which they possess
> They scatter and unloose it from their bond,
> And so, by hoping more, they have but less;
> Or, gaining more, the profit of excess
> Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,
> That they prove bankrupt in this poor rich gain.

The use of paradox in the quotation above is in keeping with what transpires in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Doctor Faustus*. Tarquin and Faustus quests are inherently paradoxical. They want to be admired yet they engage in activities that work against their quest for admiration. Tarquin rapes Lucrece while Faustus 'unloose' himself from his bond to God by forming a pact with the devil. It is from the tragedy of Faustus that the expression 'Faustian bargain' was coined. The idea of the Faustian bargain, as it is commonly understood, is that some people are so bent on gaining immediate reward, power or benefits that they engage in actions that they know are evil. Their moral choices become erratic because all they want is the reward, not how the reward is to be accomplished. Therefore, one can conclude that Faustus and Tarquin are classic examples excesses owing to the faustian bargain they each strike. The protagonists are consumed by their lusts so much that they cease to make rational decisions. As a result of their insatiable desire for unlimited success lies an unmitigated reversal in their fortunes.

3. Conclusion

The decision that Tarquin makes is equivalent to that of Marlowe's Faustus. Faustus, the embodiment of the Renaissance quest for knowledge, also illustrates man's failure to make moral choices.He falls because of excessive pride of intellect. The Chorus says that Faustus's sin is towering pride and vaulting ambition. He is a man so swollen with knowledge and self-confidence that his grasp exceeds his reach. According to the Prologue, Faustus' craving for unlimited power makes 'the Heavens conspire his overthrow' (Act I, scene I, lines 21–2). In *The Rape of Lucrece*, Tarquin engages in a Faustian bargain.Because of his raging lust, he sells his honour for a few minutes of sexual gratification. Like Faustus, he is responsible for his erratic choice. He deliberately chooses evil (rape), over good (honour). Before he makes the decision that leads him into complications, there occurs a strugglefor his soul between good and evil. It is his choice to allow 'affection' to control him that leads to his destruction. Impulsive and youthful, he is heedless of the brevity of the impending sensual pleasure that rape will afford him. His choice of evil as his good is a conscious act of his own free-will, although he tries to deny this by insinuating that his physiology is acting against his goodness. His weighing of the relative merits of honour and the evil alternative is presented logically in his speechbetween lines 197 and 357, when he debates whether or not to rape Lucrece. The alternatives are fairly presented before he makes his choice. One may, therefore, argue that Tarquin and Faustus fall as a result of the exercise of free-will.

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To Remember or to Forget:? Sensorial Encounters that Resuscitate the Past in Le Clézio's "Tempête"

KEITH MOSER

Abstract
This exploration of Le Clézio's recent text "Tempête" delves into the complex nuances of involuntary memory in the author's ever-evolving *œuvre*. Although this is a subject that the author has broached in previous works, it is perhaps in "Tempête" that the Nobel Laureate provides the most complete picture of involuntary memory. In "Tempête," Le Clézio also problematizes the reliability of the "privileged moments" or sensorial contacts that open the flood gates of memory. The protagonist of this complicated and multifaceted narrative is unsure whether he is truly reliving the past or simply inventing another version of it.

Keywords: J.M.G. Le Clézio; "Tempête;" involuntary memory; sensory studies; privileged moments

1. Introduction

In his latest work entitled *Tempête*, J.M.G. Le Clézio covers some familiar ground. Readers who are familiar with the Franco-Mauritian author's prolific and ever-evolving literary repertoire will immediately notice recurring themes that have been at the forefront of the 2008 Nobel Laureate in Literature's fiction since the publication of his first novel *Le Procès-verbal* in 1963. The purpose of this investigation is to explore sensorial encounters that resuscitate the past in the first novella "Tempête" from the collection bearing the same name. In this extremely realistic, complex, and multifaceted narrative, the author nuances his earlier ideas related to involuntary memory triggered by keen senses. In "Tempête," Le Clézio probes the inherent limitations of involuntary memory. The writer also problematizes questions related to the reliability of the memories being relived by the protagonist. In addition to the fact that our brain naturally tends to fill in the gaps, the searing pain induced by some of the protagonist's recollections compels us to ponder whether it is often preferable to leave certain things buried in the past.

Published in 2014 by Gallimard, *Tempête* is a collection of novellas comprised of two poignant narratives that sometimes destabilize the reader due to their stark realism.

First, it should be noted that the author intentionally borrowed the word "novella" from the English language to describe these stories. In fact, the official title of this collection is *Tempête: Deux novellas*. For those who are unfamiliar with this Anglophone literary form, Marianne Payot and Bernard Pivot offer operational definitions of this genre. Delving into the etymology of the term "novella," Marianne Payot explains, "*Novella*, un joli mot italien, adopté par les Anglo-Saxons, signifiant 'longue nouvelle qui ressemble à un roman'" (n.p.). Providing a similar definition as Payot, Pivot affirms that a novella is a "terme anglais qui désigne une longue nouvelle" (n.p.). Both Payot and Pivot note that both of these first-person stories are realistic representations of the trauma endured by several different protagonists in the modern world.

It is in this context in which the first text "Tempête" should be understood. Thirty years after the apparent suicide of his lover Mary Song, the narrator Philip Kyo returns to the place where this tragic event took place: Udo Island in South Korea. In an effort to make sense out of his troubled past and to forgive himself for his role (complicity/inaction) in the sexual assault of a young woman that transpired during the war before he met Mary, Philip Kyo takes up residence on the island for an extended period of time. Reminiscent of a Patrick Modiano novel such as *Dora Bruder*, the protagonist is searching for traces that might hold the key to unlocking the mysteries of his past and that of Mary Song. The failed writer and journalist is trying to find a way to live again by directly confronting the demons of his past, or to at least make peace with himself before succumbing to death.

When all hope appears to be lost, the narrator befriends a young teenage girl named June. June possesses certain qualities including a considerable amount of musical talent that remind him of Mary and which open the proverbial flood gates of memory. This platonic relationship appears to suggest that Philip Kyo might finally be able to close a difficult chapter of his life which has clearly eroded his appreciation of existence for the past thirty years. The time that the narrator spends with June before he is forced to leave the island because of an adulteress relationship with a married woman undoubtedly reinvigorates him. Instead of merely awaiting death and incessantly blaming himself for the crime that caused him to be incarcerated for six years, the protagonist rediscovers a thirst for life that beckons him to take advantage of the limited time that he still has on this earth.

2. Recollections and the shaping of time

Above all, "Tempête" is a bittersweet story about memory including how it operates and how these recollections shape the present and future. In this regard, Le Clézio's conception of memory mirrors that of Marcel Proust in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Numerous critics including Claude Cavallero, Thierry Léger, Jean-Pierre Salgas, Isabelle Constant, Denis Bachand, and Adina Balint-Babos have underscored the Proustian elements of Le Clézio's fiction. Moreover, the author himself has even discussed this influence directly in interviews. In a conversation with Claude Cavallero, Le Clézio explains that he discovered Proust a little later in life in comparison to other authors. Additionally, although the Franco-Mauritian writer initially did not like certain

aspects of Proust's worldview, Le Clézio reveals that Proust would eventually be an invaluable source of inspiration (Cavallero 168-169).

Indeed, it is difficult to read several passages of "Tempête" without thinking of Proust. Specifically, Le Clézio seems to have adopted Proust's explanation of involuntary memory. Similar to how the Proustian narrator of *A la recherche du temps perdu* is inundated by a deluge of memories because of a direct, sensorial contact involving a material substance from his childhood at Combray, Philip Kyo experiences this kind of enigmatic ecstasy as he is sitting in his hotel room. Upon his return to the island, the protagonist does not fully comprehend why something deep inside of him compelled him to come back to this space. Furthermore, he is at first unsure whether this return trip will produce any concrete results, given that this island is no longer as secluded as it once used to be because of the phenomenon of globalization. Yet, in spite of the swarms of tourists, the chic hotels, and the crowded beaches that concretize the contemporary landscape of this island, the primordial elemental forces that Philip Kyo discovered approximately three decades ago remain unchanged. The protagonist is still just as sensitive to the splendor and the fury of these elements as he was thirty years before.

When the wind touches his skin through an opening in the window of his hotel, Philip's sensorial faculties (re)-awaken dormant memories that he thought had been lost a long time ago. As the narrator reveals, "La nuit, dans ma chambre d'hôtel […] le vent a sifflé à travers les jointures des fenêtres et de la porte […] j'imagine le temps passé, j'imagine Mary, disparue, je pense à sa voix qui chantait le blues, à sa jeunesse, à ma jeunesse" (13-14). A few pages later in the narrative, the deep cosmic sensibilities of the narrator become even more evident. Explicitly linking involuntary memory to having acute senses that experience unfiltered material reality directly, the narrator further clarifies,

> Quand la tempête commence, quand le vent souffle en continue de l'horizon de l'est, Mary revient […] tous mes sens sont aiguisés, en alerte, ouverts à l'extrême pour recevoir ce qu'apportent la mer et le vent […] cela réveille le souvenir de nos jeux amoureux, à Mary et à moi, les longues caresses de bas en haut, le goût des lèvres, les baisers profonds qui me faisaient tressaillir […] Dans la tempête, j'entends sa voix, je sens son cœur, je sens son souffle […] Dans la tempête elle revient, expulsée atome par atome des profondeurs (16-17).

In this passage, the narrator's intimate relationship with the remainder of the biosphere to which he is connected is what initiates these powerful instants where the past momentarily resurfaces. By (re)-connecting himself to the cosmic whole of which he is but a small part, the narrator opens the obscure corridors of memory that were previously buried deep in the recesses of his brain. The ephemeral moments of euphoria that the narrator relives thirty years later are a concrete example of what Keith Moser terms "privileged moments." In his monograph entitled *"Privileged Moments" in the Novels and Short Stories of J.M.G. Le Clézio: His Contemporary Development of a Traditional French Literary Device,* Moser identifies three distinct types of privileged moments experienced by Le Clézio's protagonists related to nature, sexuality, and musicality. Moser also discusses how these fleeting instants of elation often trigger vivid memories that open up into philosophical and spiritual dimensions. According to Moser, even though this rending ecstasy is short-lived, epiphanies remain long after the sensual jubilation itself has long dissipated. In other words, the intense euphoria itself is not gratuitous from a philosophical perspective, given that these moments represent the possibility of a radical inner transformation. The (re-)crystallization of the narrator's past, rendered possible by his senses, explains the cautiously optimistic *dénouement*. Reliving all of these instants of anguish and joy from his past in the present allows Philip to heal and to envision a better future.

As the aforementioned passage illustrates, sensorial encounters that breathe life back into the past in Le Clézio's *œuvre* are often erotically charged. In numerous works including *L'Extase Matérielle*, Le Clézio lauds human corporality because it is our material essence which connects us to the rest of the universe and allows us to *make sense* out of the world in which we live and die. Similar to Proust, Le Clézio contends that the body itself is the key to unraveling the mysteries of the past and creating a stable identity. As Isabelle Constant asserts, "Comme chez Proust, les souvenirs réapparaissent lors d'un mouvement, d'une impression, d'une perception corporelle" (177). In this respect, the author's graphic depictions of the act of copulation itself in many different narratives including "Tempête" could be interpreted as a critique of pervasive puritanical ideology which warns believers to be "wary of the flesh." In contrast to puritanical convictions, Le Clézio valorizes the body itself because it enables the subject to catch a small glimpse of what and who we are in relation to the indifferent cosmic forces that arbitrarily tossed every sentient and non-sentient being into the chaos of existence approximately four and a half billion years ago with a big bang. The narrator rather explicitly confesses that he returned to Udo Island in an attempt to understand himself, his past, and the world to which he is inextricably linked more fully before dying.[1]

In "Tempête," carnal pleasures are a pathway for reviving inert memories trapped beneath the surface. When the subject's material essence comes into contact with the same form of matter with which he or she originally experienced certain sensations, this phenomenon activates involuntary memory and the initial event is relived. In "Tempête," it is the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches associated with the ocean that rekindle the amorous passion that Philip once felt with Mary. As the narrator explains,

> Une fois, dans la demi-lune, nous avons fait l'amour sur la plage, dans l'eau, en roulant à la manière des vaches marines. Cela s'est passé il y très longtemps. Je croyais l'avoir oublié, mais quand je suis revenu ici, chaque seconde a recommencé […] Et d'un seul coup la mémoire m'est revenue. J'étais là, sur cette route, seul et aveugle, et j'étais à nouveau trente ans en arrière, avec Mary […] Nous avons écouté le bruit de la mer.

C'était la première fois que nous nous embrassions […] Cette nuit est
restée en moi, et maintenant elle renaît comme si rien ne nous en séparait
[…] Je devais reprendre la suite logique de cette aventure, la disparition
de Mary n'avait rien achevé. Je devais essayer de comprendre (44-46).

In these erotic descriptions, it is obvious that Le Clézio has embraced the
Proustian perspective of memory. For a few brief moments, the contingencies of time
and space no longer seem to exist. Specific modalities of matter in this maritime
environment temporarily transport Philip back into time as he (re)-experiences the
sexual gratification that he felt with Mary long ago. The relationship between this
euphoria and involuntary memory helps to explain why eroticism is so ubiquitous
throughout the Franco-Mauritian author's entire corpus, as noted by Sophie Jollin-
Bertocchi in her aptly named work of criticism entitled *J.M.G. Le Clézio: L'Erotisme,
les Mots*. This phenomenon is merely one reason why Le Clézio is one of the most
sensual writers of his generation.

Although some of the author's male protagonists appear to have a difficult time
appreciating what the feminine Other has to offer outside of the purely physical realm,
as highlighted by Karen Levy in her analysis of "Lévinasian Eros and Ethics" in *La
Quarantaine*, it seems that Philip did care for Mary on a much deeper level. Not only
does the protagonist vividly remember the sexual ecstasy that they once shared, but
he is also able to recall other essential qualities that attracted him to Mary in the first
place. Like numerous Leclézian protagonists such as Laïla in *Poisson d'or*, Philip is
hyper-sensitive to musicality in all of its divergent forms. In a scene that is reminiscent
of *Étoile Errante*, powerful melodies performed by June in an evangelical church (re)-
awaken the past. Similar to Esther in *Étoile Errante*, Philip is not religious in the
traditional sense of the term. Yet, he experiences intense instants of elation when he
listens to June singing in a church choir.

Summarizing the improbable and unexpected joy that he felt in addition to the
memories that engulfed his entire being in this space, the narrator elucidates, "Je suis
allé pour la première fois à l'église […] Quand j'ai poussé la porte, j'ai entendu la voix
de June […] Elle chantait en anglais: *nobody knows but Jesus* […] et j'ai ressenti un
frisson" (72). Despite the comical elements of this stereotypical depiction of an
evangelical church which makes a reader think of religious fanatics in the Southern
region of the United States where believers handle snakes, "speak in tongues," and
flop around the pews and aisles when the holy spirit moves them, this passage should
be taken seriously.[2] The musical sonorities of June's voice remind Philip of the happy
times that he spent with Mary.

Underscoring that the distinctive nature of June's voice, which reminds him of
the bluesy, raspy manner in which Mary used to sing, is more important than the actual
words of the hymn itself, the narrator muses, "Est-ce qu'elle n'avait jamais chanté
aussi bien, avec une voix aussi claire et forte, en balançant un peu ses hanches et ses
épaules, j'ai pensé à Mary autrefois dans sa robe rouge, quand elle était éclairée par le
projecteur" (74). Albeit in a much different context from the previously mentioned

privileged moments, it is the narrator's senses which facilitate the resuscitation of
these memories once again. The reader realizes that one of the reasons why Philip was
so enamored with Mary to the point of even discussing marriage and children is
because of her beautiful voice. Not only does the protagonist carry with him the guilt
of the aforementioned war crime, but he also feels responsible for Mary's death. For
this reason, these recollections are both painful and euphoric. Moreover, reliving his
past finally provides Philip with a sense of closure. The narrator could not take away
all of Mary's anguish, a woman who had endured far too much suffering even before
meeting Philip, but he did love her. The protagonist is now cognizant that this
relationship ultimately failed because they were both haunted by the past. Even if
Philip is incapable of forgiving himself for his complicity in the gang rape that forever
scarred a young woman's life, the feelings of serenity that remain after this ephemeral
musical ecstasy has evaporated suggest that the protagonist might not longer blame
himself for his lover's suicide. Philip realizes that perhaps there was nothing that he
could have done differently to save the woman who had spent time in various psychiatric
institutions and who had tried to drown her sorrows in an alcohol bottle.

The lingering question of whether the protagonist will ever be able to cope with
the fact that he could have stopped a crime against humanity from transpiring during
the war begs the reader to ponder if it is better to remember or to forget. In spite of the
aforementioned cautious optimism at the end of the narrative, it still remains unclear if
Philip should have returned to the island or not. Before moving back to the island,
certain traumatic memories related to the violent sexual assault seem to be buried deep
inside of his fractured psyche. According to many mainstream psychologists such as
Bernard Weiner and H.M. Johnson, this form of repression is a natural defense
mechanism that allows us to continue living after painful events. Weiner created the
term "motivated forgetting," which can be conscious or unconscious, to explain this
phenomenon in 1968. This commonly accepted psychological theory sheds light on a
conversation between Philip and June. After the narrator recounts the story of his life
to June including the details of Mary's suicide, he declares, "je crois qu'il vaut mieux
oublier. Je crois que les souvenirs ne doivent pas nous empêcher de vivre" (107).

This passage is crucial because it adds another layer of complexity to Le Clézio's
conception of involuntary memory. When these recollections are automatically
triggered by a sensorial contact with other forms of matter, both the good and the bad
resurface. Involuntary memory is an unconscious process that cannot be controlled.
A subject cannot selectively filter out specific traumatic experiences and prevent them
from rising to the surface. This unbearable anguish can reduce the quality of one's
existence as opposed to healing the wounds of the past. For this reason, it is debatable
whether Philip should have rendered himself vulnerable to this deluge of involuntary
memory. Even if the narrator is now able to comprehend what happened more fully
including his role in a sinister act perpetrated during the war, the reader wonders if the
cost is too great. This is one of the enduring questions of the narrative: should Philip
have reopened this partially closed wound or not?

Another section of the narrative further problematizes the phenomenon of involuntary memory. In an early passage of the text, the narrator readily admits that he is unsure how reliable his recollections of Mary truly are after thirty long years have passed. As the narrator confesses, "Elle s'appelait Farrell, Mary Song Farrell. Song parce qu'elle avait été déclarée à ses parents adoptifs sous ce nom, Sa mère s'appelait probablement Song. Ou bien elle chantait, je ne sais pas. C'est peut-être moi qui ai inventé après coup toute cette histoire" (21). Before Mary tragically took her own life, it is evident that Philip deeply cared for her. However, this enigmatic blues singer was always somewhat of a mystery to him. Given that he might not have known her that well in the first place, Philip is concerned that his brain is filling in the missing information incorrectly after a long lapse of time. Additionally, contemporary psychologists like Y. Dudai have observed that memories are relived through a process called "reconsolidation." In particular, Dudai notes that the reconstruction that reconsolidation entails is replete with errors and downright fabrications.

This overt admission from the narrator is also reminiscent of the metafictional literary devices that Le Clézio employs in his early fiction. Philip does not appear to be an exceptional writer, but he is a writer nonetheless. Consequently, it is possible that the narrator is letting us know that Mary Song is purely a figment of his imagination. In *Terra Amata*, Le Clézio takes advantage of this technique often associated with the so-called French new novel movement to foster a sense of complicity between the reader and the author. At the end of this experimental novel published in 1967 by Gallimard, the narrator directly informs the reader that the protagonist Chancelade never existed in order to emphasize the universality of the story (i.e. existence) that he is attempting to tell. The suggestion that the narrator of "Tempête" might be engaging in metafiction as well adds yet another nuance to this discussion of involuntary memory. This possibility warrants further investigation by the academic community in future studies that transcend the inherent limitations of the present essay.

3. Conclusion,

"Tempête" is an extremely rich and complex narrative from a literary, philosophical, and psychological perspective. It could be argued that this recent text is one of the author's best works in recent years. "Tempête" is an important addition to Le Clézio's vast and extremely diverse body of work that continues to evolve with each passing day. When read alongside other canonical texts from different periods of the Nobel Laureate's illustrious career that spans nearly half a century, "Tempête" nuances some of the writer's earlier ideas related to involuntary memory triggered by our five senses. "Tempête" is a realistic and sometimes even disquieting narrative that encourages us to think more deeply about how involuntary memory operates and how it is triggered. "Tempête" also reexamines the validity of relived experiences like the ones described by the narrator from a slightly different angle in comparison to previous works. For all of these reasons, "Tempête" provides the most complete picture of involuntary memory in Le Clézio's œuvre.

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Subverting Nationalism: Historicizing Horrors of the Past in Wole Soyinka's *Samarkand* and Femi Fatoba's *They Said I Abused the Government*

NIYI AKINGBE

Abstract

This essay engages with Nigeria's turbulent past in Wole Soyinka's *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* and Femi Fatoba's *They said I Abused the Government*. Factionalism is adopted to poignantly map the pervasive tension which engulfed the Nigerian landscape during General Sanni Abacha's tortuous military regime between 1993 and 1998. The collections further reflect how satire intersect with protest to explore a sustained anger against the military. The increasing complexity of Nigeria's nationhood comes under close scrutiny as a patchwork of cultures encased in a tenuous geographical sphere,where people of differing nationalities and religions are stampeded into a nation by the obtrusive British colonial authority. These poetry collections articulate a great deal of connection in the thematics of satire and protest: poems in both collections are preoccupied with assertive criticism of Abacha's military subjugation. The paper's overarching concern is the delineation of brutality derived from the recent historical occurrences in Nigeria. Essentially, the poems significantly re-evaluate the potential of art to bear witness to the bizarre and depressing anomie which reverses Nigeria's sovereignty during this period. Where Soyinka's poetic hacks into the incongruity of Nigeria's nationhood, Fatoba's poetry generates vitriolic humour that verges on satiric tone.

Key words: subverting nationalism, historicizing horrors of the past, satire, protest.

1. Introduction

In almost all African nations that have witnessed the menace and scourge of military interjections, the attendant consequences are often encapsulated in: a looted economy, violation of human rights and perpetration of culture of impunity. Unabated, this chaos has often led to civil war in a few postcolonial African countries like Nigeria, Liberia and Uganda. The military as an aberration of governance in contemporary Nigeria[1] is a by product of the subverted nationhood. It is curious to emphasise that Nigeria has often tottered toward disintegration and has been constantly rescued by the same politically inclined military from obvious collapse. This ambiguous role has become an oppressive, divisive tendency hedged around by the ambitious military gladiators to derail democratic governance since the first coup of 1966. Concrete evidence to support this assertion, eloquently reverberates in Wole Soyinka's *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* (2002)and Femi Fatoba's *They said I Abused the Government* (2001).By driving concern to acknowledge the problematic of military incursion in the postcolonial Nigeria, Soyinka and Fatobaattempt an indexing of horrors which relentlessly accrued from the upsetting pain and brutality trajectory created by Abacha's military regime.

This comparative project first considers the well-known Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka. Soyinka, at the inception of Abacha's usurpation of power, embarked on a selfless campaign against the annulment of the June 12 presidential election. He was then forced to relocate from Nigeria when it became obvious that his life was in danger. Subsequently, he kept shuttling between the United Kingdom and United States of America in order to deflect Abacha's persistent persecution. On the other level, Femi Fatoba also suffered some degree of deprivation consistently unleashed on the pro-democracy activists based in the South-Western Nigeria where Chief M.K.O Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the June 12th 2003 Nigerian presidential election hailed from. For Soyinka and Fatoba, 'faction' (combination of fact and fiction) is adopted as a stylistic of literary self-assertion in *Samarkand* and *They Said I Abused the Government*. Their adoption of faction takes the form of a delicate balancing act that oscillates between outright auto-biography and fiction. Invariably, Soyinka and Fatoba's re-telling of their experiences in the poetics rendered in faction serves as a convenient medium of response to the urgency of documenting events during the turbulent days of Abacha's regime. Incontrovertibly, the choice of faction affords the poets a needed platform to reiterate a pursuit of self-assertion which unsettles the gap between truth and fiction. In addition, the overlap between the actual historical occurrences of Abacha's brutality and the humiliating personal experiences suffered by the duo poets is exploited in intertwining of satire and pun within the context of protest, to reinforce the thematic link between affirmation and the denial of military subjugation.

Suffice to state that, the idea of nationalism has become an increasingly important leitmotif in the writings of contemporary African writers, for the interrogation of instability in some postcolonial African states. Nationalism is a recurrent reference point in the works of writers from Nigeria, Liberia, SierraLeone, and other belligerent African countries that are continually embroiled in perennial threats of disintegration often orchestrated by the disturbing ethnic differences and parochial military interventions.

I intend to argue in this paper that, the things that have held Nigerians back since the attainment of independence in 1960 include an ineffective pseudo-federalism, corruption and incessant military incursions. These factors have compromised their

ingenuity, talent and their ambition. But they also undoubtedly recognize that at the fundamental root of these interlinking problems, lies an unbalanced and inequitable structure which undermines Nigerian federalism. Essentially, Fatoba and Soyinka have through the medium of faction appropriated pun and humour grounded in the intersection of satire and protest in *They said I Abused the Government* and *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known.* This intersection has been utilized to criticise the dehumanisation and devaluation that Nigerians experienced during the anomic years of Sanni Abacha's military regime. In the light of the above, significance of these collections lies in their attempt to engage with thriving Nigerian poetry that often vibrantly deploy protest against autocratic regimes. Soyinka and Fatoba have chosen to engage with nationalism as an important and topical issue which bothers on governance in post-colonial Africa in general. Through a deft appropriation of nationalism, the poets are able to catalogue the excesses of Nigeria's maximum ruler, General Sanni Abacha's despicable rule in particular. Consequently, the paper takes a close look at the nature of protest, its manifestation in satire, and the way in which literary imagination transforms it to suit the artistic temper of Fatoba and Soyinka. The intersection of protest and satire in these collections remarkably retains its essence as a means of drawing attention to the intimidation, torture and killing visited on Nigerians by this repressive military regime.

Matter of fact, Nigeria is a nation in transition where tribal allegiances are privileged over equitable compromise that gives each of its federating units its proper due. As a result of this inherent inequity, each ethnic group tries to assert itself over others. A situation which has often developed into a mutual distrust as it has constantly bred unbridled rivalry that has led to anarchy. Further, it will be illustrated that, these poetry collections revolve around a series of social and political reminiscences that impinged on Nigeria's turbulent nationhood. This perceived political upheaval has inturn emphasised a reverse of the gap between historicism and reality. Suffice to state that, the climax of recent threat to Nigeria's sovereignty is roundly entrenched in the poetics of beating, incarceration and humongous assault. These are satirically and humorously grounded in the pages of these anthologies to protest the subjugation of Nigerians by the military during the apocalyptic days of General Sanni Abacha's horrendous regime[2]. Consequently, Fatoba in *They said I Abused the Government* weaves a diverse poetic techniques of metaphor, irony, sarcasm and Yoruba proverbial to build a platform in which anecdotal evidences of the violation of individuals' human rights and the illusory messianic image of the military are counterpointed. Similarly, Soyinka in *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* articulates the nauseating obduracy and searing megalomania of the military as grotesquely exhibited in the form of liquidation of its perceived political opponents. But most importantly, Soyinka and Fatoba poignantly express all these atrocious occurences in humour, metaphor, irony and pun in the two poetry collections.

Writing on the impact of military incursion into the governance in Nigeria has become a poetic tradition which Oyeniyi Okunoye has essentially emphasised in his delineation of the anti-military poetry tradition in the Nigerian Literature:

Even though writing against dictatorship may immediately suggest writing solely preoccupied with criticising dictators, the tradition has grown, impacting in the process on the form and media of poetic expression. There have been three main phases in the development of anti-military poetry in Nigeria. The first coincides with the work of Odia Ofeimun...The second was a development in the eighties which saw many poets building on the foundationthat had been laid,while the third, in part an extension of the second, largely chronicles the losses and social dislocations... (Okunoye 66-67).

It is remarkable to note from the foregoing, that anti-military Nigerian poetry draws on the trajectory of brutality coordinated by the military who expended violence with attendant gambit of dehumanization on the hapless civilian populace in the past three decades. It will not be out of place, to also affirm that since the first coup of 1966, the Nigerian military in its rampaging adventurism has ran the country as fiefdom, promoted ethnic divisions and maintained a ruthless grip on power. This was eventually to have profound consequences for the Nigerian nationhood during the Abacha era. Invariably, the long stay of military in power thrives in dispensation of brutality and terror that was not borne out of rationality but a sheer engagement in impunity. As became evident during the regime of Abacha, the Nigerian military's forage into politics was not to strengthen democratic principles but to stay as an army of occupation. It bears remarking that since independence, Nigeria has suffered from its weakened political structure which has encouraged significant conflict between political elites and has rendered the country vulnerable to usurpation of power by a succession of military interlopers. Subsequently, Abacha symbolises this, and his obtrusiveness into the political sphere ostensibly documents the slippery Nigerian political terrain.

However, if the past military regimes in Nigeria have been criticized to be repressive by the contemporary Nigerian literary writers, the decisive ruthlessness with which the military administration of General Sanni Abacha dealt with the opposition leaves a lot to be desired. An egregious suppression of the dissent voices who criticised his wanton dissolution of the democratic process, has ostensibly burgeoned into an exuberant literary productions. The frightening magnitude of Abacha's brutality has been indexed and made accessible to the reading public in: Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* (2002), Ogaga Ifowodo's *The Oil Lamp* (2005) and *Homeland and Other Poems*(2008), Ademola Dasylva's *Song of Odamolugbe* (2006) and Joe Ushie's *A Reign of Locusts* (2004). These writers focus on the fragmented Nigeria's past to elicit a feedback on the stranglehold of anomie created by the military from these works.Similarly, the horror of death is deconstructed in these works within the critical consensus forged by the deluge of political violence and destruction wrecked on postcolonial Nigeria by the successive military regimes. However, the full extent of military brutality becomes apparent, when violence is employed in these titles individually, to inscribe a scathing criticism of the Abacha's high-handedness and to elucidate its attendant horrific bestiality.

2. Harnessing the Intersection of Protest and satire in *Samarkand* and *They Said I Abused the Government*

Significantly, Ngugi wa Thiong'o has noted that "satire takes for its province a whole society, and for its purpose, criticism". He stresses further that, "the satirist sets himself certain standards and criticizes society when and where it departs from these norms. He invites us to assume his standards and share the moral indignation which moves him to pour derision and ridicule on society's failings. He corrects through painful, sometimes malicious, laughter" (Ngugi 55). Hence, considering satire's prodigious engagement with criticism, its often highly elliptical nature has made it the favoured tool with which literary artists over the ages have employed it as a weapon of protest against the shortcomings of oppressive rulers and gotten away with it. When taken as such, Satire in poetry is explicitly designed in form and in content to state opposition to social conduct that is deemed reprehensible. It is often appropriated as a tool for repudiating societal ills in order to facilitate a restoration of societal ethos to its rightful place. To this extent, satire provides in Soyinka's *Samarkand and other market I have Known* and Fatoba's *They Said I abused the Government*, the elliptical literary sites for the deconstruction of the imagery and symbols which repudiate Abacha's incarnation of despicable rule.

But just as satire explicates the elliptical imagery and symbols in poetry, on the other hand, the etymology of the word 'Protest' demonstrates that it has from the very beginning, been associated with notions of self-assertion at the individual or group level within a context that is simultaneously adversarial and social. The Latin *protestari*, with its implication of a public declaration, is invariably associated with argument and contending views, and it is not surprising that about four centuries later, it took on the much more specific and sharper connotation of a statement of disapproval. This latter meaning carries implications of right and wrong, and places greater emphasis on the need for the one making the protest to assert his opposition to whatever it is that he disapproves of. In other words, he was in a significant way, at odds with certain other members of his society. Given the trajectory it had traced, it is not surprising that protest next appeared within the profoundly contentious context of the American Civil Rights movement some two centuries later. It is easy to see how an assertion of disapproval could be transformed into a demand for equality under the law; after all, a person who censures or condemns an ongoing situation in society is very likely to also be a person who seeks to change that which he disapproves of, and this was precisely what Civil Rights activists wanted.

The word "Protest" as embedded in *Roget's Super Thesaurus* has synonyms of varying accuracy, all of which attempt to convey roughly the same meaning of the concrete demonstration of opposition or support for a social trend, government policy, or momentous situation. They include "objection, remonstrance, complaint, grievance, march, demonstration, strike, riot, boycott, rally, sit-in, stink, fuss, picketing, challenge" (Mc Cutcheon 454). Many scholars of protest prefer to speak of protest in terms of a "protest movement," that is, protest as a mass rather than an individual phenomenon aimed at significant social, political and economic change. In this paper, the preferred term is "social protest" because it appears to properly contextualise protest as a fundamentally social activity, motivated by social needs and aimed at specifically societal ends. Essentially, protest could be any verbal or non-verbal means by which an individual or a group expresses disagreement with or support for an existing or proposed state of affairs in all or part of a given society, and/or seeks to alter or maintain it, either by ending the said state of affairs by replacing it with something else, or by maintaining it (Akingbe 12). Protest is not just a means of ventilating grievances, but is also an arena for the clash of opposing views because it compels those on all sides of a given issue to consciously articulate and propagate the ideas that form the basis of the issues they are protesting for or against. Many definitions of protest situate it within the context of conflicting aims of different sections in society, where it is mainly utilised as a means through which interest groups simultaneously justify their claims, seek a more advantageous situation and reject disadvantageous ones. Poloma's description of protest accords with this view: "Protest is a process that may be instrumental in the formation, unification and maintenance of a social structure; protest has been used as a weapon for agitation by groups seeking power, by groups holding power and by groups in the process of losing power." (Poloma 67) Anifowoshe has also observed that: "In virtually all parts of the world, protest has been pursued in the defence of order by the privileged, in the name of justice by the oppressed and in the fear of displacement by the threatened." (Anifowoshe 25)

In terms of broad eclectic applications, it must be emphasized that the many definitions of protest are complicated by its all-encompassing nature, and protest cannot be limited by notions of whether it is "political," or overtly aggressive, or aimed at achieving radical social change. In accordance with its characteristic of simultaneously reflecting and shaping society, poetry reflects protest and influences it. One of the ways in which this is done can be seen in the manner in which *They Said I Abused the Government* and *Sarmakand and the Other Markets I have Known* focus on the actual nature of protest itself, rather than just portraying it when they adopt the appurtenances of satire: pun and humour as the most effective ways of responding to the dire situation in which Nigeria during Abacha's rule finds itself. The implication of this is that, in these collections, Fatoba and Soyinka use protest to define themselves as individuals in opposition to the dictates of a repressive military regime, to obtain access to rights hitherto denied them, and to indicate the possibilities of change and social progress.

In contextualizing the interaction between satire and protest in the paper, it should be acknowledged that the relationship between satire and protest poetry is more complex than at first seems apparent in *Samarkand and other Markets I have Known* and *They Said I Abused the Government*. This relationship cannot therefore be restricted to the art-propaganda dichotomy. Due to their propensity to harness satire, protest and poetry are implicated in each other, and any attempt to properly understand the way in which they do this simply cannot be done within the confines of this long-standing division between aesthetics and relevance. What this implies is that satire is a fundamental aspect of protest, and to the extent that poetry is in many ways a reflection of society, satire is also a reflection of protest, and therefore cannot be alien

to it. Satiric poetry is unambiguous protest, since it seeks "to ridicule folly or vice in a society, an institution or in an individual" (Ouinn 291). African literary history is replete with poets who defied danger and coercion by expressing their opposition to perceived injustice in their work. They include Dennis Brutus, Arthur Nortje, Wole Soyinka and Jack Mapanje.

Remarkably, the paper establishes that poetics of Femi Fatoba's *They said I Abused the Government* and Wole Soyinka's *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* are sufficiently grounded in the intersection of protest and satire in their capabilities to raise the awareness of incarceration, torture, maiming and killing, during the Sanni Abacha's reign of terror. By declaiming these absurdities, Fatoba and Soyinka have demonstrated their artistic commitments to the transformation of Nigerian society, by showing in their poetry, how those atrocities can be lessened or reversed to the benefit of all. In focusing on the notion of protest in their poetry during the Abacha's regime, the poets attempt to raise questions regarding how contending social forces arise as a result of military brutality, and they further seek to articulate how satire has been harnessed for the depiction of this brutality within the context of other forms of literary techniques at their disposal.

3. Interrogating A Dislocation in Nigeria's Nationhood

If we consider the national anthem of a country as its most assertive totem of cohesion and indivisibility, the Nigeria's national anthem stands as a sad euphemism for recalling the arbitrary yoking together of people of disparaging nationalities by the British colonial administration. As representatively exemplified in Fatoba and Soyinka's poetry, therefore, the nebulousness in Nigeria's nationhood is remarkably caused by the irreconcilable cultural differences among its federating units, which the military institution has always manipulated to stage incessant military coups. Nigeria in the words of Obafemi Awolowo, "is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression…"(58). This amorphousness in Nigeria's nationhood has also been reiterated in the succinct observation of Nigeria's first prime minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, "since 1914 the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds…and do not show themselves any signs of willingness to unite…"(Meredith 8). Curiously, the arbitrariness in Nigeria's nation-state as delineated by the yoking together of varied nationalities with incongruous ethnographic features which epitomizes her inherent falsehood as aptly illustrated in Benedict Anderson's seminal definition of the nation as "imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 15). Anderson further declaims that, unlike individuals, nations have no specific, identifiable source or referencing. Therefore, Nigeria incongruously derived from differing multi-nationalities is a nation daily re-imagined by its trapped inhabitants and such re-imagination verges on a "narrative of identity, and a crafted story that imbues it with a sense of continuity" (Anderson 205). Anderson's striking submission on the imagery of a nation further refracts in the political diagnosis of the ineffable complexity of Nigeria's nationhood, which has been clinically elucidated in Chinua Achebe's *There Was A Country,* "the social malaise in Nigerian society was political corruption" (Achebe 51). The structure of the country was such that there was an inbuilt power struggle, among the ethnic groups, and of course those who were in power wanted to stay in power. The easiest and simplest way to retain it, even in a limited area, was to appeal to tribal sentiments, "so they were egregiously exploited in the 1950s and 1960s" (Achebe 51). It needs to be stated unequivocally, that the discernible arbitrariness in Nigeria's nationhood has been tellingly complicated by the actions of her opportunistic sectional leaders, who constantly fan the embers of ethnic tension. This has often orchestrates a backlash, that requires military intervention in the governance of postcolonial Nigeria.

Hence, the consequence of subordinating Nigeria nation-state to tribal lines by its political elite, has exemplified her localization, thereby caricaturing its sovereignty as tenuous.This weakness in the Nigeria's nationhood is aptly reflected in the words of Homi Bhabha, when he described a nation as a "curiously hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance" (Bhabha 2). Bhabha's remark inscribes Nigeria's nationhood within a dialectical logic where ethnic/tribal interest is privileged over and above national interest. Consequently, the crisis of ethnic nationalism in postcolonial Nigeria indicates clearly that however the national interest and ethnic[tribal]affiliations are mixed they will never coalesce. The recognition of this disturbing fact elicits a perception of Nigeria in *They Said I Abused the Government and Samarkand and Other markets I have known,*as a pseudo-nation struggling against military brigandage, corruption and constant threat of disintegration from its federating units. A reverberation of postcolonial disillusionment in Nigeria's nationhood has equally been argued by Sanya Osha when he posits that, "the African political disaster has meant disaster in all other spheres of African life..." (Osha 177). In Africa, as in other places, politics and economics are coterminous. Hence, inefficient political programmes have resulted in an intolerable level of economic stagnation and the sieges launched upon "the peoples of Africa by different regimes have effectively broken down barriers and roles; thus all forms of societal schizophrenia prevail" (Osha 178).

If Nigeria's nebulous nation-state is situated within the discourse of ethnic chauvinism, its economic prebendalism and the overarching political anxieties also continue to threaten its sovereignty on the present continuous terms. Then Nigeria as a nation-state could be seen in the light of a "contested referent" (Esonwane 1993), a "shifting referent" (Cobhan 1991), and an "imagined construct" (Pardes 1994). These complicated descriptions of the nature of Nigeria's nationhood ostensibly betrays Fatoba and Soyinka's portrayal of the artificiality of the Nigeria nation-state: as a nation which constantly needs to be held together by its self-seeking military. In a veiled way, this artificiality in Nigeria nation-state has been obliquely satirised by Fatoba in 'Like Weaverbird or Crow? :

> They say I sing our anthem
> With a heavy lump in my throat
> Twisting and spitting the words
> As if they were parts of a curse:

But what is there
To remove the harshness of my tone
What yet to re-arrange
The collocation of my lyrics?
Is it the foaming saliva of hunger
Which constipates my bowels…
Or the eternal hawks of prey
At every stretch and corner of our lives? (*They Said I Abused* 3)

By drawing on the leitmotif of dissonance in nationalism, the poem interrogates incongruity of patriotism amidst hunger and deprivation: ''they say I sing our anthem/ with a heavy lump in my throat/twisting and splitting the words/as if they were parts of a curse''. This interrogation recalls Rhonda Cobhan's (1991) fitting imagery of a nation in African political discourse, she has described a nation as ''having a shifting and unstable significance within African political discourse'' (Cobhan 84). Imbued with Cobhan's political discourse, the poet persona protests the basis for recitation of Nigeria's anthem when he is hungry. The refusal of the persona in the poem to recite national anthem with enthusiasm constitutes a deep-seated protest against Nigeria's lacklustred welfare packages. It is a refusal which has pitted him against power elite that insists he must be patriotic despite his social deprivation. The persona's obstinate resolve to sing the national anthem grudgingly amidst a debilitating hunger, provides a literary site for the examination of the relationship that demonstrates competing display of nationalism between Nigerian power elite and its impoverished citizens. Refusal to sing Nigerian anthem with affectation clearly has the effect of freeing the persona from obsequious and exhibitionist patriotism. Through a depiction of disempowerment of the masses in the poem, Fatoba deftly contrasts the marooning of the masses in throes of hunger with the perpetration of social inequality by 'the soldiers' of fortune who have pauperised the masses in their looting of the treasury. At the same time, the poem evokes a satire which problematizes the military's swashbuckling that have left the streets awash and crowded with the 'felling men' who are dying of hunger.

The poem untangles a complex web of poverty and misery the poor have been subjected to by the Abacha's military in Nigeria through Fatoba's use of a linguistic gambit of implied meaning.Harry Garuba has described this as ''the mark of mime'' (1986). Garuba has further explicated impact of the biting elan of satire in Fatoba's poetry when he enthuses that, ''Instead of the 'grand', explicit linguistic gesture he uses the 'dwarfed' one, precise and laden with a seething series of implied meanings'' (Garuba 21).Consequently, the signification of protest is realised in the poem, through the interlocking of satire and humour imbued by the implied meanings: ''They say I sing our anthem/With a heavy lump in my throat/But what is there/To remove the harshness of my tone/The collocation of my lyrics?/Is it the foaming saliva of hunger/ Which constipates my bowels''. The full extent of the persona's denunciation of Nigeria nation-state becomes ostensibly apparent in the depth of humour grounded in the poem. The persona's despair and disillusionment is sufficiently invested in humour that is subtly accomplished in the poem through the use of irony to delineate the contrast between opulence of the soldiers ''of fortune'' and poverty of the masses. Hunger as a debilitating factor inhibits a demonstration of nationalism which provides the perfect counterpoint to the patriotic recitation of national anthem in the poem. This counterpoint further underscores the contrasting cynicism and enthusiasm for nationalism that is inherently embedded in the Nigeria nation-state. The poem has a ringing parallelism in ''Prayer for the National Team'', where a wobbling national football team is employed as a metaphor to articulate the tragedy of Nigeria's nationhood:

Lord, you gave us this geographical spread
From which we select our team
We did not us the way we are;
The team never plays well,and
We cannot prevent us from relegation.
Our goalkeeper achieves his goal
Just by being between the posts
Strutting to the cheers of his tribe.
The centre-forward positions himself.

(*They Said I Abused*5)

Fatoba's abiding interest in Nigeria's tortuous nationhood is further complicated in the poem. The poem cryptically delineates the abiding dislocation of excellence in Nigeria nation-state as captured in the jettisoning of the technical merits of selection. Curiously, the poem emphasises a mediocre representation of the federating units in the national football team's selection. The poem indicts the successive military regimes for inaugurating this nebulous contraption in the football team's selection and further berates the Abacha's regime for sustaining the practice. Hence, the poem employs the overarching metaphor of ethnic based-football team selection, to evaluate and paints the grim picture of the extent to which Nigeria's nationalism has sunk. Nigeria is presented as a spectacle of mishmash in which ethnic nationalism and overriding patriotism are counterpointed. This clear-cut tragedy in Nigeria's nation-state has been surmised in Femi Osofisan's flagellating rhetoric, ''...Our identity crisis in Africa, *and specifically Nigeria* (emphasis mine) is of a different order entirely''; relating to two urgent problems-first, the dilemma of creating a national identity out of our disparate ethnic communities; and secondly, that of creating committed, responsible, patriotic and ''compassionate individuals out of our civil populations''(Osofisan 6).In writing of the balance between patriotism and sectionalism in the poem whose personae indubitably typify the collective Nigerian citizenry, Fatoba works out a pattern of attitudinal disposition, locating affinity between zealousness and debasement, resolution and wishy-washy: 'lord, you gave us this geographical spread/from which we select our team/we did not make us the way we are/the team never plays well, and/ we cannot prevent us from relegation'(*They Said I Abused* 6).

Through this compromised trajectory in the contemporary Nigeria, her citizens of differing ethnicities have often displayed cynicism toward its nationhood, and have made for themselves a variety of excuses that could make them circumvent the circuitous

long trudge to nowhere. This circumvention often manifests in social vices such as: corruption, armed robbery, embezzlement of public funds and prostitution. Cynicism is remarkably deplored in the poem, to satirise the reduction of the rigorous selection of the national football team to the ridiculous, debased and pedestal of ethnic consideration. Fatoba condemns vehemently, the abysmal situation whereby important political appointments in Nigeria are ostensibly premised on the ethnic endorsement for its legitimization. This condemnation reverberates George Padmore's (348) submission that tribalism remains a major constraint to the development of African postcolonial societies, because it "can be, and is exploited by unscrupulous politicians to spread disunity and separation" among the more politically backward sections of the people, and undermine "the forces working for national integration" (Padmore 349). The perceived tribal rivalry in postcolonial Nigeria is often demonstrated in the sustained adversarial competition between its southern and Northern ethnic groupings, especially the four major ethnic groupings: Hausa and Fulani (predominant Muslim), from the north versus Yoruba and Igbo, (predominant Christians) from the south. Since independence, political domination has often been skewed in favour of the barely- educated political elites of the agrarian north to the detriment of the well-educated and industrialised south. Rivalry between the two divide reached its apogee in 1993 when General Babangida, a northerner annulled a presidential election allegedly won by Chief M.K.O Abiola, a southern Nigerian politician. In the light of Padmore's analysis, it will not be out of place to state that the perceived violence and wrangling ravaging contemporary Nigeria nation-state have been imbedded in the ethnic narratives of its federating units. Fatoba's oblique, but satirical protestation against the perceived subverted nationalism exhibited in the football-team's selection depends for its scathing remark, on the politicization along the ethnic line in the management of the nation's vast human resources. This overarching perceived artificiality in Nigeria's nationhood is also tenaciously evaluated in Wole Soyinka's "Elegy for a Nation":

> Ah, Chinua, are you grapevine wired?
> It sings: our nation is not dead, not clinically
> Yet. Now this may come as a surprise to you,
> It was to me. I thought the form I spied
> Beneath the frosted glass of a fifty-carat catafalque
> Was the face of our own dear land- 'own', 'dear'
> Voluntary patriotese, you'll note—we try to please.

An anthem's sentiment upholds the myth. (*Samarkand* 68)

Though inspired by deep-seated cynicism, Soyinka seems to contend in the poem that what holds the postcolonial Nigeria together is basically the British foisted unity, tenuously weakened by the recurrent, egregious intrusion of its military into governance, which has essentially driven a wedge among varied ethnic groupings that constitute its federating units. This notion is rendered in: /our nation is not dead, not clinically/...our own dear land-"own" "dear"/voluntary patriotese, you'll note-we try to please/. Soyinka in the poem sets out to generate hostile reactions from the inherent artificiality in Nigeria nation-state which further transposes political tension into antagonism between Nigerian populace and Northern Nigeria military-political elite who unabashedly could annul elections at will to frustrate southern Nigeria's aspiration. The dilemma and frustration experienced in the obtrusive yoking together of adversarial ethnic groupings in the colonial Africa, detracted from the mask of anger identified in Basil Davidson's book, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-state* (1992). Davidson enthuses in the book that "[T]he old states in Africa were swallowed entirely into new states as though these old states had never existed save as quaint survivals from the 'savage backwoods' of a deplorable past" (Davidson 188). The central problematic that Nigeria and other African nations that are yoked together against their wills are confronted with has also been summarised by Arjun Apparadurai (1996) when he argues that, "the incapacity of many de-territorialised groups to think their way out of the imaginary of the nation-state is itself the cause of much global violence"(165) because many movements of emancipation and identity are forced, in their struggles against existing nation-states to become anti-national or anti-state and thus to inspire the very state power "that forces them to respond in the language of counter nationalism" (Apparadurai 166). Taking a cue from Apparadurai's theory of counter-nationalism, protest against the arbitrary creation of Nigeria manifests in the repudiation of the identified British colonial meddlesomeness. This condemnation reflects in the aftermath postcolonial, political mismanagement by the military institution which has often led to a sustained discontent that abound in the two poems.

While Fatoba assembles and sifts through memories and histories in "Prayer for the National Team" to lampoon ethnic chauvinism as the undermining factor diminishing the Nigeria nation-state, Soyinka irrevocably condemns Nigeria's fraudulent claims to a nation in "Elegy For A Nation". However, the premonitory disintegration of Nigeria undermines the value placed on its illusory cohesion in Fatoba's "Workingman's Time":

> 'workingman's Time'
> We have not got the peace of mind
> Now
> To paint landscapes of flowers
> Our vegetation is a whirlwind
> And clouds are running red
> On our hot pavements.
> What is the use of flowerbeds
> On which only war tanks will buzz? (*They Said I Abused* 4)

In pursuit of unshakable premonition, a picture of imminent disintegration of Nigeria is satirically painted in the poem: "we have not got the peace of mind/now/to paint landscapes of flowers/and clouds are running red"... "what is the use of flowerbeds/on which only war tanks will buzz". Fatoba's sacerdotal nudge about Nigeria's imminent balkanisation makes a connection between her colonial artificial fixture and the dilemma of her postcolonial fragility held together by the military might. The poem is reminiscent of Christopher Okigbo's laudatory "Come Thunder": *Labyrinths* (1971), in which he pyrotechnically prophesied the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970:

NOW THAT the triumphant march has entered the last street
                              corners,
Remember, O dancers, the thunder among the clouds...
Now that laughter, broken in two, hangs tremulous between
                              the teeth,
Remember, O dancers, the lightning beyond the earth...
The smell of blood already floats in the lavender-mist of the
                              afternoon.
The death sentence lies in ambush along the corridors of
                              Power...

                                         (*Labyrinths* 66)

In the most disturbing sequence in the turbulent trajectory of Nigeria's nationhood, Okigbo's premonitory hunch in the poem did come to pass: as the Nigeria's burgeoning ethnic differences eventually snowballed into a full-scale civil war with attendant heavy casualties on both sides. Although the Nigerian civil war was brought to an end in 1970, but it has nevertheless, left in its wakes the final death of its nationhood. What is been hedged around by the successive rulers, is nothing, but a counterfeited nationalism that is sustained at all cost through the military might.

Ostensibly nurtured on propaganda, thirty-one years after the Nigerian government's dubious proclamation of 'No victor, no vanquished' to signal the end of the civil war, Fatoba has in contrast, presciently poeticizes Nigeria's disintegration in *They said I Abused the Government* when he rhetorically asked "what is the use of flowerbeds/on which only war tanks will buzz?"(*They Said I Abused* 4). The implication of this is that ethnicity has poignantly remains the albatross of cohesion in the postcolonial Nigeria and it is a sad indictment of the colonial authority's insensitivity in the yoking together of differing ethnic groups who do not share the variables of nationhood: common ancestry, language, culture and other anthropological nuances of nation-state. What is most worrying about this division is its exploitation by the Nigerian ambitious military to promote sectional interest, which has often pitched one ethnic group against the other. Underpinning this sectionalism in postcolonial Nigeria has been an exemplary annulment of the 1993 Presidential election[3]. The annulment is a deflationary action embarked upon by the northern Nigerian soldiers, with an intention to degrade the southern Nigerian political elite. In an uncharitable promotion of northern Nigeria's interest, the election was annulled by General Ibrahim Babangida and upheld by General Abacha, both who are from the northern Nigeria.

4. Criticizing the Militarization of Nigeria's Political Sphere

African poetry is most often concerned with the prevailing national issues like poverty, military rule, war and famine. The reason for this overt concern has been explained by Tanure Ojaide (1995) that "there are indications that despite the demise of communism in Eastern Europe, the flowering of multi-party politics in Africa, and the gradual dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, African poetry will continue to be radical..." (Ojaide 17). Poets will continue to portray the bleak socio-economic landscape "with negative and ugly images and dream of light at the end of the tunnel" (Ojaide

17). While successive military junta in postcolonial Nigeria has denied Nigerians the laxity of inalienable human rights, contemporary Nigerian poetry's rhetoric and form have entrenched protest tradition which aims at revealing the disturbing reality of brutality associated with military rule. In this pursuit, it also entrenches the shaming of the military's decades of pillaging Nigeria's vast economic resources. Again, the audacious indexing of debilitating effect of poverty unleashed by the successive military regimes on the Nigerian masses, stands poetry out from other genres of literature. More over, the overt engagement of protest in Fatoba's *They said I Abused The Government* and Soyinka's *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* have significantly amplified outrage against perceived pernicious brutality during the Abacha's regime. Ostensibly, Fatoba's employment of sarcasm to criticise the military's infringement of the human rights in Nigeria, is embedded in a poem titled "They said I Abused the Government":

            The police came to break my door
            To drag me, away from home,
            From wife, children and relatives
            To lock me up at the mercy of government...

            Did I say the government is deaf
            And does not hear the cries of her people!
            Did Isay the government is lame
            And never lifts an arm in the service of her people!
            Did I say the government is blind
            And does not see where she is going!
            Did I say the government is a cannibal
            Killing and eating her own children!
            Did I ever say anything
            Bigger than the small mouth
            With which I ask simple questions?.. .(*They Said I Abused* 7)

Through an oblique appropriation of humour in the poem, Fatoba is able to make a concerted effort in demystifying the excessive display of terror and violence by the military when he retorts to the sarcastic cataloguing of the grandiose brutality, torture, intimidation and pauperization of the masses by the repressive General Sanni Abacha's government. Further, the persona rhetorically asks "How did I abuse the government/ Did I say the government is deaf/And does not hear the cries of her people!/Did I say the government is lame/And never lifts an arm in the service of her people!/Did I say the government is blind/And does not see where she is going!/Did I say the government is a cannibal/Killing and eating her own children!"(*They Said I Abused* 8). The repetition of a rhetorical proof 'Did I' underscores the signification of humour in the poem and must be read as a polemic against the trauma orchestrated by the Abacha's military's high-handedness against Nigerians. It is interesting to note that in attaining a satirical gratification as exemplified in the use of humour, Fatoba undercuts military intimidation in "They Said I Abused the Government".

Albeit admixture of satire and protest, the poem made a veiled reference to the debasing atrocities of the military in which the devious dark side of intimidation is conceived in terms of symbols: "the police came to break my door/to drag me, away from home, /from wife, children and relatives/to lock me up at the mercy of government/" (*They Said I Abused* 7). Protest is eloquently grounded in the poem to satirize the regime of terror unleashed on the dissent voices, in their criticism of the repressive policies of the military. The entrenchment of humour in the poem undercuts the severity of dehumanisation meted out to the persona by the military. The intensity of the military's subjugation in the poem is trivialized by the employment of the Yoruba proverbial, which is deleteriously rendered in rhetorical questions: "did I say the government is deaf/did I say the government is lame/ Did I say the government is a cannibal! /did I ever say anything/bigger than the small mouth/with which I ask simple questions?" (*They Said I Abused* 8). Clearly, the Yoruba proverbial affords Fatoba the innocuous platform for attacking satirically the military's sure-footed trajectory of repression. Following in a similar course, Soyinka deplores pun to satirize the death of Nigeria's maximum ruler, General Sanni Abacha in 'Exit Left, Monster, Victim in Pursuit':

> Long, long before he slipped
> Viagra
> Down his throat, and washed it down
> With 3-Barrel rotgut,
> His favourite gargle from Iganmu,
> Libelled home-made brandy as in
> Home-made democracy, the Gunner
> Was a goner.
> The world said he'd outgunned
> The finest and the best
> Of a hundred million but
> The Gunnner was long gone.(*Samarkand* 21)

In reiterating the gratuitous debauchery embedded in the poem, Soyinka juxtaposes Abacha's transient pleasure of sex with his morbid fascination with death. This is done through the graphic illustration of his Viagra-induced insatiable appetite for sex. Viagra is an aphrodisiac he had taken an overdose of which eventually hastened his death atop an Indian prostitute. The farcical mockery of Abacha's death in the poem is robustly offset by his legitimization of violence, whose inscriptions are viscerally outlined in the Nigeria's political landscape in the forms of anarchy, sorrow and death that are harvested in scores. The first stanza presents the graphic depiction of the destructive effect of display of macho bravado and the self-destructive libidinous indulgence embarked upon by the tyrant. This depiction is deloyed thus: "long, long before he slipped/Viagra/down his throat, and washed it down/with 3-barrel rotgut,/ his favourite gargle from Iganmu" (*Samarkand* 21). But the second stanza celebrates the more deserving death of the tyrant referred to in the first stanza: "the world said he'd outgunned/the finest and the best/of a hundred million but/the Gunner was long gone"(*Samarkand* 21).

In addition to the farcical foregrounding of the ignoble death of Sanni Abacha in the poem, Soyinka deftly extends this mockery by employing the pun of Gunner/ goner as a polemical gambit in the stanzas to balance the political and personal. The Gunner/goner pun is utilised effectively in the poem to redeem the gloomy, apocalyptic image of Nigeria that Abacha had hitherto created. The rhythm of African tradition of communal mourning in the poem is essentially restricted to a rancorous polemical and didactic probity of the past. The sombre and seedy chiaroscuro evoked in the depiction of Abacha's ignoble demise in "Exit Left, Monster, Victim in Pursuit" is juxtaposed against the enduring lamentation of the death of pro-democracy heroine, Kudirat Abiola. Kudirat is the wife of Nigeria's president-elect, Chief M.K.O Abiola, she was murdered by the Abacha's foot-soldiers on the streets of Lagos. Soyinka fittingly exemplifies this juxtaposition in 'Some Deaths are Worlds Apart':

> No bed of flowers bloomed for Kudirat
> She was not royal, white or glamorous
> Not one carnation marked the spot of death.
> Though undecreed, a ban on mourning spoke
> Louder than cold-eyed guns that spat
> Their message of contempt against the world.
> Death touches all, both kin and strangers.
> The death of one, we know, is one death
> One too many. Grief unites, but grief's
> Manipulation thrusts our worlds apart
> In more than measurable distances-there are
> Tears of cultured pearls, while others drop
> As silent stones. Their core of embers
> Melts brass casings on the street of death.(*Samarkand* 19)

Although recent bid by the few Nigerian political elite to fix Nigeria's political system may prove fruitful at long run. Especially, if one considers that such determination entails a huge political move that could cut to size the morbid, inordinate ambition of the military and prevent them from seizing political power at will. Nevertheless, Soyinka's agony over Kudirat's death in the poem, further privileges a determination by the pro-democracy activists to restore sanity to the troubled Nigeria's political sphere once and for all. The overt engagement of "Some Deaths Are Worlds Apart" with Nigeria's political complexities, compliments the interrogation of the dimensions of human depredation in Abacha's military gulag. By contextualizing the intersection of poetry and politics (*protest*), Soyinka succeeded in establishing a vocabulary of resentment against the military's matrix of terror in the poem. This convenient intersection of poetry and politics has been explained in the words of Reed Way Dasenbrock (2003) in his essay: *Poetry and Politics:*

> Today most critics and theorists hold that the connectionbetween poetry and politics is not limited just to situations in which poets become politically involved in an explicit way, but instead, all cultural expression is related to the social and political context-whether implicitly or explicitly-in which it is produced….All poetry is political in one way or another,

since even the choice to eschew explicitpolitical involvement or reference
constitutes a form of political action (or perhaps more precisely inaction)
(Dasenbrock 51).

Soyinka's foregrounding of discursive context of political assassination in the poem is complicated by the range of Abacha's brutality evidenced by the liquidation of Kudirat. However, this discernible intersection provides a vibrant platform for articulating the odious tragedy of subjugation during the Abacha's regime. The protestation in the poem is designed to further sensitize and mobilize Nigerians against future occurrence of another military incursion. Beyond the imaginative retelling of the dark chapter in Nigeria's nationhood, the intersection further enamoured a discursive paradigm which inaugurates a poetic mode of expression that unobtrusively articulates the frustrations borne by the victims of the Abacha's junta in their quest for reparation.

Although the harsh reality of the Abacha's brutality which manifested in the killing of Kudirat is rendered inconsequential by the deification of her valour and bravery. This deification resonates in 'one death/one too many/grief unites, but grief's/ manipulation thrusts our worlds apart/in more than measurable distances apart/in more than measurable distances-there are/tears of cultured pearls, while others drop/ as silent stones/ and 'their core of embers/melts brass casings on the street of death'(*Samarkand* 19). While Soyinka broke into paroxysm of lamentation to mourn the death of Kudirat, he paradoxically trivialises the death of Abacha in a gale of mockery, derision and humour.

The valorisation of Kudirat as an epitome of the heroic struggle against a rapacious army of occupation in the postcolonial Nigeria is set against the villainy, rape and devaluation of democratic ethos by the intrusive Abacha's military junta. Soyinka's inversion of pun in the juxtaposition of the reception of Kudirat's death against that of Abacha's introduces a bias beneath the general signification of death, and stimulates a counter-current of emotion which amplifies witticism in the poetic of 'Some Deaths Are Worlds Apart' against the poetic of 'Exit Left, Monster, Victim In Pursuit'. Kudirat's death at the hands of Abacha, strikingly recalls the killing of Dele Giwa by the General Ibrahim Babangida's odious military regime. Giwa, a quintessential Nigerian journalist was brazenly murdered at his breakfast table through a letter bomb which was hurriedly dispatched by the army's intelligence unit. This heinous killing is explicated in Fatoba's "For Dele Giwa":

Let us be satisfied
That he is dead
Let us rejoice
That he will no more
Stick his pen in our conscience
Let us sit back in hope
That we
Having killed a tongue of truth
Shall never die. (*They Said I Abused* 26)

Giwa in his pursuit of investigative journalism, unearthed a high profiled dealing in narcotics that indicted General Ibrahim Babangida personally and some members of his military junta, which he threatened to make known to the public. But this discovery of the damaging facts against the military led to his untimely death. Beneath his curiosity and stridency to report misdemeanour of Nigerian political elite to the public, Giwa has been fingered to be involved in an underhand financial dealing with the former Nigerian military ruler, General Ibrahim Babangida not to publish the inflammatory treatise. But, he later reneged on the deal albeit blackmail, and published the story. This irked Babangida, who sent soldiers to sieze all the printed copies of the *Newswatch* journal and had Giwa murdered subsequently through a letter bomb for betrayal of agreement. Nevertheless, Fatoba sees Giwa's brutal assassination by the military as symptomatic of the killing of "a tongue of truth". Fatoba's appropriation of the narrative voice in the poem poignantly mocks the temporary triumph of the military, who in their naivety assumed that the killing of Giwa will guarantee their continuity with unrestrained trafficking of illicit drugs and unabashed looting of the treasury. This mockery is eloquently emphasized in: /let us be satisfied/ let us rejoice/ that he will no more…/ (*They Said I Abused* 26). However, little did they realise that their shameless deeds will be exposed to the world through the literary production exemplified in Fatoba's *They Said I Abused the Government*.

5. Conclusion

The paper has acknowledged that in re-telling their experiences of physical assault and deprivation, Soyinka and Fatoba have to adopt faction in order to bridge the delicate gap between outright auto-biography and fiction. In examining the devastating effect of the military rule in the postcolonial Nigeria, the paper has sought to explicate the employment of intersection of satire and protest in the poetry of Femi Fatoba and Wole Soyinka to confront the monstrosity of the shenanigans of Sanni Abachas's repressive military regime. The paper further illustrates the differences among the federating units of the postcolonial Nigeria, which indubitably has compromised its nationhood and continually raised fear of its disintegration. Nigeria nation-state has been frequently wracked by continuous bouts of internal dissension emanating from tribal antagonism exhibited by its differing ethnic groupings. Hence, the military has often cited this threat to Nigeria's sovereignty as the necessary impetus for intervening in its political process. It is this intervention that historically gave birth to the atrocious Abacha's regime that brutally recorded casualties of maiming and killing of the opposition with cannibalistic gusto between 1994 and 1998. The two poetry collections not only explicate the viciousness of Abacha's military junta, but also act as touchstones to show the extent of the killing of notable Nigerians during its preposterous incursion into the Nigeria's political system.

Nevertheless, Femi Fatoba's *They said I Abused The Government* andWoleSoyinka's *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* have through their poetics protested against their humiliation as well as the detention, torture and killing of other dissent voices who criticised Abacha's usurpation of political power. In the same vein, the paper has affirmed the appropriation of faction by Fatoba and Soyinka's poetry; to harness the appurtenances of satire: humour, witticism and pun. All these devices are utilized to evaluate the devastating effect of military brutality on the Nigeria's socio-political landscape. While Fatoba's protest against the military is nuanced by the humour and Yoruba proverbial, Soyinka's protest against the military is dexterously rooted in pun and witticism. These poetic devices have been utilised in the anthologies:

to criticise the subordination of overriding patriotism to ethnic nationalism by the successive military rulers in the postcolonial Nigeria. A pursuit of northern Nigeria's unbridled political interest led to the annulment of the June 12th presidential election adjudged to have been won by Chief M.KO. Abiola, a southern Nigeria's politician. Aftermath of this annulment also led to the brutal assassination of dissent voices, like Kudirat and Alfred Rewane by the reprehensible Abacha's regime. The paper concluded that, breaches that had occurred in the Nigeria's nationhood has remarkably necessitated the regular incursions of the military into the centre stage of her political arena, which has subsequently facilitated emergence of the monstrous Abacha's regime.

Notes

1. Although Nigeria attained independence in 1960 from Britain, but her nationhood has been continuously threatened by the ethnic differences among its federating units. This threat to the Nigeria's nationhood has often serves as an excuse for an ambitious soldier to stage a military coup that has constantly disrupted democratic process in the postcolonial Nigeria.
2. GeneralSanni Abacha ruled Nigeria between 1994 and 1998. His regime is often associated with gratuitous brutality in which scores of dissent voices were maimed, detained and killed.
3. Chief M.K.O Abiola is the presumed winner of 1993 presidential election in Nigeria. But mid-way into the announcement of the final results of the election, it was annulled by General Ibrahim Babangida.

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Women, Power Knowledge in W.B. Yeat's "Leda and the Swan"

TSUNG CHI (HAWK) CHANG

Abstract

Yeats's well-known poem "Leda and the Swan" seems to be reinforcing the traditional gender-myth (gender-stereotype) of aggressive male/passive female. However, in generating Leda's daughters, Helen and Clytemnestra, Zeus is transferring a considerable degree of power to Leda. Through a deconstructive reading, this paper argues that the mythological Leda in Yeats's text has within her womb a potentially violent, disruptive, and deconstructive force.

Keywords: women, power, knowledge, "Leda and the Swan," W.B. Yeats

1. Introduction

For centuries, Ireland's traditional bards glorified women through idealized woman-figures that misrecognized and misrepresented actual women. Patriarchal domination has infiltrated all aspects of life in the disguise of a pure, elevated, artistic outlook, so that unsuspecting readers often fail to notice it. For example, the binary operation of masculine hegemony and female subordination underlying Irish cultural nationalism emerges repeatedly in Yeats's poems, such as "No Second Troy" and "A Prayer for My Daughter." Yeats's time-honored poem "Leda and the Swan" helps explain this negligence, or blindness to oneself, that is somehow characteristic of the most heavily patriarchal writing. "Leda and the Swan" appears to recount the erotic story of Zeus and Leda in Greek mythology. In the story, Zeus transforms himself into a swan, descends to earth, and rapes Leda, a beautiful woman who is imprisoned in a cellar by her own father. Some critics propose that the poem discusses the probable welding of knowledge into power through the body (Howes 120). In addition, by referring to Yeats's own commentary, many academics focus their interpretation on Yeats's apprehension in relation to the coming of discord and anarchy in 20th-century Ireland (Bloom 257; Brown 296-97; Jeffares, 221-22; O'Neill 162). In his allegorical reading, Declan Kiberd discusses Yeats's complex feelings about England's relation to Ireland (314-15). Through a deconstructive reading, this paper argues that although

"Leda and the Swan" is so overloaded with sexually hierarchal oppositions that it is often considered another potent testimony to the disempowerment of women which is typical of Yeats's poetry, a significant subversive potential for women to fight up against patriarchy in the poem can be discerned.

2. Powerful Men vs. Fragile Women

As a representative of culturalnationalist, Yeats was commited to promoting traditional Irish culture. However, like many of his counterparts working for the generally male-dominated Gaelic League, Yeats seldom paid attention to women's contribution in the nation-building business. As David Lloyd points out in his critical collection, *Anomalous States*, politics and aesthetics are two important topics mutually entangled in Yeats's poetry (60). In the meantime, women's concerns were mostly dismissed.In his well-known poem "Easter 1916," Yeats recounts his acquaintances, praisingthose humdrum lives which are transformed by the fight for freedom from a "casual comedy" (181) to a "terrible beauty" (181). Inspired by the Easter Rising in 1916, which triggered much commotion and sympathy, manyIrish people became much more involved in fighting with the British army. However, from another perspective, Yeats's over-emphasis on the contribution of the male revolutionaries strongly consolidates the inequilibrium between valiant nationalists and silent women. Linda McDowell's critique testifies to this disproportion between men and women. As she argues, while men's sacrifice in wars and their bravery are well chronicled in Irsh history, women in Ireland are often attached to the idealization of virtuous housewives (22). Conspicuously, Yeats's "Easter 1916" demonstrates how male warriors exclude submissive woman servants from matters of great importance. Additionally, in an analysis of Irish literature and art, Catherine Nash maintains that "while the idea of woman remained the embodiment of the national spirit and the the allegorical figure for the land of Ireland, this land now became the domain of the overly masculine" (47). In other words, in Ireland, the nation tends to be managed by males, whereas the land is associated with females. However, the feminization of the land does not mean a real respect for women. It is moreoften a strategyused by chauvinists to elicit the Irish people' sympathy and prompt them to sacrifice for their motherland.

Women's subordination and theirexclusion from politically correct nation-building businessarealsomanifest in Yeats's "No Second Troy." In this poem, Maud Gonne's active involvement in politics is criticized. According to the poet speaker, Maud Gonne has "taught to ignorant men most violent ways" (91). In Homer's epic *The Iliad*, Troy is a cursed land marked by conflicts and devastation. It is full of conflicts because the place is torn between the nobility of man and the veracity of humanity. In addition, devastation is rampant because finally Troy ends up with ruins. In the ancient myth, the devastating wars are caused less by Achilles or Agamemnon than by the sexually demonized Helen. Therefore, as an object of beauty, Helen is the reason why Troy is demonised. By contrast, malessuch as swift-footed Achilles and wise Odysseus are depicted as heroes. They are sketched in this way in order to

arouse readers' pity and admiration. In Yeats's "No Second Troy," Maud Gonne is analogous to Helen of Troy, the very embodiment of beauty and annihilation. Maud Gonne is so passionately immersed in the political liberation of Ireland that Yeats expressed his anxiety over her indulgence in politics. Anxcious about her involvement in political activities, Yeats questions, "Why, what could she have, being what she is? / Was there another Troy for her to burn?" (91).Yeats's reaction here is far fromsurprising because it echoes the logic underlying nationalism. In other words, whereas men lead in political campaigns, women are expected to take good care of domestic affairs. According to McDowell, the rhetoric of nationalismis a "profoundly gendered one in which women take their familiar and familial place as the guardian of the family, keeping home and hearth together in time of hardship" (22-23).

The concept of female docility is also portrayed in Yeats's "A Prayer for My Daughter," in which the poet speaker reiterates his ideas of female beauty and urbanity. According to Yeats, although both Helen and Aphrodite are beautiful in appearance, they are far from his standard of perfect women because both of them lack good qualities such as gentleness and culture. "May she become a flourishing hidden tree / That all her thoughts may like the linnet be, / And have no business but dispensing round / Their magnanimities of sounds" (189).As is evident in these lines, the image of ideal women for Yeats is closely associated with natural beauties such as trees, flowers, and birds. Nonetheless, a cultured woman should not run wild in the wilderness, and nor should she argue with others.As the poet goes on to explain, "Nor but in merriment begin a chase, / Nor but in merriment a quarrel. / O may she live like some green laurel / Rooted in one dear perpetual place" (189). This allusion to the chase of Apollo and Daphne exemplifiescertain chauvinism. The laurel is often regarded as the symbol of honor after Apollo fails to win Daphne's heart. However, simultaneously it is limited to being an eternal fixation because of Apollo's love. Although the laurel appears beautiful and romantic, it is doomed to stay put with little chance of movement or change. The poem ends with a few lines which are in tune with an emphasis on female subjection to traditions and decorum. In the meantime, while custom, culture, and tenderness are accentuated, personal opinions, intellectual cultivation, and political participation are completely left far behind the poet speaker's concern when referring to his ideal womanhood.

As discussed above, Yeats's "Easter 1916, "No second Troy," and "A Prayer for My Daughter" manifest a hierarchal operation of masciline hegemony and female subordination which is common in his poetry. Apparently, Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" presents a very similar scenario of male dominance, though a closer reading of the poem may reveal a very different picture. As the poet re-tells the myth in the first two stanzas,

> A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
> Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
> By the dark webs, her nape caught in her bill,
> He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

> How can those terrified vague fingers push
> The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
> And how can body, laid in that white rush,
> But feel the strange heart beating where it lies? (214)

The primary binary opposition falls on the protagonists: bolt-hurling Zeus, the lord of the sky, and, in contrast, Leda, wife of Tyndareus of Sparta. Intimidated by the unexpected approach of Zeus with his powerful wings, Leda is plunged into panic. Helpless and hopeless, the "staggering girl" (214) is "caught in his bill" (214), utterly subject to the manipulation of the "dark webs" (214). The heart/body opposition in the second stanza reinforces the man/woman, intellect/nature, reason/passion hierarchies that are embedded in the poem. "And how can body, laid in that white rush, / But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?" (214). It is perplexing that the raping male oppressor should be crowned with "feathered glory" (214), while the raped girl degenerates into a voluptuous body, lying low on the grass. Reluctant yet irresistible, Leda succumbs to this gorgeous thundering power step by step with her "loosening thighs" (214), a paradox prevalent in the chauvinistic justification of sexual violence. This male violence toward women is often justified in the nationalist discourse. Under the circumstances of warfare, rape is justified as an instrument. In her research on African women, Amina Mama denounces female maltreatment in patriarchal societies, asserting that acts of rape, disfigurement, and illegal detainment are notoriously overlooked in the construction of national identity (252-68). Moreover, according to Cynthia Enloe, in the operation of nationalist movements, people often feminize the nation so as to protect her. The intruding enemies are consequently imagined to be other men, men who would contaminate the nation (239). With this logic in mind, these male nationalists consider their female counterparts so fragile that they are desperately in need of male protection and fertilization. When reading Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" from this angle, it is understandable that Leda becomes not so much a mythological medium through which power and knowledge might coalesce into one as a feeble, raped colonial woman.

The enigmatic lines near the end, "Did she put on his knowledge with his power / Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?" (215) turn out to be the narrator's meditation on the relationship between the defiled Leda ("the staggering girl" or essentially weak Mother Ireland) and almighty Zeus ("the brute blood of the air," or the British army as an extension of the royal family). From this perspective, the concluding lines can be interpreted in the following: Were the Irish people forcibly imbued with British rationality while being raped by the overwhelming British military power before the exhausted British army relinquished its dominion over Ireland? In other words, the patriarchal logic of man over woman which is hidden in these lines is somehow blind to its own hegemony.

3. Gender Myths

In "Leda and the Swan," the most interesting question Yeats asks does not come until the last stanza, where the connection between power and knowledge is

questioned. The interrelation of power and knowledge has been interpreted by Michel Foucault in his theory of discourse. Foucault argues that "the analysis, elaboration, and bringing into question of power relations" is "a permanent political task in all social relations" (The Subject of Power" 223). He maintains that power is never something possessed only by an individual or a political institute. Instead, power is always involved in a network of power-relations that are governed by language. According to Foucault, power, which is infinite, is so diffuse and nebulous that it permeates almost all aspects of human life. In addition, it is so closely related to knowledge that one cannot exist without the other. Regarding the genuine attributes of power, Foucault argues,

> Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general policies" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Rabinow 72-73)

For Foucault, truth and knowledge are trapped within the web of power, and vice versa. To make possible the realization of truth, someone or something has to be silenced or oppressed under the sway of overpowering discourse. Foucault's theory on power and knowledge helps shed light on our interpretation of the final stanza in Yeats's "Leda and the Swan." At the instantaneous moment of sexual intercourse, Leda is undoubtedly endowed with Zeus's power as embodied in the act of love-making, whereas she is also robbed of the knowledge to know the forthcoming destruction which is caused by this affair. The question mark at the end indicates that the poet speaker casts doubt on whether she is capable of integrating his knowledge with his power. As a matter of fact, Irish women in Yeats's own time were neither powerful nor knowledgeable. Leda's power transmitted from Zeus's is verly likely to fail because the given power is destitute of some necessary props (e.g. mighty episteme, in Foucault's terms) to perpetuate and consolidate the operation of power. So fragile is Leda's grip of knowledge that nothing, not even the fleeting sexual power from "the brute blood of the air" (215) can make her envision "the broken wall" (214) and "the burning room and tower" (214). Such a split between power and knowledge on the part of Leda substantiates again the female disempowerment in twentieth-century Irish culture.

Leda seems to be reinforcing the traditional gender-myth (gender-stereotype) of the woman made powerful—made into the mythical Mother Ireland or (as Helen of Troy) Mother Greece—by the male god, or by men. In generating Leda's daughter, Helen (with that "shudder in the loins") (214), and thus Troy's "broken wall" (214)—Leda's other daughter will be Clytemnestra, who kills her husband, Agamemnon, upon

his return from Troy to Greece—Zeus is giving Leda great (potential or future) power. Therefore, Yeats asks, "Did she put on his knowledge with his power?" (215). Yet again, we can just read this as the brutal act of a man (or male god who represents manhood and male aggression) raping a defenseless woman. As a consequence, Yeats wittingly or unwittingly mis-represents the woman, by seeming at first to portray her as a traditionally passive and feminine victim of rape now suddenly made powerful, made masculine and heroic. However, this traditional gender myth is itself subverted here, laid bare for what it is, just a myth.

If a deconstructive reading sees the apparently emphasized term as the author's blind spot, here we have a fairly complex deconstructive model. At first look, we have the priority of the male term in traditional patriarchal oppositions, such as man/woman and aggression/ passivity. But then we suddenly see the blind spot in the patriarchal stance and give the lower term priority: Leda puts on Zeus's knowledge with his power. Some French feminists, such as Hélène Cixous, argue that this sort of inversion merely reverses the hierarchy, thereby maintaining a male, logocentric, patriarchal logic. Therefore, in the third stage, when we lay bare the fact that the priority-to-the-lower-term was itself a kind of fantasy, an illusion or myth, and thus switch back again, on the one hand the patriarchy is reaffirmed. However, on the other hand, this final move back to the higher term also deconstructs the logic of the hierarchy itself and leaves an open space for the possibility of a woman's identity as difference, as something located outside the phallocentric, hierarchical logic. This deconstructive reading unveils the complex male/female hierarchical duality of the poem, the duality of male (divine) rapist and female (human) victim. It unravels an unintentional male mis-representation of the female as powerful when, after all, her power can only be a mythical one, the sort of fantastic (as opposed to real, political) power that men project onto woman. In this sense, Leda (or women as a whole) is not as vulnerable and disempowered as some scholars assert (Cullingford 159; McKenna 431-32).

In a nutshell, whereas the traditional myth gives priority to men in male-dominated oppositions such as man/woman, aggression/passivity, intellect/nature, reason/passion, heart/body, immortality/mortality, heaven/earth, glory/lowliness, creation/destruction, and birth/death, there are various ways in which the "lower" term can also take priority, thus rendering the hierarchical order indeterminate and pointing to a position for women which is outside all such hierarchies, a position of absolute difference. This helps illustrate why, unlike most feminists who criticize Yeats's aestheticizing of Leda's rape, Kiberd regards Yeats as "identifying with the put-down woman" (312). In identifying with Leda, Yeats realigns his sexual politics with the construction of national identity by articulating his patriotism through a female other (Neigh 154). In this sense, the potential power of creativity and destruction granted to Leda highlights Yeats's strong attachment to Ireland, the mythically feminized land that had been disempowered sexually, culturally, and politically for many centuries.

4. Conclusions

In the wake of tenacious patriarchal traditions, many Irish writers in the twentieth cencury, including Yeats, tended to depict impotent women. However, this deconstructive reading of Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" showcases how the myth of women and the patriarchal logic may subvert themselves. Although the constraints imposed upon women are severe, they are not absolutely helpless in the face of patriarchal hegemony. As Foucault proposes, the exertion of power is necessarily accompanied by a counter-force that moves against the dominant force of coercion (*Power/Knowledge* 56). With this subversion or loosening of man/woman sexual relations, the possibility of women's liberation, which used to be an unfuifilled dream, is heralded ahead of its times.

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Balance, Stillness, Vertigo – Myths of Cosmic Centrality in Plato, Nietzsche, and Kundera

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Abstract

Contemporary images of decentred information find their origin in myths of cosmic centrality and revolutions. Images such as Deleuze's decentred rhizome and Derrida's acentric free-play have influenced contemporary understanding of political phenomena and internet media, but their connection to mythical imagery has gone unremarked. In this study, I analyse the mythical images of cosmic centrality as interpreted by Plato, Nietzsche, and Kundera, in order to point out how they function as models of philosophical autonomy amidst diverging and dispersed information. This study suggests that the image of the centre is not opposed to mere liberating dispersion, whereby centrality becomes a synonym of repressive control; the centre is rather opposed to an ambivalent field of dispersion and control, thus making the centre itself a locus of intellectual freedom.

Keywords: Centrality; Plato; Nietzsche; Kundera; Philosophy; Myth.

1. Introduction: the image of the centre between myths and information technology

Cosmic revolutions and centrality are mythical images of the cosmic order that recur throughout the whole of Western history, and assume varied meanings in relation to knowledge, ethics, and politics. These myths are defined through their variation. Much like language, mythical images are not individual objects identifiable through their individual essence, but acquire their meaning through their interaction with other images, and through their reception in different moments and places. Variants of a myth are, in fact, what *constitutes* a myth, either as grounded on a permanent structure (Lévi-Strauss 1958: 233-236), or as a net of receptions open to hermeneutical analysis (Blumenberg 1979: 174-176). My study will not try to identify a structure, but it will proceed in agreement with Hans Blumenberg's stance (*ibi*, 174): "the myth that is varied and transformed by its receptions […] deserves to be made a subject of study" independently from a hypothetical fundamental myth (*Grundmythos*). If myths remain operative even nowadays, in different forms, it is because they are received through different media, they alter the structures through which we think and perceive, and they maintain a power that can only be shown case by case (cf. Kittay 1987 and Lakoff 1980 for similar accounts of the cognitive force of metaphor). In short, myths keep orienting the way we perceive and understand our world through different, and ultimately subjective, reinterpretations.

Myths of cosmic revolutions and their centre ground the contemporary language of centrality and of its lack. This language describes a problem that ranges from the fluid space of mass-media (especially internet and social media), through the socio-political reality, to philosophy itself. We assist nowadays to a de-centralisation of knowledge and information, which covers the entire field of human experience. Back in 1980, as philosopher Guido Cusinato observes, Deleuze and Guattari proposed a liberal, acentric organization of knowledge, rejecting the traditional tree-like model of rationality, and proposing a *rhizomatic* net of interactions among various points of knowledge and experience. The rhizome, a net of airborne roots, is configured as "an acentric and non-significant system, in which there is no apex [nor any common root or central axis], and where any point is freely connected to any other" (Cusinato 2013, p.38, tr. mine; cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1980). Similarly, against the ideal of all-encompassing intellectual structures in the human sciences, in 1966 Derrida had opposed the traditional idea of a foundational centre to that of de-regulated free-play:"The function of this centre was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure […] but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the [*free*] *play* of the structure." (2005: 352).

Derrida argues that, in our times, the Western obsession with centralised systems of knowledge has collapsed and, "in the absence of a centre or origin", an interplay of different languages and discourses has become predominant, with no central, structuring object or objective (353-4).

The models of acentric rhizome and decentred free-play have had, and still have, strong social, political, and intellectual repercussions. The neo-liberal model of politics is one of unhindered and divergent motivations, where the criterion of political action is not one of centralised ideals, but of deregulation of individual initiative. Cusinato identifies a structural and historical convergence between neoliberalism and nihilistic relativism (i.e. the acentric dispersion of values and opinions), since both conceive freedom as "deregulation", against all external impositions of structures and limits to actions or desires (2013: 40; cf. Lyotard 1979). As the unexpected consequence of such conception, we face nowadays the ever stronger emergence of particularisms against all-encompassing projects such as the European Union. At the same time, international relations proceed more and more along the line of particular, shifting economic interests. This phenomenon is also correlative to the contemporary decentred structure of information. With the expansion of the internet, the mass-media have developed within a 'hyper-textual' frame, where information and even social relations do not proceed in a centralised way and according to an organised structure, but along diverging lines.

Critical theorist George Landow observes, accordingly, that "decentredness" is a defining feature of the hypertext, which coincides with Derrida's textual free-play and Deleuze's rhizome, in that their decentred structure "perfectly matches the way

clusters or subwebs organize themselves in a large networked hypertext environments" (2006: 59). We can think, for instance, of Wikipedia, which diverges from the Enlightenment ideal of an en-*cyclo*-paedia, an organised 'circle' of information revolving around a centralised ideal of knowledge; Wikipedia, instead, has turned the encyclopaedia into an open, cooperative space, where the user finds instant, quick (in Hawaiian, 'wiki') links to all other relevant articles. Moreover, we can think of social-media, where information appears as an ever-shifting line of information, and where friends or interests are selected and stored in cumulative lists. While these developments certainly have a strong democratic power of direct participation and offer positive chances for serendipity and discovery, they also raise two fundamental problems: disorientation and filtering of information. For instance, Landow has observed that disorientation is an inherent (either positive or negative) possibility of hypertexts that programmers constantly need to consider (2006: 145-151); and IT ethics expert Engin Bozdag has studied the way information intermediaries (Facebook, Google) tend to channel and regulate information in a way that is out of individual control, through the creation of 'filter bubbles', where privileged information is automatically selected by algorithms and creates a radically private space that may enhance personal bias (2013: 209-227). As Guido Cusinato comments, decentred structures of information can originate a "liquidity that nurtures the individual's illusion of not being oriented", i.e. of being free to create his or her own decentred connections, while in reality it directs this very decentred liquidity, because "what is liquid [...] is maximally susceptible to being channelled" (2013: 53). Politically, this channelled liquidity results in highly controversial mass-phenomena, such as the recent Brexit vote or the American elections, where the unexpected success of divisive positions has been widely based on disinformation and partisan positions: the filtered information allowed by hyper-textual media, arguably, has had the result of polarising oppositions, whereby the factual truth of the information delivered (on either side) has become less and less relevant. Philosophically, this problem is that of nihilistic relativism, as a completely disoriented existential, social, and political condition. Here, neoliberal decentred freedoms find a momentary *impasse*, and require to be rethought and reaffirmed.

The three images I present here deal differently with this problem of centrality as a problematic point of orientation, and they offer valid models for understanding these phenomena of centrality, dispersion, and polarisation, and to reflect on them in new critical ways, alternative to the standard models of rhizome and free-play.

2. Methodology

I will compare three mythical images where the cosmic order of centred revolutions becomes a model of intellectual freedom, ethical change, and philosophical orientation amidst conflicting information. These images are mythical insofar as they can be traced back not simply to a rationalistic understanding of the cosmic order, but to an effort of interpreting the human significance of this very order. The mythical universe is always alive, animated at least in part by intellects, desires, drives, and intentions, and it changes with them. It is such a universe that is represented, differently, by philosophical writers as distant as Plato, Nietzsche, and Kundera. They can be comparatively connected because of their mutual influence and common philosophical focus on the image of a cosmic revolution around a physical centre, within a single theoretical problem. They all avail of the potential of mythical imagery to create specific models of philosophical autonomy and orientation, which still underlie, implicitly, contemporary language and conceptions. Such a comparative approach is undoubtedly partial, in historical and philological terms, since it overlooks wide changes in cosmological imagery and symbolism of circularity from Classicism to Modernity; nonetheless, it is possible to trace the coherent recurrence of a single image, characterised by stable themes, within a limited number of authors. Plato, Nietzsche, and Kundera are particularly significant because the problems they tackle are still vital nowadays, and in need of philosophical orientation. The contemporary models of decentred information find their unconscious root in mythical images, which can be brought back to awareness in order to allow a reflective comparison (cf. Mosco 2004: 83; Landow 2006: xii).

3. Plato: Cosmic Revolutions and Centred Balance

Plato wrote in the 5th century B.C.E., a time when Greece, and Athens in particular, saw the rise of the Sophists, travelling intellectuals and rhetoricians, who contested traditional morality and promoted moral relativism. Sophists, as Plato describes them, are a class "that wanders from city to city and has no private home" (*Tim*. 19e), and therefore does not possess any fixed political values. In a sense, however, these 'international' travellers brought about Athens' cultural development, forcing thinkers to defend ethical and political positions, precisely through their relativism. Plato's philosophy is a philosophical response to the sophistic "overturning upwards and downwards" (*Gorg*. 481d-e) of discourses, opinions, and values, in search for principles of intellectual and ethical orientation. He used myths and images in a constant attempt to discover and communicate such principles, not dogmatically, but through constant inquiry and dialogue. One of Plato's most significant images, in this regard, is that of cosmic balance: Plato's universe is spherical, geocentric, and revolving in circular motion, in perfect equipoise around its central axis. The image of the universe as balanced in its centre appears both in the *Phaedo* and in the *Statesman*, where it is used as a model for autonomy and dominion over oneself, an ethically correct posture that enables self-determination.

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates is in prison, sentenced for impiety, and about to die. Trying to persuade his friends that death is no evil for a philosophical mind, he narrates a cosmic myth where immortal souls travel to different parts of the universe. Within this myth, he presents his own belief as to the position of the Earth in the cosmos:

> I am persuaded, then – he said – that firstly, if the earth is in the centre (*en mesôi*) of the heavens and rounded, it needs (*dein*) neither the air nor any other constraint such as this in order not to fall, but that to hold it in place the equality (*homoiotçta*) the heavens to themselves and its own balance (*isorropian*) are sufficient; indeed, a balanced (*isorropon*) object placed in the centre of something that is equal (*homoiou*) cannot incline either

more or less in any direction, but it will remain equally unswerving. (*Phaed.* 108e-109a, tr. based on Reale).

Socrates choses this image to contrast former cosmological theories, where the Earth is sustained by an external force, such as substrates of water or air that, like the mythical Titan Atlas, hold the universe from outside. For him, those philosophers who embrace this image,

> […] do not search for the force that causes things to be now placed as it is best for them to be placed, nor do they think it has any divine power (*ischun*), but they think they can find a new Atlas more powerful (*ischuroteron*) and more immortal than this, and they do not really think that what is good and right (*agathon kai deon*) binds together and embraces (*sundein kai sunechein*) all things. (*Phaed.* 99c, tr. based on Reale)

As opposed to former philosophical cosmologies, Socrates wants an image that shows "why it is best for [the Earth] to be in the centre (*en mesôi*)" (97e). As Jean-Pierre Vernant comments, since the Earth is "balanced at equal distance from everything", it requires no external force or constraint "to abide where it is" (1985: 236, tr. mine). It is through its precise *right position* that if finds stability, and achieves what no mythical Titan or material element could: sustaining itself by itself. The position of the Earth in the centre of the cosmos, thus, represents for Socrates an ethical model, an enactment of a non-physical principle of goodness and correctness, *agathon kai deon*, which alone can bind together (*sun-dein*) the cosmos. *Deon* (correct, perfectly adequate, and sufficient) is what has the power to bind, *dein*, physical realities in a harmonious inner condition. It is an inherent power that bodies can exert autonomously, since it requires only a *right position*. Socrates thus indirectly compares his own position to that of the Earth, sustained by a cosmic principle of goodness, claiming that if his own "bones and sinews" are sitting in a cell, that is only because he "judged that it was more just and beautiful (*dikaioteron* […] *kai kallion*), rather than to escape and run away, to sustain (*hupechein*) any penalty inflicted by the city" (*Phaed.* 99a). Socrates was in fact allowed to run away from Athens in exile, but his unswerving ethical persuasion is sufficient to keep him in the city that condemned him, and in the cell where he will die. Like the principle of goodness and correctness allows the Earth to sustain (*sun-echein*) itself, it allows Socrates to sustain (*hup-echein*) the punishment of the city and to turn it into an expression of his own intellectual freedom.

The same image of balance appears in the *Statesman*, where a character named 'Eleatic Visitor' uses it as a model for political action. Here, the cosmos is represented as revolving autonomously: "because, greatest (*megiston*) and most perfectly balanced (*isorropotaton*) as it is, it goes on travelling on the smallest pivot (*mikrotatou* […] *podos*)" (*Pol.* 270a, tr. Rowe, adapted). But this autonomous movement cannot go on forever: periodically, the Visitor narrates, a god needs to stir the universe backwards, in order to prevent it from losing its movement in a 'boundless sea of confusion (*anomoiotetos apeiron* […] *ponton*)' (273d-e; tr. mine [*anomoiotetos* is translated as

'confusion' rather than the more literal 'dissimilarity' or 'unevenness']). This bizarre image of an autonomy that can be lost and that depends on an external force (unlike the Earth in the *Phaedo*), is explained by Schuhl through the analogy with a spherical suspended spindle that probably influenced Plato's myth:

> The machine revolves, the string to which it is suspended is twisted; when the artisan [i.e. the god who crafted and directed it] steps aside, the string, quite naturally, tends to untwist; at first, the movement continues without interruption, and then, after a moment of turmoil, when the two impulses oppose each other (272e-273a), 'its allotted and innate drive turned it back again in the opposite direction'. (1968: 84).

In a sense, the action of the god creates an impulse in the universe that, periodically, can unfold on its own in the opposite direction, precisely thanks to the convergence of forces in its central axis. But Schuhl's image is merely an analogy: the *Statesman* does not portray any axial string, but rather a central pivot of balance, where the enormous (*megiston*), revolving mass of the cosmos finds its balanced tension on its minuscule (*mikrotaton*), stable pivot. Plato's universe is not a mere machine, but a living being endowed with wisdom (*phronesis*, 269d) and desire (*epithumia*, 272e). It is also not mechanically suspended to a binding string, but can potentially get lost in an unbound, infinite (*apeiron*) external space.In this image, the essential ethical model is one of *acquired* autonomy, where the control of an external power exists only in function of the independent (if precarious) self-movement of its subject. The delicate convergence of opposite instances (the huge cosmic size, and its minuscule pivot; the timely control of a steersman and the balanced autonomy of a revolving cosmos) is in the *Statesman* a model for an ethical ideal of right measure. Ethically and politically just is, here, everything that conforms to "due measure (*metrion*), what is fitting (*prepon*), the right moment (*kairon*), what is as it ought to be (*deon*), and everything that *removes itself from the extremes to the middle* (*meson*)" (284e, tr. Rowe, adapted).

The convergence of balance in a cosmic middle point represents, such as in the *Phaedo*, the universal enactment of a principle named, among other terms, *deon*: that which can bind (*dein*) things together, that which is needed to make things as they ought to be; not an external duty, but an interior position that can maintain reality in its most harmonious, balanced, and classically beautiful condition. We can briefly notice that similar images of delicate equipoise, explicitly used as images for the soul, appear also in the *Republic* and the *Laws*: in the former (436c-e), the human interiority, composed of divergent impulses, is compared to a spinning-top, which can be said to stand still (on its axis) and at the same time to move (in its circumference), as long as its axis does not incline (*apoklinein*); in the latter (898a-c), the intellectual and cosmic soul is compared to a "sphere turned with the lathe (*sphaira entornou*)", able to remain constantly equal through change, if it revolves "always around some centre (*meson*)". The physical *meson* and equipoise are to Plato ethical and psychological images of unwavering but delicate stability. Plato's ethical ideal is, accordingly, one of internal harmony and delicate self-control, to be found and acquired within one's own position.

4. Nietzsche: Philosophical Stillness and Revolution of Values

Nietzsche is the philosopher who defined contemporary nihilism, as a state of radical disorientation of opinions and values, and attempted to overcome it. Writing in the second half of the 19th century, Nietzsche saw the decadence of traditional Christian values, and the emergence of alternative, conflicting moral and intellectual systems that, in his view, substituted the ideal of God with other metaphysical principles (e.g. the State, Man, Idealism, Materialism; cf. *The Gay Science*, 108 and 109). He used a wide plethora of allegorical or metaphorical images to convey his conception, in the persuasion that traditional language, heavy with metaphysical presuppositions, should be dismantled in order to pave the way to a post-metaphysical and not nihilistic philosophy. Noticeably, since his youth Nietzsche had defined his philosophy as an "inverted Platonism" ("Posthumous Fragments"1870/71, 7[156]; cf. Figal 2002, p.102), an attempt to value the world of appearances more than the hypothetical world of true essences; so it does not surprise to find in Nietzsche the same mythical creations we see in Plato, but overturned in focus. As Hans Blumenberg observed, "after Plato […] only Nietzsche tried to devise elementary myths […] and employed them as an instrument of philosophy" (1979, p.176); Nietzsche did this, I submit, because he needed to subvert the Platonic imagery as well as the theory (cf. Andler 1921, pp.165-166). Nietzsche's most famous cosmic image of nihilism is the 'eternal return of the same', representing the radical immanence of universe where all its history is cyclically repeated, forever, without any external points of reference to give it meaning. However, he represented nihilism through other mythical images. He used the images of cosmic order, celestial revolutions, and the loss of a universal centre as symbols for the advent of nihilism, and for his own creative response to it. Since he writes in fragmented aphorisms, it is always useful to examine his works in a comparative manner: I suggest here a comparison of the famous allegory 'The Madman' (125) in the *Gay Science* to the less known aphorism 'Great Events' (40) in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

'The Madman' represents the nihilistic loss of values as a cosmic disorientation and loss of centre. In the story, a madman irrupts in a marketplace shouting that God is dead, and is derided by the non-believers there convened. While they, despite being atheists themselves, do not accept the tremendous consequences of God's death, the madman tries to show them with a cosmic image: "What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying, as through an infinite nothing?" (181).

The death of God is, to the madman, a radical *loss of centre*, because it entails the dissolution of all absolute and permanent values that can orientate and keep together the order of reality. The state of humanity after the loss of ideals, then, is one of radical *loss of direction*, a "breakdown of previously accepted values", which forces humanity "into 'unexplored' and 'undiscovered' territory" (Löwith 1965, p.312). Without a centre, there is no possibility to determine a direction towards which we, as humans, are moving, or to evaluate ups and downs, i.e. to determine objectives and an order of

higher and lower values. The parallelism with Platonic imagery is stunning: the cosmic movement becomes, in the absence of a stable centre and a binding force, a pure straying into an infinite disorienting space. The "infinite nothing" of nihilism is therefore not a pure absence, but the absence of orientation, much like in Plato's infinite sea of confusion. Like in Plato, 'unbound' and 'infinite' are synonyms: in absence of a binding centre, there are no de-terminations, no boundaries, and possibilities are as unlimited as confusing. Unlike in Plato, though, there is no benevolent god who providentially prevents the loss of centre; cosmic disorientation is total and definitive. Nietzsche, here, provides no answer to this dramatic state. He rather represents this vision of cosmic disorientationas out of reach for the people in the market-place:"This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering – it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard" (182).

There is no answer because the madman's message is untimely: "I have come too early", he judges, symbolically smashing the lantern he was displaying in full daylight. While the story in fact calls for the "invention" of new "festivals of atonement" after the death of God, it leaves open the question of how to react to "the greatness of this deed", because it is still "too great for us" (181). There can be no answer to the state of disorientation entailed by the loss of values, if it is not seen as such.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* we find more direct answers to this problem of disorientation, which is ultimately a problem of valuation. For instance, in the aphorism 'On a Thousand and One Goals' (15), Nietzsche establishes the inherent variety of possible human values, outside any stable system, and he claims: "Evaluation is creation: hear it, you creative men! Valuating is itself the treasure and the jewel of the valued things. Only through evaluation is there value; and without evaluation the nut of existence would be hollow" (p.85). Again, we find the problem of values in relation to the core of reality: *creating* values is what fills the void at the core of an unbound existence. The best human reply to the void of existence is not a search for truth, but a creation of new valuable appearances (cf. Andler 1921: 247-248). Nietzsche does not counteract disorientation with a reactionary return to an imaginary centre; he rather radicalises the loss of values, claiming that values themselves are nothing but human creations. His positive reaction to disorientation, consistently, is a call to renewed ethical creativity.

This appeal to a new, creative core of reality is imagined again as a matter of cosmic order in the 40th aphorism of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, titled 'Great Events'. Here, Nietzsche employs the images of cosmic revolutions and of the centre of the Earth to represent the quiet action of the creators of new values, i.e. those philosophical individuals who can bring about an overthrowing of traditional, transcendent values, and substitute them with an ongoing, philosophical effort of evaluation of our immanent world. 'Great Events' is the narration of one of Zarathustra's, philosopher and explorer, voyages at sea. It is a fantastical narrative divided in three sub-sections:first, Zarathustra arrives at a volcanic island with his sailors, who see him flying past their ship like a ghost and shouting the enigmatic message: "It is high time". Second,

Zarathustra encounters a demonic fire-dog, who is believed to surge right out of the heart of the Earth, i.e. straight from the core of things, and opposes to him his own vision of a cosmic centre. Third, he returns to the ship, where the sailors ignore his account of what happened on the island, and he reflects on the ghost and his message. The story ends with an enigma: "For what, then, is it — high time?" (Burnham and Jesinghausen 2010: 115). The two external moments of the narration thus frame, enigmatically, the central passage, in which we find the image of cosmic centrality and revolutions.

Zarathustra and the demonic fire-dog represent two opposing conceptions about the core of reality. The fire-dog is accused by Zarathustra of being a "ventriloquist of the earth", who pretends to speak "out of the heart of things"; he sprites of out the depths, but his appearance surrounded by fire and smoke is just the mask of a shallow superficiality. Zarathustra compares the fire-dog to the Church and the state, i.e. to mendacious and shallow institutions, which appeal to a metaphysical authority they do not have. To the dog's appearance as a creature from the core of reality, Zarathustra opposes his disbelief: "I have unlearned belief in "great events", whenever there is much bellowing and smoke about them. […] The greatest events — they are not our noisiest but our stillest hours. The world revolves, not around the inventors of new noises, but around the inventors of new values; it revolves *inaudibly*" (153-154).

In this passage, Nietzsche contrasts the image of a demonic creature with that of a creator of values; the fire-dog is a roaring, loud creature, which speaks with the authority of one who comes from the centre of reality. But the true centre, to Zarathustra, is the very creative individual. There is, he claims, a real dog of the depths, who does not breathe fire and smoke, but "his breath exhales gold and golden rain", because "the heart of the earth is of gold". Zarathustra's appeal to a different, golden, and delicate centre of things humiliates the fire-dog, who finally runs back to his cave.

Setting aside other important elements of this image, like the gold, the masking smoke, or the false depths, I wish to focus on the image of the creator of values as the silent centre of a cosmic revolution. While the state-like dog is surrounded by loud noises and thick smoke, not unlike the loud declarations and proud symbols of 'metaphysical' institutions, Zarathustra appeals to a quiet, disillusioned but creative individualism. The Hegelian idealistic view of the state as "the march of God in the world", and as "an absolute and unmoved end in itself" (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 258) is overturned here: there is no metaphysical heart of the Earth, of which someone could bear the message or enact the will. There is, instead, a position of centrality to be assumed by creative subjects, who alone can give value to the revolutions that surround them. Charles Andler correctly observed that Nietzsche's appreciation of creative individuals constitutes "the immobile centre of all the shifting system of [his] ideas" (1921: 248). The revolution, just like the overturning of values, is centred on the creative subject; it is not visualised as a destructive or forceful action, but as a silent, imperceptible movement. The point of convergence with Nietzsche's story 'The Madman' are remarkable: (a) the revolution, the radical subversion of accepted values, goes unseen and unheard; (b) the decentred movement of the

Earth calls for a creative act that is not understood by those who do not see its necessity; (c) the "great deed" of the loss of a cosmic centre requires the even greater event of an individual capable to become a new centre; (d) the untimeliness of the madman's message is echoed by Zarathustra's ghost's announce of a "high time", and by Zarathustra's description of the "stillest hours" as the moment for creative valuation. In the figure of the creator of values as the new centre we do not find, then, a forceful re-establishment of metaphysical centrality. We rather see the central point of view around which we can visualise a new order of values, even if its necessity is yet unseen and unheard. The greatest events coincide with "our stillest hours" (cf. *Zarathustra* 44), and the revolutions of the world are centred on silent, creative individuals. Zarathustra's ghost asked: "For what then – is it high time?" It is time for the subversion to be made visible and audible, for a change of perception that eschews ostentatious appeals to the core of reality, but rather requires the subject to assume, *personally*, a position of centrality.

This image of creative centrality is fundamental to complete Nietzsche's stance on the a-centred human condition after the nihilistic loss of directions. It expresses the paradoxical position of the creator of new values, depending at the same time on the dramatic loss of an *objective* cosmic centre, and on the stillness of a *subjective* point that, alone, can actualise an authentic revolution of values. This image overturns the Platonic one: Nietzsche does not refer the revolutions of values and opinions back to a stable centre; rather, he relates the centre directly to the revolutions that surround it. However stable, the centre is the foundation of a subversion. Its stillness is not the quietness of an objective presence; instead, it is the subjective point of view that *makes* the revolution real, that *creates* it.

Unlike Plato, Nietzsche does not call for the *discovery* of a centre of balance (a subjective position that depends on an objective structure), but for the personal *transformation* into the centre of a change. His centre is not the point of self-equality, but of self-transcendence. Indeed, *only* in respect to such centrality it becomes possible to orientate, with Nietzsche, the nihilistic dispersion within a cosmic, self-transcending succession of different moments of the day. Frequently does Nietzsche use imagery of cosmic succession in this way: the *twilight* of idols is the disappearance of former ideals; *midnight* is the radical loss of ideals, a wholly negative moment when no orientation seems possible; *daybreak* is the emergence of new values, as affirmative creations instead of false absolutes; and *midday* is the moment of joyous immanence in the world, when shadows are short and no transcendent illusions hinder the affirmation of corporeal life (cf. Nietzsche's books: *Twilight of the Idols, or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer*; and *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices on Morality*. For the images of: night: *Gay Science* [125]; dawn: *Zarathustra* [48]; midday: *Twilight* [1]). The entire process originated by nihilism, then, can be seen *affirmatively* as a cosmic revolution, where partial values are cyclically affirmed and destroyed. Nietzsche's *affirmative* position overcomes nihilism by embracing the disoriented world, as a condition for the creation of values. The position of affirmative centrality has been called by Gilles Deleuze "the focal point", where "nihilism is defeated, but

defeated by itself", because finding this point entails "not a change of values, but a change of the element from which the value of values derives. Appreciation instead of depreciation […] will as affirmative will" (1983: 172-174). In this sense, the centre requires, *as centre*, a constant overcoming of partial points of view. Despite overturning Plato's imagery, Nietzsche maintains centrality as the difficult, and even paradoxical, subjective reply to a troubling sea of unbound possibilities.

5. Kundera: Cosmic Polarity and Central Vertigo

Like Plato and Nietzsche, Milan Kundera unifies narrations, images, and philosophy. His most famous novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, is an example of philosophical insights joined to an historical narration, set during the Prague Spring (1968) and the following two decades. Published in 1984, this novel is an evident critique of the Second World War, and of the Stalinist regime that followed it. Less evidently, it is also a reflection on the dispersion of conflicting values during and after the war, as opposed to a philosophical questioning attitude: while "political [totalitarian] movements rest not so much on rational attitudes as on […] fantasies, images, words, and archetypes" (250), this irrationality is contrasted by "the person who asks questions" (247), i.e. by those who do not uncritically accept superficial images, but demand explanation. Kundera's concern is not so much with dispersion as such, but with the irrational channelling of this dispersion in polarised movements (left and right) that mask the very dispersion through delusionary images. However, he pursues his critique also through myths and images, and he frames the whole narration within Nietzsche's "mad myth" (3) of eternal return:"the myth of eternal return states that a life which disappears once and for all, which does not return, is like a shadow, without weight, dead in advance, and whether it was horrible, beautiful, or sublime, its horror, sublimity, and beauty mean nothing" (3).

Kundera thus evaluates the Nietzschean myth as an expression of outright nihilism about human endeavours, and he uses it to criticise in particular the vanity of wars and revolutions. It is a "perspective from which things appear other than as we know them: they appear without the mitigating circumstance of their transitory nature" (4). Even if any historical act, such as, for instance, Robespierre's revolution or a medieval African war, ultimately means nothing, its eternal recurrence makes it heavy, it makes "its inanity irreparable" (3), and any mitigation or justification based on the future becomes impossible. Nietzsche's myth means that every historical act bears the heaviness of unescapable responsibility, since it will never be resolved in a result other than itself. Every act is existentially heavy precisely insofar as it is historically insignificant, or 'light'. Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, then, becomes the point of coincidence of lightness and heaviness.

Kundera declines this coincidence through many different 'mythical' images, from the dualism of being and non-being (5), to that of body and soul (37), and even of words and meaning (85). But only in the penultimate chapter of the story, "The Grand March", we find it transformed into a cosmic image, where the two poles of the Earth converge in a single point, and cause a dreadful vertigo. We see it in the tragic example of Stalin's son, Yakov, who (in Kundera's imaginary account) was captured by the

Germans, was humiliated by other prisoners because he "habitually left a foul mess" in the shared latrine, and finally committed suicide out of humiliation. From Yakov's humiliation Kundera extracts the image of a cosmic vertigo:

> Was he, who bore on his shoulders a drama of the highest order (as fallen angel *and* Son of God), to undergo judgment not for something sublime (in the realm of God and the angels), but for shit? Were the very highest of drama and the very lowest so vertiginously close? Vertiginously close? Can proximity cause vertigo? It can. When the north pole comes so close as to touch the south pole, the earth disappears and man finds himself in a void that makes his head spin and beckons him to fall" (238).

While Nietzsche presented the nihilistic disorientation as a cosmic space with no centre, up, and down, Kundera makes it a vertiginous space where up and down, north and south, converge and meet in the middle. In Kundera's image, it is not the Sun that disappears, but the very Earth itself. All space, defined by opposite extremes, is annihilated when the extremes fall upon each other. The apparent importance of Yakov's political drama, the godlike privilege of Stalin who had rejected him, collapses on the opposite, trivial but concrete humiliation caused by his bodily excrements. His Atlas-like position, as a divinity who 'bore on his shoulders' the 'highest drama' of politics, collapses on the 'lowest' drama of a prisoner's humiliation. The Classical echo of this language is implicit, possibly a mere dead metaphor (as in expressions like 'institutional body'). It is nonetheless significant that the image has re-emerged intact in the same cosmic context. The figure of Yakov as Atlas, here, is that of a godlike being crushed not merely by cosmic grandeur, but by its constant shift with humiliating events: "Rejection and privilege, happiness and woe – no one felt more concretely than Yakov how interchangeable opposites are" (238).

Kundera contrasts Yakov's heartfelt suicide to the meaningless sacrifices of German and Russian soldiers in the war, presenting it at the "sole metaphysical death". Yakov's death represents a metaphysical issue, because it symbolises a nihilistic vertigo of the sort Nietzsche described. This vertigo, however, is not caused by decentred directions, but by an inherent confusion that befalls on a single subject; it is the impossibility to distinguish highest and lowest not because a centre is absent, but because those extremes have fallen too close to their centre.

Kundera's cosmic image disposes of the centre, in the same move through which it makes the polar extremes converge in that very centre. It is therefore radically negative. Kundera's disorientation, unlike Plato's and Nietzsche's, is not one of a cosmic body within an external space, but one caused by the internal convergence of its very limits, which annihilates the body itself. Kundera does not allow any opposites (balance or unbalance; external and internal space) to remain distinct. In this way, he tragically disavows any possibility for a moderate centre: the very existence of polar extremities (north and south, lightness and heaviness, fidelity and infidelity, privilege and excrements) causes a radical, *inherent* indecisiveness, because the poles are indistinguishable. Disorientation thus becomes an *internal* condition of the subject, not an external confusion.

However, this condition is valuable. The collapse of poles on the annihilated centre assumes a positive value as a breaking point of self-awareness, in contrast to the blind war-like opposition of enemy factions: "The Germans who sacrificed their lives to expand their county's territory to the east, the Russians who died to extend their country's power to the west – yes, they died for something idiotic, and their deaths have no meaning or general validity" (238).

Kundera contrasts the outward, expansionistic opposition of geo-political east and west with the inward collapse of physical north and south. The collapse of polarity on the centre is certainly a painful condition, and it can end in self-sacrifice; but it is inherently much more valuable, much more meaningful, than the vain effort of war, a pointless contrast of opposite factions that cannot converge, but only tear each other apart. If war, as contrast of polar opposites, is to Kundera pure idiocy, Yakov's suicidal choice is "metaphysical" because it is endowed with philosophical significance. Imprisoned in a condition of total weakness, Yakov exposes, through his humiliation, the inherently acentric status of human beings when they lose their affiliation to one or another pole of human existence. His death is a moment of authenticity, the unhindered expression of a philosophical acknowledgment: poles are close to each other, opposites are interchangeable, and the (often violent) effort of setting them apart is a vain delusion. This is the only contrast that Kundera allows: meaninglessness, vanity, and idiocy against meaning, value, and self-awareness. Kundera's collapsed centre is a crushing self-awareness that cannot be constrained by the vanity of opposing, separate poles: as such, it is again a moment of philosophical freedom. Not the freedom of a choice between opposite alternatives, but the freedom to manifest the heavy absurdity of their lightweight shifting.

6. Conclusion: centrality as threefold model of philosophical freedom

A common philosophical concern for freedom among adverse circumstances associates Plato, Nietzsche, and Kundera, despite their mutual distance in time; thus, it is not a chance that they chose the same cosmic myth to express such a concern. While certainly Plato influenced Nietzsche, who strived to overturn Platonism, and Nietzsche influenced Kundera, who appropriated his imagery, the historical connections among these authors are merely a contingent precondition of their shared philosophical concerns. The fact that they all chose images of cosmic centrality is, more than a piece of philological evidence, a testimony to the ongoing power of imagery to orient philosophical awareness. Images remain present within language that has become ordinary, such as in dead metaphors like 'concentrating' or 'balancing act' (cf. Black 1962 and Ricoeur 1975), and bringing them back to the surface increases our awareness of how language influences the way we think.

The comparative study of these three images of centrality highlights three different ways of conceiving the centre amidst dispersive directions. 'Centre' can be a position were opposites are balanced, an objective point to be found through the delicate coordination of diverging qualities (big and small, stability and movement, freedom and imprisonment). It can be, therefore, a model of autonomy, as the mutual 'keeping together' of these qualities, without need for an external support or constraint.

Differently, it can be the position were orientation amidst diverging directions is possible, as a subjective point of view that can keep them together. It can be, thus, a model of creative valuation, oriented not towards itself but towards an ongoing overcoming of partial truths, opinions, and values. Finally, it can also be a fading position between opposite directions, which cannot be kept separate. Therefore, it can be a subjective point of radical refusal of divergence, a purely subjective self-awareness that becomes the source of meaning and value by denying any violent opposition. In all cases, the centre is an internalised space in opposition to an external ambivalent field: only with regard to the internal centre the two external phenomena of disorientation (where movement lacks any direction) and constriction (where one direction of movement precludes any other) are possible. Deleuze's and Derrida's binary opposition of acentric rhizome v. axial tree, or acentric free-play v. centralised structure, are therefore misleadingly partial, since they do not consider that the structure of the centre is actually threefold: the centre can be opposed either to unbound multiple directions or to constraining determinations, both of which hinder its autonomous self-direction. The centre is always the locus of a self-aware autonomy, because it stands in opposition to extremes where self-direction becomes impossible.

Can we use these images to respond to the contemporary phenomenon of decentred information? I wish to submit a humble and partial proposal for a reflection on images of the centre as possible models to understand this phenomenon. As I have briefly shown, decentred information characterises contemporary life from politics to hypertexts. Nowadays we face political forces that pull away from centralised ideals, such as the European Union, and that promote division, such as the construction of walls at national boundaries and the rejection of war refugees. But these pulls are not merely 'political', in the sense of a purely collective phenomenon that transcends and determines, from above, individual positions. Rather, they are correlative to a subjective and inter-subjective problem of decentred orientation: partisanship and unreflective particularisms are related to the current problems of technological participation and shared knowledge, which can degenerate into disorienting fragmentation and filtered information. Freedom and knowledge, here, are hindered not through direct and evident constriction, but through a dispersion that confines each particular opinion within a limited space. I am not arguing that there is a direct causal relation between this decentred, but channelled and fragmented, information, and political divisive decisions. The correlation is, in fact, more profound; it is a structural homogeneity whereby any subjective attention to an all-encompassing, 'centred' organisation is hindered, while dispersion and particularisation are constantly increasing. The maintenance of a subjective centre can be hindered, according to the models outlined above, both by the external divergence of directions (dispersion), and by the external determination of such directions (particularisation). Neither constraint is immediately evident as such, since it appears either as an unbound possibility of choice, or as a freely accepted field in opposition to other, rejected possibilities. The response to this state of things cannot be a reactive return to a transcendent centrality, to an overarching project imposed from above, precisely because any claim to this central and superior position

is itself suspect of partiality, and could become another external constraint. Instead, a correct and active response needs to acknowledge the lower, decentred position of these contemporary phenomena, and move on from there. The response must not be an immediately political one, but a subjective one of correct ethical positioning.

The images I have examined as models of decentred forces and centred orientation move in this direction. They do not suggest the imposition of a pattern from above, but the coordination of different instances within the position of the subject. I propose these three images of centrality as responses, from different angles, to the problem of decentred conditions of knowledge and ethical behaviours. Plato's balance is an effective model if the problem is that of instituting a centralised organisation (be it individual or collective), whenever it is threatened by divergent drives, without recurring to imposition from above but trying to find an immanent organisation of coexistence. Nietzsche's stillness is significant as a creative response to the radical absence of any acknowledged centre; a response that rejects stiffened opinions and absolutes, but embraces their partiality as a condition for further creativity. Kundera's vertigo is significant whenever the phenomenon of dispersion becomes a problem of polarisation, i.e. when inner meaningful drives are channelled by outward forces in futile contrasting movements. The acceptance of inner disorientation thus becomes itself a model for autonomous orientation. Each author here examined treats the problem of dispersion as an ethical issue, and offers different contextual responses. It is not my purpose, in this article, to promote an ethical argument, let alone a political one, but merely to show that the issue of decentred information is *also* an ethical problem. It is a problem that concerns the position of the subject amidst this dispersive space. Different responses are possible, and they are a matter of subjective choice. Orientation within this problem is nonetheless necessary and Plato, Nietzsche, and Kundera provide us with instruments to achieve it. I believe that their different images allow us, as Cusinato suggests, to "imagine a form of orientation that does not coincide with repression" (2013: 39). The judgment of their validity and effectiveness must be left, by necessity, to the reader.

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"This is truly me": A Lacanian approach to *The Danish Girl* (2015)

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Abstract

This article aims at offering a Lacanian interpretation of the latest released film the major topic of which is about transsexuality: *The Danish Girl* (2015). The story of Einar/Lili will be pursued in order to assert that the film reproduces a stereotyped representation of transsexuality as a symptomatic expression of psychosis, the main enunciation of which is to be a woman trapped in a man's body, which places the subject in the modality of the *pousse-à-la-femme* in order to become The Woman.

Keywords: Transsexuality, Lacanian psychoanalysis, symptom, *sinthome*, sexual difference.

1. Transsexuality and what incessantly returns

In the last decades, the fascination to and diverse study of transsexuality[1] has notoriously increased. While the first discourses on transsexual subjects were primarily based on a psychiatric background, since the 1970's-1980's there has been a different perspective that does not reduce such a subjective experience to pathologization. Thus, the impact of feminism and queer theory has been remarkably important to allow a new perspective, mostly based on a discursive account of the production of the subject by means of different devices in the processes of subjection.

As far as I am concerned, my aim is to offer a different perspective on this phenomenon, which will neither be anchored in a psychiatric focus, nor in a purely constructivist/nominalist one that reduces the subject to a discursive monism. Hence, I will elaborate a Lacanian analysis of the latest film whose major topic is about transsexuality: Tom Hooper's *The Danish Girl*, which was released at the end of 2015. In addition, my purpose will be focused on offering a detailed analysis of the transition process lived and embodied by the main character, Einar/Lili. According to the interpretation that I will provide, the film reproduces a too much taken for granted liaison: transsexuality as a psychotic symptom, a remark that has been lately discussed in Lacanian psychosis by means of a further analysis of contemporary hysteric symptoms.

Before beginning my analysis about the film, I would like to clarify some key notions regarding the Lacanian corpus. In aiming to elaborate a psychoanalytic approach to the film, what is crucial to outline is the fact that Einer/Lili tries to find a solution in front of an impasse to which each subject, independently of its anatomic sex and its insertion into a social discourse, is confronted: sexual difference. For psychoanalysis, sex is neither a mere biologic reality nor a pure cultural one, but it is rather placed in a frontier between these two domains, which refers to the specificity of one of the major Freudian concepts: the drive. In his *Three Essays on a Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud defines this concept in these terms: "The *drive* refers to the representative psychic agency of intra-somatic stimuli, which is in a process of fluidity, whereas a stimulus is merely produced by singular excitations that come from the exterior world" (Freud, 1905: 153. Italics in the original). As a result, the drive is not an automatic response to an outer agent, but it is a *representation* of something attached to the body, this is to say, it involves the primordial role of the signifier and its effect on the subject, a remark that clearly differentiates the drive from instincts[2]. Furthermore, the difference between the drive and the instinct entails that human sexuality is not linked in advance to a concrete object, but the drive is rather in the pursuit of it.

In relation to the link between the drive and its object, Jacques Lacan, following Freud's remarks on the frontier status of sex, pushed the reflection forward. Concerning the circuit proper to the drive, Lacan referred to its partial structure, which entails that the drive does not exhaust the object at once, but it rather surrounds it[3]. The drive, then, operates as a deviated line whose goal is never assured, which means that the elected object could be nearly anyone, diminishing any prerogative that might be attributed to a heterosexual choice: "Si la pulsion peut être satisfaite sans avoir atteint ce qui, au regard d'une totalisation biologique de la fonction, serait la satisfaction à sa fin de reproduction, c'est qu'elle est pulsion partielle, et que son but n'est point autre chose que ce retour en circuit" (Lacan, 1973: 163). In other words, the drive as the interstice between biology and culture is deprived of any teleology, which implies that human sexuality, due to the effect of language on the subject, suffers a de-naturalisation.

Sex, then, despite its initial imbrication with the organism and reproduction, becomes a parcel for which there is no signifier able to represent it as a function, placed in a domain that, in Lacanian terms, refers to the Real. By "Real" Lacan does not mean to give an account of "reality", which is linguistically structured by means of the regions of the Imaginary (the primordial dimension of the signifier in its oppositional logic), and the Symbolic (which must be understood as a signifying chain deprived of a totality and governed by a lack that, indeed, points to what is *realest*), yet what escapes from an attempt to construct a totality. Therefore, sex is placed on the side of the Real because it is neither graspable by the imaginary representations of the signifier, which mainly refers to the identifications attributed to masculinity and femininity, nor by the Symbolic, which regulates the assumption of the sexed status of the body through the operation of castration in neurosis and perversion, while in psychosis the relation towards it is a rejection, expressed by the notion of "foreclosure". In other words, sex is neither simply the anatomy nor the identifications that are said to be proper to men and women, but it mainly appeals to a crucial Lacanian concept: *jouissance* and its two modalities in relation to the master signifier of the unconscious, this is to say, the phallus[4].

Besides, what Lacan signals – and this is crucial in order to offer an accurate interpretation of Einar/Lili – is the failure that sex is in relation to the signifying chain. Such a claim entails that, diverging from the discursive strategies proper to domains such as gender studies, queer theory, and Foucault's legacy concerning sex, psychoanalysis does not offer a normative or prescriptive account of human sexuality, but it points to its negative structure, this is to say, the antinomy that sex is in relation to discourse. Sex is not an attribute or predicate, but a gap made of pure negativity, a feature proper to the domain of the Real as a modality of what is impossible to represent. As a result, sexual difference offers the two possible positions in which such a failure happens: the modalities of *jouissance* indicate the location of each subject in relation to the single available signifier for sex, the phallus or phallic function. Being a man or a woman, then, is not primarily a matter of attributes or identifications, but of enjoyment. This is what the psychoanalyst Patricia Gherovici clarifies:

> Sexual identity for both males and females is always precarious because the human infant *becomes sexed* without fully symbolizing unconsciously a normal, finished sexual positioning. Psychoanalysis attempts to throw light on the ways in which sexuality fails to conform to the social norms by which it is regulated and on the various fantasies that are constructed to veil the structural failure (Gherovici, 2010: 5. Italics on the original).

Consequently, my analysis of Einar/Lili transition will be mainly focused on his/her efforts to articulate a suitable "solution" for such an impasse, which is based on the relation that each subject elaborates in relation to the signifier of the unconscious, and the *jouissance* as a *real* surplus from the effect of the signifier that structurally appeals to the body. Furthermore, the fact that there is only the phallus as the single available signifier for the unconscious in order to deal with the Real-impossible of sex implies that the sexual relationship between the sexes is impossible to be written, this is to say, there is no way to articulate a symmetry between each sexed pole. Hence, identifications, both imaginary and symbolic, are contingent and precarious strategies to organize what escapes from sense and its production, returning incessantly in traumatic terms. Language, then, works as a tool to give an account of the region lacked of a proper category, surrounding the subject through unconscious fantasies: "(...) prendre le langage comme ce qui fonctionne pour suppléer l'absence de la seule part du réel qui ne puisse pas venir à se former de l'être, à savoir le rapport sexuel" (Lacan, 1975b: 47).

2. The Imaginary and the fascination towards the body: Painting, the symptom and the *sinthome*

The opening of *The Danish Girl* is revelatory of what is to come: a lake that works as a mirror where the image of three trees is reflected. Indeed, the whole photographic texture of the film works as a reflex, a projection of a bodily and extended image. From a Lacanian perspective, what is quite interesting is the enormous presence of the register of the Imaginary. It is the fascinating domain of images that provides the identifications of what Lacan called the *moi*, the French term for the Freudian *ego*, which refers to the Freudian analysis of narcissism as the psychic operation that enables the subject to elaborate an image of its own body. Indeed, the couple formed by Einer and Gerda Wegener are specifically bond to this question: they are both painters.

In a Lacanian sense, it would be licit to assert that painting has a singular dimension for Einar, especially *before* the beginning of his transition towards Lily, which is firstly a fantasy of her wife. Most of the paintings that Einar makes are portraits of women, figures to which the character seems to profess an extreme devotion, which reminds of the operation of sublimation[5]. As far as sublimation is concerned, it is a mechanism thanks to which the drive obtains a satisfaction by means of a deviation from its usual object of enjoyment. In his *Introduction to narcissism* (1914), Freud remarks that "the sublimation is a process that takes place in the domain of the objectified libido, which consists of the orientation of the drive towards a different goal from sexual satisfaction" (Freud, 1914: 29). Hence, what Einer elaborates in his portraits and paintings is tied to an operation that refers to the object of *jouissance*, which Lacan called the *objet petit a:*

> C'est ici que j'avance que l'intérêt que le sujet prend à sa propre schize est lié à ce qui la détermine – à savoir, un objet privilégié, surgi de quelque séparation primitive, de quelque automutilation induite par l'approche même du réel, dont le nom, en notre algèbre, est objet *a* (Lacan, 1973: 78).

Thus, painting is the recourse that Einar uses in order to produce a fantasy in response to the lack imposed by the operation of castration, which results in the loss of a mythical *jouissance* previous to the insertion into the Symbolic. The pursuit of the object-cause of desire and *jouissance* refers to the void imposed by the signifier on the living organism. Hence, it is structurally tied to the body as some sort of cut experienced on it, a remark that can also be made in relation to Einar's portraits: each one of them operates as a metaphor of what is irrecoverably lost, leaving partial traces that the subject pursues. In this sense, Lacan uses the algebraic *a* to refer to what inserts the subject into the dialectic of desire and *jouissance* in order to stress the negativity that recovers the lost object, which is foreclosed in the register of the Real, being the element that no concrete symbolisation can absorb.

In Einar's case, what has a privileged status is the scopic drive, this is to say, the drive whose object of *jouissance* is placed in the gaze, being a detachment between the painting as such and what he attempts to represent through a signifying practice. To use a Lacanian expression, painting performs the *littoral* proper to writing, which shapes the borders proper to the body inasmuch as the signifier, thanks to its imaginary dimension, allows the creation of the form of a bodily totality: "La lettre n'est-elle pas… littorale plus proprement, soit figurant qu'un domaine tout entier fait pour l'autre frontière, de ce qu'ils sont étrangers, jusqu'à n'être pas réciproques?" (Lacan, 2001: 14). His paintings elaborate a liaison between the feminine figure and his modality of *jouissance*, which provisionally offers a solution for the impasse to which the unconscious is confronted: how to handle sex and sexual difference when there is only one available signifier? What it means to have a sexed body? It is the enigma in front of which each subject elaborates a symptom[6], this is to say, a subjective response in front of the Real-impossible of sexual difference. Geneviève Morel, in her essay *Sexual*

Ambiguities. Sexuation and Psychosis (2011) signals the always problematic relation towards the body because the subject *is not* its body, but it *has it*, being a negative separation that bans any immediate fusion. Thus, language is needed in order to deal with our bodily dimension:

> Our relation to the body is complicated by the fact that we are subjects of language. Our body is marked by signifiers; it only has a form because we are capable of recognizing ourselves in the mirror; and the *jouissance* of the body goes well beyond its biological needs. Language subverts the "natural" body (Morel, 2011: 156).

Unfortunately, the story narrated by the film does not tell any subjective experience before his success as a painter, which deprives of a further information concerning his story. The spectator is only confronted to Einar just before the Real bursts into his symptomatic reality, undoing the strategy he had invented in order to join the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary through a *sinthome* that painting was meant to be. The *sinthome*[7] is a Lacanian expression that describes the subjective union of the three registers thanks to the phallic signifier, which puts a limit to *jouissance* and the demand of the Other – at least in neurosis and perversion –. Thanks to the *sinthome*, the subject might assume a position concerning the real dimension of its *jouissance*, being either masculine or all phallic, or feminine or not-all phallic, regardless of its anatomy: "The Name-of-the-Father was thus defined as a key signifier granting access to phallic signification: it was the factor that allowed the subject to bestow meaning to signifiers and adopt a position as male or female in the basic sexual division" (Gherovici, 2010: 159).

Hence, Einar seems to have achieved a more or less stable configuration of the *sinthome* thanks to being a painter, which allows him to bond the Imaginary and the Real, and a husband, an identification proper to a symbolic level regulated by the Law. In this subjective construction, his wife, Gerda, plays a crucial role, which reminds of the Lacanian assertion of the importance that a partner can have in order to sustain the *sinthome*. Or, at least, this is what the film seems to suggest, mainly in a scene previous to the emergence of Lili in terms of the fantasmatic projection of Gerda on Einar. The scene in question offers a scenario where they are both going to bed. Einar, lying in bed, watches Gerda's body, merely covered by a nightdress. In her body, he finds something irresistibly attractive, which in a certain sense might be a fetishist *jouissance*, this is to say, a denial of the lack imposed by the signifier through the libidinal recourse to an object of enjoyment. The moonlight that impregnates their room creates a visual atmosphere similar to a painting. Just before Gerda puts her nightdress off, Einar requests her to keep it, enjoying the vision of her wife. I would like to suggest, in order to continue with my analysis in the next section, that his *sinthome* begins to experience a progressive disintegration with the encounter of what, in Lacanian terms, is The Woman, this is to say, a recreation of feminine *jouissance* in terms of completeness and totality, a feature proper to perversion.

However, as I will argue for, according to what the film recreates, Einar is not a pervert, this is to say, he does not disavowal castration, but he rather forecloses the phallic signifier that inflicts a structural separation between the subject and all its identifications. Hence, Einar sees in Gerda what he had been sublimating through painting, which had prevented a trigger of a psychotic structure: The Woman in terms of the signifier that he will aim to incarnate. In other words, the symptomatic reaction of Einar in front of the Real-impossible of sexual difference is the *pousse-à-la-femme*[8], a feminization that attempts to synthesize the feminine position under a whole signifier: "The *pousse-à-la-femme* results from the subject's delusional interpretation of the *jouissance* that invades him/her, and is not localized by the phallic signifier: in other words, it is foreclosed. *Jouissance* is now interpreted as being feminine" (Morel, 2011: 60).

3. Desire as the desire of the Other and the emergence of Lili

According to my point of view, the appearance of Lili that the film offers is too abrupt, being a void between Einar's dissolution of its *sinthome* through the emergence of a *real* dimension of what was repressed concerning sex through the vision of Gerda's bodily figure, mainly its nightdress, interpreted by him as the lacking element for the acquisition of a full *jouissance*, and the "creation" of Lili as a new (failed) *sinthome*. He lacks of The Woman, which he will constantly pursue until his death, provoked by a non-successful attempt of transplanting a womb within his/her body. In other words, experiencing lack in these terms involves a rejection of the phallic signifier, which explains why Einar's *sinthome* becomes dissolved.

Despite this important narrative absence, which deprives of interpreting his symptomatic reaction in front of the Real-impossible of sexual difference by means of his infantile memoirs, I would like to go back to the scene where Gerda's nightdress becomes a fetish for Einar. This moment, crucial for the symptomatic response that Einar will give in front of the real of sex through Lili, allows a further exploration of the relevance that Einar confers to Gerda. Indeed, in the next relevant scene after this moment, Gerda attempts to finish a portrait of a ballet-dancer. It is a huge portrait of a good friend of the couple, who will rename Einar as Lili. In a moment of distress and of impotence in front of the impossibility to achieve her goal, Gerda asks Einar to be her model to finish the portrait. Sitting in a bank, with the same dress that the ballet-dancer had worn in front of Gerda, and with a pair of tights, Einar watches his body dressed with feminine clothes. Besides, he watches his body in front of the Other that has become a metonymical incarnation of the object-cause of desire, which permits to stress the structural liaison with alterity in the dialectic of desire.

Indeed, Lacan, in his sixth seminar, devoted to desire and the insertion of the subject into language as a symbolic structure, elaborated an explanation of the desiring circuit[9]. Desire is always the desire of the Other because the satisfaction that the subject pursues must be interpreted in linguistic terms, this is to say, it must be expressed through a demand. As a result, the previous need that searched for its satisfaction, once it becomes a linguistic interpellation, experiences a fundamental transformation. Desire, then, will be the negative rest that constantly remains between what the subject expected and what it finally obtained through the Other, being a void that remains empty. Hence, as Lacan stressed, "il s'ensuit que le besoin du sujet est profondément modifié par le fait de devoir passer par la demande, donc par les défilés

du signifiant" (Lacan, 2013: 41). In addition, the bond between desire and language involves a further consequence: once the word is uttered, there is a split at the core of the subject, being a separation between that subject of the enunciation and what is uttered, which implies that, strictly speaking, the subject does not what he/she desires. The dynamic proper to desire, thus, is proper to the unconscious, the discourse of the Other inasmuch as it is caused by the asymmetry between the subject and the Other:

> A partir du moment où la structure de la chaîne signifiante a réalisé l'appel de l'Autre, c'est-à-dire où le procès de l'énonciation se distingue de la formule de l'énoncé et s'y superpose, la prise du sujet dans l'articulation de la parole, prise qui était d'abord innocente, devient inconsciente (Lacan, *op. cit.* : 26).

Therefore, the desiring bond that takes place between Gerda and Einar involves an attempt realised by Einar in order to introduce himself into the fantasmatic dimension displayed by Gerda through painting. Einar tries to identify with the Other that demands him to incarnate an imaginary position symbolically regulated. What becomes even more interesting is the abrupt entrance of the real model. Such interruption has two further consequences : it reminds Einar that he occupies the symbolic position of a man, blushing in front of someone that has seen him transvestite, and, at the same time, offers him a chance to reconfigure his *sinthome* through a new name : Lili. A name that cannot be separated from the desiring instance in which Gerda and Einar are both implied. In relation to the peculiar bond between the name given to a subject by the Other and desire, the psychoanalyst Colette Soler signals what follows:

> Le prénom qui s'ajoute au patronyme est tout autre chose: il n'est pas transmis automatiquement mais il inscrit un choix. Aussi est-il toujours le stigmate du désir de l'Autre à l'endroit du nouveau venu, un signifié de l'Autre (s(A)) qui porte la trace de ses rêves, de ses attentes (Soler, 2009: 93).

Thus, the name conferred by the Other, which projects in the subject its expectations and dreams, becomes the occasion for the emergence of what had been repressed, being an irruption of the Real that installs Einar in a new position that becomes an impossible one. While Lili is seen by Gerda as an imaginary fantasy with no *real* existence, for Einar it will be interpreted as his/her actual self. Lili is the occasion to achieve what could not be expressed under the name of "Einar".

In the following scenes, the couple enters into a game of cross-dressing and make-up fetishism. Lili becomes a model for a series of portraits made by Gerda. Each portrait is a repetition in which Einar tries to incarnate this fantasy, experiencing a *jouissance* in this performance of passing as a woman. Such a performance will lead them to enlarge this sort of fantasied identifications into a different symbolic scenario, represented by the party where Gerda and Einar/Lili go.

However, an unexpected event takes place in the party: the fantasy that Lili is said to be attracts the curiosity of a young man, who approaches him/her. At first, Einar/Lili doubts in relation to responding to the demand of this new Other. He is being addressed as a woman, but he *is not* a woman, or at least that is what his first reaction seems to suggest. Nonetheless, he/she decides to enter into the game of seduction. In order to be read as a woman, he/she performs the cultural codes attributed to a woman in the Danish society in the middle of the 1920's: showing some shyness in front of a man, being receptive to the requirements of his partner, and so on. What will break the performance is the reaction of the young man: he kisses Lili, which places Einar/Lili in an impossible situation of sustaining the fantasy. The symptomatic reaction is an extremely bodily one: his/her nose begins to bleed when Einar/Lili sees a third character that breaks the previous atmosphere, Gerda.

Once they are back at their home, Gerda assumes the incarnation of the symbolic law, reminding him that Lili does not exist, but it rather is a pure fantasy between them. He is Einar, his husband. In an effort to assume this symbolic position, Einar goes back to painting. But something has changed: the *jouissance* that he obtained thanks to this artistic activity has vanished, and Lili incessantly returns to him. In other words, the *sinthome* whose structure was painting-Einar-husband-Gerda is no longer operative, which means that he must reinvent himself. Nevertheless, an interrogation emerges for Einar: can Lili work as a *sinthome* if he has a penis? From a psychoanalytic point of view, one can be on the feminine side (of *jouissance*) and have a penis, a question explicitly outlined by Lacan: "on n'est pas forcé quand on est mâle, de se mettre du côté tout-phallique. Il y a des hommes qui sont aussi bien que les femmes" (Lacan, 1975b: 70)[10].

His answer, though, will be a negative one, illustrated by a scene where Einar goes back to the store where he and Gerda had obtained the dresses and wig in order to perform as Lili. There, Einar gets undressed and, naked, looks at a mirror his bodily image, evoking the looking-glass phase elaborated by Lacan to give an account of the construction of the subject's bodily image in terms of an extended projection. For Einar, there is an element that distorts his aim to become the impossible position of The Woman: his penis. Hiding it between his legs, he touches and admires his body, feeling an incredibly joy in front of what he reads as a feminine body. The phallic signifier, hence, has been reduced to the image of the penis, which is the common error made by the male transsexual through foreclosure and rejection of castration. To become Lily, he must have his penis removed, attributing an error to nature, which has not been able to provide the body he is convinced to have. As Lacan remarks:

> Dans ces conditions, pour accéder à l'autre sexe, il faut réellement payer le prix, justement celui de la petite différence qui passe trompeusement au Réel par l'intermédiaire de l'organe, justement, à ce qu'il cesse d'être pris pour tel et, du même coup, révèle ce que veut dire d'être organe, un organe n'est instrument que par le truchement de ceci dont tout instrument se fonde, c'est un signifiant. Eh bien ! C'est en tant que signifiant que le transsexualiste n'en veut plus et pas en tant qu'organe (Lacan, 2011 : 15).

To understand the foreclosure proper to psychosis, and, in this case, to Einar's transsexualist symptom, it is important to outline two issues: the confusion of the Imaginary and the Real, and the three moments of the assumption of a sexed position. As far as foreclosure is concerned, the confusion often made by transsexuals is to put on the same level the phallus as on organ (the image of the penis) to its dimension as

a signifier without a signified (the Real). It involves a failed attempt to subtract oneself from the phallic function through recourse to a surgical intervention, which would presumably allow the subject to incarnate The Woman as a universal. The error that Einar makes is to presume that once the penis is removed, the phallus as a signifier will no longer be operative. What Einar denies is the fact that the Real cannot be grasped by any symbolic operation, which entails that sexual difference is not pure anatomy, but a modality of *jouissance* that challenges any identification. As a result, the sexual discourse is always based on a mistake: taking the phallus as the penis, which works on the Imaginary through the most elemental operation of differentiation, this is to say, being a man is having the phallus, while being a woman is lacking of it.

This imaginary separation, notwithstanding with that, hides a fundamental void at the core of sexuation, which defies any attempt to write the sexual relationship. As Geneviève Morel asserts: "For example, because one says, "I am a woman" or "I am a man", one believes oneself to be sexuated, but these attributes only support imaginary identifications beneath which the subject hides a fundamental void" (Morel, 2011: 20).

As a result, language forces the subject to interpret a mythical anatomy under the influence of one and single signifier, rejected in the case of psychosis, which means that castration is not working. In psychosis, the subject becomes fused with imaginary and symbolic identifications, rejecting the void of the Real. The consequence of foreclosure is barring the assumption of a sexual position. In Lacanian terms, as he enunciated it in *...ou pire* (2011).

> Sa passion, au transsexualiste, est la folie de vouloir se libérer de cette erreur, l'erreur commune qui ne voit pas que le signifiant c'est la jouissance, et que le phallus n'en est que le signifié (Lacan, 2011: 15).

The rest of the story is a delusional[xi] relation towards a body that does not show the *certainty* that Einar/Lili has concerning his/her "truly" self: he/she is a woman trapped in a man's body. This contradiction felt by Einar/Lili is perfectly illustrated when he/she meets again the man who had flirted with him/her at the party. In a moment of intimacy, he kisses him/her, willing to have sex with Einar/Lili. At the precise moment that his/her genitals are touched and the name of "Einar" is uttered, Einar/Lili rushes to his/her home. His/her passing has failed, which makes his/her *sinthome* crash. From this moment on, Lili will be his/her main character, feeling a huge disgust in being called "Einar" and talking of him in a third person.

4. The Other of science and writing as the last attempt to find a "solution"

After this failed attempt of passing as Lili, Gerda finds who she still conceives as her husband, Einar, performing as Lili and crying at home. Gerda, worried about him/her, asks what is wrong. The answer is clear: Einar/Lili finds him/herself trapped in a body that he/she cannot feel as his/her own. Therefore, she suggests that it would be good for him/her to see a doctor. This will be the first encounter with the discourse of science, governed by what Lacan named the discourse of the university[12], this is to say, a social construction of knowledge in terms of the truth concerning the subject. In Copenhagen, Einar/Lili sees a psychiatrist that reduces his/her symptom to a disorder from a normative conception of human sexuality, referring to the historical cultural

ideals on masculinity and manhood that any normal subject is said to embody. The diagnosis is what could be expected from psychiatry: Einar is insane, being Lili a depersonalization suffered from a syndrome that, in order to be treated, would require his/her hospitalisation. At this point, Gerda's reaction is to defy the conception concerning what a man – from the perspective of scientific knowledge – ought to be. Einar is not insane, but he rather suffers from the impossibility of incarnating a fantasy that he would like to be.

Some months later, the couple moves to Paris, where Gerda's portraits of Lili have had a huge success. In this period of their life, Gerda is confronted to a situation that requires an ethical response: how to sustain Einar's desire to become Lili, which implies to leave behind "Einar", the name that is attached to those moments and affects shared with his husband? Such an anxious dilemma is powerfully captured by the camera in a scene where Gerda requests Lili if she can have her husband back. Unfortunately, "Einar" does not exist any longer, but it is only "Lili". Gerda's reaction, all along this fundamental moment and beyond, is to accept Lili's decision by an act of love: she submits herself to Einar/Lili's desire, displacing her own desire in order to remain with him/her. Indeed, Gerda shows the dimension of love as such: love is not based on an exchange of empirical and concrete goods, but it is a disposition towards alterity, taking in the Other in its singular *jouissance*. In other words, love is giving one's lack-of-being, though it finds an impasse: the Real of sexual difference and the impossibility to become One:

> L'amour prétend être don; aimer, c'est en effet "donner ce que l'on n'a pas", son marque à être, mais il ment, car en fait il est demande: "Aimer, c'est vouloir être aimé". L'amour est demande d'être, il cherche son complément dans le manque de l'autre avec l'espoir de faire Un. Illusion par conséquent qui ne veut rien savoir du destin que nous fait le langage (Soler, 2011: 85).

In spite of the obstacle of the Real to which love is confronted, Gerda remains with Einar/Lili, which adds a further ethical element in her decision of sustaining his/her desire: assuming the lack of the impossibility to obtain what has disappeared, his husband. Indeed, in the moment where they meet a pioneer surgeon that has begun to perform sex changes, Gerda *believes in* Lili's self-narration: she is a woman trapped into a man's body.

However, fear emerges: there is a risk of dying owing to the fact that, in the 1920's, such a surgery was a rudimentary one. Despite this possibility, Lili does not hesitate: her demand is to become The Woman and, to achieve this goal, his/her penis must be removed in order to supposedly fill in her imaginary notion of "woman means not having a penis". Due to the fact his/her request is directed to science, his/her demand is interpreted in nearly literal terms, a question often reproduced still nowadays, which might have lethal consequences once the surgery is done. In the transsexual's demand, there is a request to fulfil an infinite expectation that no change could guarantee, which means that surgery, despite the psychiatric reduction of transsexuality to a mental disorder that requires a sex change, is never the final solution. This is why Geneviève Morel affirms that

"to respond to these subjects by acceding to their demand for surgery raises an ethical problem because in such cases the medical discourse makes itself, in some sense, the instrument of psychosis" (Morel, 2011: 187).

Fortunately, the first surgical intervention goes well and Lili *seems to* feel complete thanks to the removal of the male organ. Back in Copenhagen, Lili decides to work in what she identifies as a really feminine profession: a perfume saleswoman. All customers are delighted with her delicacy in selling perfumes, while all her colleagues at the store like Lili. Finally, she does not have to *pass as* a woman, but she has become one. In this sense, it is quite curious that the film suggests that Lili is at ease performing an extremely stereotyped version of womanhood, what seems to reinforce Catherine Millot's assertion in relation to certain female transsexuals:

"En effet, l'idée de la femme dont se réclament les transsexuels est d'un conformisme total. Hors de la star et de la popote, qui sont les deux pôles de l'identification féminine des transsexuels, pas de salut" (Millot, 1983: 12).

Nevertheless, to support her *sinthome* as Lili, writing reveals itself as an operation that helps her to join the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary, providing a certain and precarious consistency to the sum of identifications of her performance as a woman. Despite this, the *real* lack persists: Lili wants to achieve what she considers as a typical feminine trait, this is to say, being a mother. Thus, she demands the doctor for a transplant of a womb. The Woman, then, is reduced to the symbolic position of the mother, radically different from the feminine *jouissance* inasmuch as it is beyond the phallus, this is to say, the Law and its aim to produce a totality. Assuming the risk of this operation, Lili persists, captured by an invading Other that knows no limits, which reminds of the Freudian notion of the death drive, which was re-elaborated by Lacan in reference to the persisting dimension of *jouissance*, which exceeds the limits imposed by castration. As a matter of fact, the lack of any restriction, of any limitation in the domain of a fantasied omnipotent *jouissance*, is the same as death, the zero point in which life consumes itself[12].

This time, Lili's fate is condemned: the surgery does not go well and, eventually, she dies. Just before dying, she utters a final enouncement that is revelatory of all her transition: she had dreamt the night before that her mother was hugging her not as Einar, but as Lili. This is why, from a psychoanalytic perspective, emerges a final interrogation: was Lili trying to fit in her mother's desire, though the film does not narrate anything concerning this bond? Was the pursuing of the interpretation of her mother's desire what pushed Lili to a death drive that knew no restriction? The answer, maybe, should be searched for in her diary.

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A Communicative and Stylistic Adaptability of New Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions in Yorùbá Literary Texts

DAYO AKANMU

Abstract

New idioms and idiomatic expressions are quintessentially modern stock expressions which constitute communicative clogs in Yoru̇baı̀ routine discourses because of their semantic complexity and deviant nature. Existing studies have established their scope of usage in Yoru̇baı̀ music but have hardly addressed their communicative and stylistic adaptability in literary texts. This paper investigates the issues expressed with these idioms and strategies for using them in selected literary works in Yoruba. This is undertaken with a view to establishing their communicative and stylistic relevance in Yoruba discourses. The paper adopts Mukarousky's theory of Standard Language for its capability to explain 'differential specifica' between the language of everyday conversation and literary language. Five Yoru̇baı̀ literary texts were purposively selected from the works of Oluı̀yeòìmisiì Adeìboİòwaìleì, OyeİbaìnjiÌ Oòìlaijuyin, LeìreİÌ Adeìyeòmiì, Abeìeìguìndeì Oòìlaìjuyin and DayoİÒ AÌkaÌnmuì. In all the texts, five issues were expressed: corruption, politics, entertainment, transportation and abuse. Corruption was prominent in virtually all the texts and contextualized in bribery and fraud. Politics occurred in one text and was contextualized in embezzlement. Entertainment was found in two texts and were contextualized in eroticism, pornography and vulgarity. Transportation appeared also in one text, revealing the context of bus conducting. Abuse occurred in one text within the context of social misalignment. Linguistic strategies involved in their formation were derived from nominalization, compounding and phonaesthetic coinages. All these were differentially contextualized in fraud, (OòÌjeòÌluì), bribe (eòÌguìnjeò), vulgarity (koste /osòoÌdiÌ oÌkeÌ) and social misalignment (oìloìyuìn oì poònmoò). New idioms and idiomatic expressions, used to express socioeconomic, traditional and emotive issues in Yoru̇baı̀ literary texts occurred in mediated and non-mediated contexts and were conveyed through metaphorisation. These idioms reflect dynamism and modernity-constrained stylistic choices in Yoru̇baı̀ discourses.

Key words: New idioms, idiomatic expressions, Yoru̇baı̀ literary texts, communication strategy

1. Introduction

This paper is motivated based on the fact that new idioms and idiomatic expressions are tools in the hand of poets, novelists and others in the academia who have the urgent desired to educate Nigerians about new development in education, social, economic, politics and other areas of human endeavours. People are incapacitated with certain linguistic constraints imposed on them by their language, especially difficulty in getting appropriate lexical items and terms for the expression of their ideas. To overcome these linguistic challenges, the solution, according to Babalo̩lá (1972), Awóbùlúyì (1992: 26) and O̩láté̩jú (2005) lies in the use of new idioms and idiomatic expressions which can be derived by coining new words or idioms and by attaching new meanings to the existing ones. The paper is also devoted to the task of unraveling the communicative challenges associated with comprehension of new idioms as a result of their complex and deviant nature. Naturally, and like the traditional idioms, they are complex and deviant both in meaning and structure, they constitute a new veritable means of literary communication in the Yorùbá language.

This paper is preoccupied with the task of analysing and interpreting idioms and idiomatic expressions found in the texts selected for this work. This analysis is to provide insight into communicative and stylistic relevance of the idioms. Because of the possibility of new idioms and idiomatic expressions possessing many interpretations and the fact that meaning cannot be determined by their individual lexical constituents, this phenomenon is better studied and analysed from stylistic perspective with a view to determining their communicative and stylistic effects in literary texts. New idioms and idiomatic expressions are fast becoming popular among the people to such an extent that they are creeping into literary texts in Yorùbá at a significant rate owing to the impact of globalization. Our effort in this paper, therefore, is to subject the selected texts to critical analysis so as to determine the stylistic and communicative potential of new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

2. Method of Data collection

Data were collected from five Yorùbá literary texts across the genres of prose, poetry and drama. These literary genres which exemplify sufficient use of new idioms and idiomatic expressions include Olúyẹmisí Adébò̩wálé's play *O ̩ṣèyí Tán!* (1995); Lérè Adéyemí's novel *Àkùkọ gàgàrà* (2001); Oyèbánjí O̩lájuyin's novel *Òdòdó È̩yẹ* (2010); Adeìdoyin Abeìguìndeì's drama text *Ìgbéyàwó Ku Ọla* (2004) and Dayò Àkànmú's anthology *Jongbo Ọ̀rọ* (2002). In all the genres, five prominent issues were expressed. They include corruption, politics, entertainment, transportation and abuse. They were all contextualized in different aspects of human experiences. The new idioms and idiomatic expressions were analysed mainly at stylistic levels.

3. New Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

New idioms and idiomatic expressions are another distinctive and vital aspect of language use. The term new idiom is a modern stock expression, formed in response to the needs of the moment arising as a result of the linguistic constraints of the users

which consequently necessitate creation of new words and expressions. New idioms are so called not only because of their complexity which necessitates the overlapping tendencies of their semantic realizations but also because of their distinctive differences from old, traditional idioms. As a matter of fact, they straddle metaphor and euphemism and also serve as replication of the established Yorùbá idioms both in form and meaning. They are in spoken and written forms, and mainly operate at the lexical and phrasal levels. The lexical ones (one word idioms) are called idiom while the phrasal or sentential ones (more than one word idioms) are called idiomatic expressions. New idioms and idiomatic expressions are created either through coining, or by investing old words and expressions with new meanings. New idioms are creative, new, strange and fresh by nature. They are not vague expressions and their origins are also known to the users who are always dazzled wherever they come across them in any context.

4. Existing Works on New Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

Few scholars have turned their attention to the study of new idioms and idiomatic expressions in Yorùbá. These scholars include Àkànmú (2003) and Ọlátéjú (2005). As for the old or traditional idioms, a considerable amount of efforts seem to have been devoted to this even though in passing, as no direct or specific study of the Yoruba traditional idioms has been carried out in Yorùbá studies. Some scholars have described idioms as terms referring to words whose meanings cannot be predicted from the individual elements in them (Babalọlá, 1972; Àkànmú, 2003 and Ọlátéjú, 2005).

While discussing idioms and coinages, ((Babalọlá, 1972) states that neologism is used for expressing new items and ideas brought into Yorùbá culture by foreigners. His view bears direct relevance to this paper in that, neologism is one of the linguistic strategies employed in the formation of new idioms.

Àkànmú's (2003) work, is not specifically on new idiom and idiomatic expressions but it has semblance of new idioms in the discussion and the examples cited. He employed sociolinguistic analytical method for the interpretation of the work which he referred to as coded language used by certain groups or sub-culture of the Yorùbá society. In this work, many of the examples cited as slang are not slang in the real sense of it but are new idioms used by a considerable number of people. Also, without prior mention of the stylistic method for analysis, he explores aesthetic values of some of these new idioms that he calls slang, using stylistic apparatus.

Ọlátéjú's (2005) work is a remarkable contribution on new idioms, their formation and interpretation. He examines idioms and idiomatic expressions from both the linguistic and literary points of view. He adopted Chomskyan Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) while stylistic and some sociolinguistic variables were used to bring out aesthetic and communicative potential of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

5. Theory of Standard Language

The theory of standard language formulated by Jan Mukarovsky (1970) is considered the most suitable for this paper. The suitability of this model lies in the fact that it can be used to explain the differential specifica between the language of ordinary usage and literary expressions as well as using it to explain and interpret the deviant and inventive nature of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

6. Standard Language Vs Literary Language

According to Mukarovsky (1970), Standard Language (SL) is the language of everyday conversation. Its purpose is the understanding between the speaker and the audience with the aim of enhancing effective communication (Crystal, 1997: 68). Language of ordinary discourse is casual and devoid of ornamentation. It is unexamined and uncritical. It does not draw attention to itself or open up provocative questions to the nature of its coding. It is often used in schools, on radio, during political campaigns and preaching. Its priority is effective communication which calls for employment of words and phrases that can be fully comprehended. Therefore, to enhance undistorted communication in standard language, language must conform to the entire linguistic norms. Concepts crucial to the standard language are 'backgrounding', authomatization illustrated by the example below:

> Oṣòdì òkè!
> Oṣòdì òkè ló ń lọ!
> Oṣòdì òkè rè é!

> Oṣòdì òkè!
> It is going to Oṣòdì on the bridge
> Here is Oṣòdì òkè bus

Looking at the content of the example, which is a shout out of a particular popular bus stop/location in Lagos – 'Oṣòdì òkè', it is clear that no single element needs further explanation as regards meaning, because the expression is in standard Yorùbá. Whereas, Literary Language (LL) is the language of literature. It is also referred to as poetic language because of its special nature; it is remarkably different from Standard Language (SL). It cannot be called a brand of the standard because it has at its disposal, from the stand point of lexicon, syntax and so on, all the forms of the given language; it is rather 'a stylistic variation of standard language as confirmed by (Ọlátéjú, 1998). In literary language, the intentional violation of the norms of the standard language is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language. Concepts crucial to the literary language are foregrounding, de-automatization also illustrated in the example below:

> …Oṣòdì òkè tí ń mì jólójóló
> …Oṣòdì òkè that dangles admiringly

Unlike the previous example cited under SL., here, 'Oṣòdì òkè' has been de-automatized or foregrounded to have a new meaning (a busty lady), different from its original meaning in the earlier example, which is a popular location or bus stop in Lagos. Without the first example there can never be the second one, because 'Oṣòdì òkè' in the first example serves as the background to the second. Although, foregrounding is logically prohibited in standard language, but this is not to say that it is not visible in

SL, as Mukarousky indicates its possibility in journalistic language where it can be used as subordinate to communication in order to draw the readers' attention more closely to the issue at hand or the item of information articulated. This must have justified the use of new idioms that are foregrounded in the texts used in this paper.

7. Linguistic Strategies for the Formation of New Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

According to Bámgbósé (1975), word formation is a universal linguistic concept that is concerned with the study of the patterns on which a language forms new lexical item. As far as formation of new idioms and idiomatic expressions are concerned in this paper, the linguistic strategies involved in their formation include the following:

7.1. Nominalisation

Nominalisation is universally known as one of the veritable tools for generating new words in virtually every language. Ruvet (1973: 172) views it as the derivation of a noun phrase from an underlying clause or sentence; or the process of forming a noun from other word classes. Below are some examples of new idioms and idiomatic expressions created from the linguistic process of nominalization.

Idioms	Formation	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
Alaṣàkaṣà	On+àṣà+k+àṣà pre + n + neg. mrk + n (Owner-of-bad-culture)	Alaṣàkaṣà Owner of bad culture	Onisọkuṣọ vulgar person/user of nonsensical language
Ọlṣẹkọṣẹ	Oni+Oṣẹ+ki+oṣẹ pre + n + neg.mrk + n (Owner-of-bad-soap)	Ọlọṣẹkọṣẹ Possessor of bad soap	Oloriburuku (a misfortune person)
Elebòlò	Oni+ebòlò pre + n (Owner-of-ebòlò)	Elebòlò Seller of ebòlò vegetable	A prostitute
Ajẹbọtà	A+jẹ+bọtà pre + v + n (One-that-eats-butter)	Ajẹbọ? tà Butter eater	Ọmọ ti kò jìyà ri (children of the upper or middle class who have not been exposed to hard life or a child born with silver spoon)
Òṣọmọgbọmọgbìn	O+ṣe+ọmọ+gbe+ọmọ+gbìn pre + v + n + v + n + v (One-that-produce-chBámgbóséild-for-planting)	Òṣọmọgbọmọgbìn One that is in relationship with many ladies	A flirt, humaniser or philanderer.
Ègunjẹ	È+gún+jẹ pre + splitting verb (That-which-is-pounded-and-eaten)	Ègunjẹ Medicated powder	Rìba/owo àìto (bribe/settlement)
Ojabokòfo	O+ja+bo+kò+fo pre + comp. v + neg. mrk + v (He-that-fell-but-did-not-break)	O? ja? bọ? kòfọ? Unbreakable	Overcomer/invisible entity

7.2. Compounding

Scholars like Ogunbowale (1967), Rowland (1969) and Owolabi (1976), have revealed that compounding is a very productive word-formation strategy which entails the combination of two or more independent words to form another word with an entirely different meaning. In other words, two separate words are joined together to produce a single word. New idioms and idiomatic expressions formed through compounding are mostly in form of verb and noun structure – (Vb + N) or (N$_1$ + N$_2$) structure. For example: Vb + N

Idioms	Formation V + N	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
Gbémú	Gbé + imú Carry + nose	Gbémú carry nose	wíjọ́/yarí (complain/grumble)
Gbéborùn	Gbé + ìborùn Carry + neck band	gbeborùn carry neck band	(sòfófó/tojubọle) (be an interloper)
Gbéfìlà	Gbé + fìlà Carry + cap	gbéfìlà carry cap	(sòfófó/tojúbọlé) (an interloper)
Gbéṣẹ́	Gbe + iṣẹ Carry + work	gbeṣẹ carry work	sòwò nàbì/ṣe aṣewo (engage in prostitution)
Yabébà	Ya + bebà Destroy + paper	yabébà destroy paper	ná owó bí ẹlẹ́dà (spend extravagantly)
Gbójà	Gbé+ ojà Carry + market	gbọjà carry market	sòwò to lòdì si òfin (deal in contrabands)
Gbẹ̀wà	Gba + ẹ̀wà Collect + beans	Gbẹ̀wà collect beans	Ṣẹ̀wọ̀n (serve jail term)
Gbéégún	Gbé + eégún Carry+ masquerade	gbeegun carry masquerade	jí ìwe wò nínú ìdánwo (to cheat in the exam)
Jọta	Jẹ + ọta (Eat + bullet)	Jọta eat bullet	Lówó (be reach)

Idioms	Formation N$_1$ + N$_2$	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
àtikè ọlà	Atikè+ọlà Powder+ wealth	àtikè ọlà powder of wealth	(a powdery substance) for: An illicit drug like cocaine
Oṣòdì òkè	Oṣòdì + òkè Oṣòdì + hill	Oṣòdì òkè Oṣòdì on the hill (a bus stop in Lagos)	big boobs
Ounjẹ ọmọ	Oúnjẹ + ọmọ child+food	Child/infant food formular)	big boobs

7.3. Phonoeasthetic Coinages

Idioms in this category are called phonoaesthetic idioms because they evolve from phonoaesthetic coinages. Idioms of this nature, according to Ọlátéjú , (1989 132), refer to words or expressions which by the virtue of their sound composition imitate or

suggest their meaning. By nature, they are idiophonic or onomatopoeic and they exhibit close relationship between the sound component of the word and its meaning and they are mostly one word. The following are examples of such coinages:

Idioms	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
Gòòbe Pálasà	A Hausa expression for tomorrow coined phoneaesthetically to denote a very light and made-in China products e.g. mobile phones.	confusion/chaos fake/ inferior/substantial

8. Analysis of Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions in Selected Literary Texts

As discussed under method of data collection, the five selected texts are: *Àkùkọ Gàgàrà* by Lerè Adeyẹmi, *Ìgbeyàwo Ku Ọ̀la* Abeegunde Adedoyin, *O Ṣè Yi Tan!* by Oluyẹmisi Adebọ̀wale, *Jongbo Ọ̀rò* by Dayọ̀ Àkànmu and *Òdòdo Èyẹ* by Oyèbanji ỌlajuyinIn Lerè Adeyẹmi's *Àkùkọ Gàgàrà,* a new idiom, *'gbajuè'* is used to describe the fraudulent tendency of a town called 'Ètànlokù'. In the text, Àlào bluntly refuses efforts and attempts of suitors from Ètànlokù who propose to Fadẹkẹmi, her daughter, on the ground that many of the young men from the town are irresponsible and fraudulent. He breaks his silence on the issues when Fadẹkẹmi's mother, who is also from Ètànlokù, keeps tormenting him and wants to know why he does not want to allow Fadẹkẹmi to get married to men from Ètànlokù:

...igbó mímú àti 'gbájú è tí wọn ń pè ní 419 ti jàrábà àwọn ará ìlú Ètànlókù'.

...marijuana and fraud, also called 419 have become a way of life of the people of Ètànlókù

(*Àkùkọ Gàgàrà*)

The underlined item is a verbal expression which literally means slap him/slap his face. It has however been nominalized as '*gbaju è*' to convey the idea of a fraudster. The new idiom '*gbaju è*' could have been connected with an old expression '*gbaju ìgan*' used between 1960 and 1970 to describe magicians who deceptively rob people of their belongings at motor parks and some other locations and also, the observation of the shocking effects and of excruciating pains suffered by the one whose face is slapped. The feeling or experience is the same when someone is defrauded. Definitely, '*gbaju è*' (fraudster) is someone who inflicts pains on another person as a result of his act of defrauding. Today, apart from its usage in the text as shown in the excerpt above, '*gbaju è*' has almost become a household expression in Nigeria and among the Yorùba because of the prevalence of corruption in our country. It is the word or expression for people who are involved in a criminal act known in the law courts as 419 and other offences having to do with fraud, embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds.

In *Ìgbeyàwo Ku Ọ̀la*, a play written by Abeegunde Adedoyin, there is also the use of a new idiom – *ègunjẹ* – where a character called Owoniyì enters a particular office to see Gbadebọ̀'s boss and is told to offer bribe (*ègunjẹ)* before he could see the person:

Owóníyì:	*Ẹ má bínú àwọn ọ̀gá ni mo fẹ́ rí*
Gbádébọ̀:	*Mo ti gbọ́, ṣé èyin náà mọ ìlú tí a wà yìí, ẹnu òfifo kìí dún nàmùnàmù, ègúnjẹ ló layé[2]*
Owóníyì:	Don't be angry, I came to see your boss.
Gbádébọ̀:	I have heard. I am sure you are aware that in this country, nothing goes for nothing, ègúnjẹ is the order of the day.

Ègúnjẹ, in its literal sense means a traditional herbal powder and can be interpreted idiomatically or connotatively to mean a bribe/bribery. Originally, It is used to exhibit the corrupt tendency of some Nigerians who smartly used the expression in their various offices or businesses in order to get additional money from customers besides their salaries or profits in an unlawful manner. The thoughts of living beyond one's income brought about the expression *ègunjẹ* in the above excerpt.

In '*O Ṣe Yí Tan!*', a play written by Olúyẹmisí Adébọ̀wálé, the word *Ègúnjẹ* is also used as allusion to the corrupt nature of the Nigerian system and her people. For instance, in Àjàyí's office, Fálànà sarcastically accused Àjàyí of supplying furniture of an inferior quality by refusing to sit down even when Ajayi politely offers him a sit. Eventually, Àjàyí remarks thus:

Àjàyí:	*Ṣé nítorí pé mo ní mo gba contract furniture yẹn lẹ fi wá ń complain? Quality ti owó tó kù gbé ni mo bẹ àwọn carpenters láti bá mi ṣe ẹ, kì í ṣe favourite mi rárá. 'Ègúnjẹ' tó ba country jẹ ló jẹ́ kí quality ẹ low.*
Àjàyí:	Are you complaining because I got the contract for that furniture? I appealed to the carpenters to produce the furniture of that quality based on the amount that was left; it is not my favourite at all. ègúnjẹ' (bribery) which is endemic in the country is the cause.

In the above, the use of *ègunjẹ*, a phonoaesthetic coinage from an existing word '*àgunmu*' (a traditional herbal powder) which is a new idiom for bribery/settlement, is to make readers know the source of substandard goods in the country. Going by Àjàyí's defence, he could not supply furniture of a high quality because he had to bribe those who facilitated the contract. If he had failed to give eÌ̀ògunjeò, he would not have got another contract from them. '*Ègúnjẹ*' just like *gbaju è*, is another new idiom in Yorùbá that has become a household expression and has, thus, entered the lexicon of the language.

Apart from the new idioms which express corruption in the selected texts, there are also others that are used to communicate political ideas and create entertainment.

For instance, the use of *ọ̀jẹ̀lu*, is found in Akanmu's *Jongbo Ọ̀rọ̀* as shown in the extract below:

> ...*Ọ̀ṣèlu niwọn ni àb'ọjẹ̀lu?*
> *Nitori olè ti wọn o jàlu*
> *Wọn fi Bibelì bura èke lasan*
> *Kaye le rò pe wọn dàtunbi*
> *Won lo Àlùkùraanì nigbàagba*
> *Irọ funfun balau ni wọn n pa kiri*

> ...*Are they politicians or embezzlers*
> *Because of their plan to loot the country's treasury*
> *They falsely swore with the Bible*
> *For people to think they are born-again*
> *They used the Quran on several occasions*
> *It is a white lie that they are peddle around.*

In the above excerpt, the new idiom used is *Ọ̀jẹ̀lu* which has two interpretations - literal and idiomatic meanings:

Ọ̀jẹ̀lu

(i)   Literal meaning - politician

(ii) Idiomatic meaning - eater of town. i.e. corrupt politician, embezzlers

The idiom *ọ̀jẹ̀lu*, is a popular expression used in the political arena to describe the Nigerian politicians who always make promises before getting to the seat of power but, on getting there, they become something else. In other words, *Ọ̀jẹ̀lu* (ọ̀-jẹ-ìlu), one who eats the town, as an idiom shares the same derivational strategy with *Ọ̀ṣèlu* (one- who-rules or administers the town – politician). The two words, shared derivational similarities and at the same time, they are semantically different and opposite; one is complimentary *(ọṣelu)* while the other *(ọ̀jẹ̀lu)* is not. Before now, in the socio-political history of Nigeria, *'(ọṣelu'* was the accurate expression used for the political leaders or politicians who are selfless and abide with the normal democratic tenet that brings meaningful development and dividends of democracy to the country and the citizens rather than looting the country's treasury for their selfish agenda. Today, as can be seen in the above text, *'ọjẹ̀lu'* which can be interpreted as corrupt or fraudulent politician, is coined and used to describe fraudulent leaders who have derailed from the political principle of services to the people.

Another idiom and idiomatic expression commonly found in literary texts is Ọ̀sọdì-Òkè. In *Òdòdò Èyẹ,* a prose written by Oyèbanji Ọlajuyin, Deroju unzips Morẹnikejì's blouse while trying to help her remove an ant on her back, Deroju could not believe what he sees, Morẹnikejì's dazzling beauty. He remarks thus

> ...*Èwù ọhun fi àyà rẹ̀ silẹ̀ diẹ̀, kò sì bo osọdì òkè tan, mejeèjì fi ẹ̀gbẹ kan ara wọn , wọn pupa rẹsurẹsu ., ẹ̀gbà ọrùn to wọ̀ rọra f 'ori sọ àlàfo to wà laàrin osọdì-òkè naà, o n dan gbinriin.*[3] *(p.11)*

...That very blouse exposed her chest a bit and did not cover the *osọdì-òkè* completely, the two touched each other sideways, they were succulently fair, the neck-chain she put on slightly positioned itself in a space between the oshodi-oke, it was glittering admiringly.

The above underlined expression *osọdì-òkè,* an existing word in the Yorùbá language was used here to convey a new meaning that is contrary to its original meaning (bus stop) to connote *ọyàn* (breasts) for aesthetic/entertainment effect. *Ọsọdì-òkè* is the name of a particular bus stop in Lagos. It is called Ọsọdì Oke because it is on the bridge just like a woman's breast is also at the uppermost part of the body. This is a case of semantic transfer.

Also found in Oyèbanji Ọlajuyin's *Òdòdo Èyẹ* is another idiom — *koste,* which is a corrupt coinage from the English word '*corset*' (bra). Having unzipped Morẹnikejì's blouse and observed her beauty, he continues to describe her underwear, especially the bra:

> ...*Ko-s-te àyà rẹ̀ funfun gbòò. Yàtọ̀ si irin tintin ti wọn fi so ko-s-te naà lẹyìn, kò ni àbàwọn kankan (p.11)*

...The bra on her chest is extremely white. Apart from the tiny hook used to fasten the bra at the back, it has no single stain.

In the above, the expression *'koste'*, a phonoaesthetic coinage from the English word 'corset' which has the literal meaning of 'bra' *(*a piece of tight fitting underwear that women use to make their breasts stand firm) is comically used as idiom to mean a type of bra used by both common,local and educated ladies/woman. It is used here to entertain readers who may not have been expecting its use in the context. There are other common expressions in routine communication, such as *koste onirin, koste onigi* and *koste alasòoò* to specify different types of *bra*. Though *koste* in normal routine communication is often used derogatorily for comic effect, in this text, does not seem to have derogatory effect. It is rather used admiringly to imply elegance. .

Examples of new idioms and idiomatic expressions are also found in *Jongbo Ọ̀rọ̀,* a poem written by Dayọ̀ Àkànmu (2002) in the first segment of the excerpt below, line two of the excerpt for stylistic and communicative functions:

> *Bo o ba wi*
> *Wọn a leego làwọn n ta si*
> *Bo o sì tun sọrọ jù*
> *Wọn a ni owo lọwọ n lẹ̀yunlẹ̀*

> *Iṣu ni wọn n pè leego*
> *Eego làwọn n pè ni nairà (Àkànmu 2002:30)*

If you talk

They will say money is their priority
And if you talk too much
They will say money at hand is the ultimate

Yam is what is called Eego

Eego is referred to as naira.

In the above example, the three words used as new idioms are *ta si, iñu* and *eeAgo* and are of stylistic and communicative significance to the ideas being expressed in the poem by the poet. For instance, they can be analysed thus:

    (i) ta si (line 3) Literal : has interest in

                Idiom : has passion for

    (ii) iñu (line 5)Literal : yam

                Idiom : money (owoA)

    (iii) ee go (line 2, 6)Literal : money (an Igbo name for money)

                Idiom : naira money

In the above examples, the preponderance of new idioms relating to money contributes, not only to the stylistic elegance of the poem, but also to the main idea, subject matter or the focus of the poem, which is the fact that money is the soul of business. This interpretation is corroborated by a Yorùbá Fujìmusician, Alhaji Àyìnla Kollington, who, in one of his waxed records, sings thus:

Ki làwa n <u>ta si</u> o o

    Eeìgo làwa n <u>ta si</u> o

    Eego làwa n <u>ta si</u>

    Eego làwa n <u>ta si</u> o o

Eeìgo làwa n <u>ta si</u>.₅

    What is our focus

    Eeìgo is our focus

Eeìgo is what we are after

    Eeìgo is our objective

    Eeìgo is our preoccupation

Just like the previous example, the stylistic and semantic importance of the use of the Igbo loan-word idiom is the importance of money in life. It should be stressed here that iñu, (yam), ọta (bullet) and kùdì (Hausa languge for money) are also used as new idioms and idiomatic expressions in different contexts of the Yorùbá routine and literary discourses. However, the expression *'ta si'* is used with a different semantic realization in *Òdòdo Èyẹ,* when Deroju was about to go and see his girlfriend, Moreònikeò, one late evening. Ladi is not favourably disposed to such a visit in such an ungodly our:

Ladi *:*   *Ki lo fẹ lọ ṣe n' dàyii?*

(What do you want to do by this time of the day?)

Deroju :   *Òpekè kan lo ni ki n wa ri òun jọọ?*

(One beautiful lady insisted I should see her)

Ladi :   *Òpekè wo nìyẹn?*

(Who is that beautiful lady?)

Deroju *:*   *Ọjọ kan bayìi ni mo <u>ta si</u> i.₄*

*(*I wooed her on a particular day that i traveled)

        (Oyèbánjí, 2010 : 13)

Here, the expression *'ta si'* (line 4) is a new idioms used to express the idea of wooing a lady. This type of idiom is common among students of higher institutions in the Yoruba-speaking part of Nigeria.In other words, from the perspective of the context in which it is used in the text*, ta si i* can be interpreted as an idiom meaning: to woo.

New idioms used as abusive expressions are also found in *Jongbo Òrò,* by Akanmu , when he condemns certain bus conductors who are in the habit of pouring invective on their passengers. He remarks:

Bi o ba fọwo leran

    Ti ò n ronu baye rẹ o ṣe dara

    Wọn a lo o gbe sẹlulà dani

    Bi o sì tun sọ̀rọ̀ jù

    Wọn a sọ pe <u>ò n jabo</u>

    Àgàgà to o ba tun wò won

    Wọn a sọ pe <u>oju- n- faṣo- ya</u>

    To o ba sì tun gbìmọ̀ràn

    Wi pe ko o bu tì ẹ padà

    Wọn a ni ẹ <u>bu wa ki e gba'ke</u>

        (Àkànmu 2002:26)

If you hang the jaw on your palm

    Thinking about how to get on well in life

    They will say you are holding a cellular phone

    And if you dare talk

    They will say you are unguarded

    And when you gaze at them

    They will say eyes-can-tear-the-cloth

    If you make attempt to respond

    They will say you can insult us and get a plastic container

The new idioms in the above expressions are *jabọ* (line5), *oju n faṣọ ya* (line7) and *ẹ bu wa ki ẹ gbake* (line10). The underlined expressions (new idioms) are used by bus conductors to abuse their passengers whenever there is any altercation between them in the bus. The word 'jabo' is abusive and derogatory:

    Jabo

        (drop-and-fall)

        Literal : drop off

Idiom :   (derogatory) keep shut, shut up, get away

This idiom therefore, is peculiar not only to the bus conductor's unguarded language (rudeness) to the passengers but also to the other members of the speech community who talks too much.

The use of the expression *'oju-n-faṣọ-ya'* in the excerpt is to caution a passenger who may have been looking at the conductor with contempt to stop doing so. It is a typical example of a sentential idiom, that is analysed and interpreted thus:

Oju n faṣọ ya
   (the-eyes-that-tear-dresses-into-shreds)
   Literal :   uncomplimentary/bad look
   Idiom :   a rude/warning/stop looking at me

Therefore, based on the context of usage, *Oju n faṣọ ya* can be interpreted to mean 'don't look at me,' which is rude and uncomplimentary. *Ẹ buwa ki ẹ gbake'*, is used not only to caution the passenger to stop abusing the conductor but also to ridicule the passenger that his/her response is worthless and does not have much impact on him just as the plastic container given out as gift is of lesser value. It can be interpreted to mean a worthless insult.

Transportation is another area where idioms and idiomatic expressions are used to convey certain ideas that are peculiar to the bus conducting business. For instance, in Àkànmu's *Jongbo Ọ̀rọ̀*, idiomatic expression, *O loyun o ponmọ* is used:

   …Bi abo to ri rùnmu rùnmu ba fe wọle
   Tàbi obìnrin rọ̀gbọ̀dọ̀
   Wọn a ni 'o loyun o ponmọ'
                  (Àkànmu 2002:26)

   *…*When a chubby female passenger is
            About to enter the bus Or an overweight woman
   They will say 'she is pregnant and backs a child'…

Literarily, the expression *o loyun o ponmọ* means she is pregnant and also has a child on her back. It is used by the bus conductor to alert the driver that a particular passenger, mostly pregnant, woman requires more patience either in coming aboard or in disembarking. Sometimes, the same expression is used for a passenger with two or more pieces of luggage who cannot catch the bus while on motion as the usual practice in Lagos. It is used to sensitize the driver about the peculiar nature of the passenger. On getting the signal, *o loyun o ponmọ,* the driver knows he has to apply the break and stop for the passenger to enter or alight. Because of impatience of the bus conductors and drivers in cities like Lagos, Ìbàdàn, Òṣogbo, Ìlorin, Àkúrẹ́ and others, the expression is used to indicate the exception to the rule. In other words, the usual hasty approach is suspended to allow the commuter (who is considered delicate) to enter or alight from the bus. It can be interpreted to mean 'slow down', 'be patient' or 'stop'.

9. Inferences

It can be seen from our discussion so far that idioms and idiomatic expressions have been used to express so many ideas, views and opinions as exhibited in the analysed texts. It is obvious that corruption was addressed in virtually all the texts and contextualized in bribery, fraud, looting and contract splitting. Politics which is peculiar to a text (poem) was contextualized in a corrupt leadership. This, indicates the pervasiveness and endemic nature of corruption in the country. Issues on transportation business were also expressed with the new idioms in some of the texts revealing the context of bus conducting, while the issues of abuse and entertainment occurred in the context of social misalignment and erotic feeling.

10. Conclusion

In this paper, attention was focused on new Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expressions with a view to establishing and highlighting their communicative and stylistic potential in literary texts. The issues expressed with them, structure, formation and their interpretation were critically carried out. For this study, Standard Language (SL) model noted for its ability to explain the deviant nature of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions, and the 'differential specifica' between the language of ordinary discourse and language of literature was adopted. Few scholarly works were reviewed and found to be a springboard on which this paper took off. Data for this paper were obtained from six Yorùbá literary texts and the new idioms and idiomatic expressions found were thereafter subjected to critical analysis and interpretation.

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Bibliometric Analysis of the Scopus-published Articles on English Linguistics by Arab Scholars from 1970 to 2015

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Abstract

In this paper, a bibliometric analysis of the evolution of research activity in the discipline of English linguistics by Arab scholars is conducted. Scopus databases are browsed for a quantitative and qualitative analysis of research production on English linguistics in the Arab World. The study will be of a great interest and value for the scholars of linguistics across nations and cultures. The total number of documents provided by Scopus databases up to date (July 31, 2015) in the field of English linguistics was 2,735. Saudi Arabia published the highest number of articles (29.3%) followed by Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (17.1%). The institutions with the highest research productivity in the field during the period of the study are Sultan Qaboos University (7.7%) and King Abdulaziz University (1.0%). The top prolific journals in which English linguistics related articles were published are *Babel*, *Dirasat Human and Social Sciences* and *English Language Teaching*. 17% of the published papers were conducted in collaboration between Arab and foreign scholars and 5% with other Arab scholars. This study seeks to unveil and develop research trends in English linguistics in the Arab countries.

Keywords: Arab World, Bibliometric analysis, Scopus databases, English linguistics

1. Introduction

Bibliometrics generally stands for the statistical analysis of books, articles, or other publications to measure the quality of scholarly papers, highlight the latest developments in the fields of science and technology, and evaluate the impact of the research work produced by individuals, research teams, institutions, or nations [1-2]. The study seeks to statistically analyze research contributions published in Scopus databases by Arab scholars, evaluate the quality of the academic disciplines offered at Arab universities and draw the attention of academicians as well as policy-makers to the competitive status of research in the Arab World. The study further highlights the bibliometric parameters of frequency of citations, rank of the journal, impact per publication, and impact per paper which Arab researchers and institutions should take into consideration. Though various studies have analyzed the scholarly research production of different academic disciplines at the worldwide level, this study is the first to analyze Scopus publications on English linguistics by Arab scholars.

2. Methodology:

The archives of Scopus databases from 1970 to 2015 were studied and compared to collect data for this bibliometric analysis of the literature on English linguistics by Arab scholars. Research findings were reached within one time interval to avoid any bias which may stem from the daily updating of Scopus databases.

English Linguistic, English literature, English translation, English sociolinguistics, English language acquisition, English phonetics, English reading, English listening, and English morphology has been entered into the Scopus search engine as article titles, abstracts, and keywords. The time period before 2015 was chosen to reflect the current state analysis. All Arab countries (Mashraq and Maghreb): Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, Algeria, Comoros, Morocco, Tunisia, Djibouti, Libya Arab Jamahiriya, Syrian Arab Republic, Mauritania, Oman, and Somalia were used as country keys. The set of words entered in the advanced search for article titles, abstracts, and keywords related to "English Linguistic" were as follow:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("English Linguistics" OR "applied English linguistics" OR "English phonology" OR "English phonetics" or "English syntax" or "English semantics" or "English discourse analysis" or "English grammar" or "English translation" or "English translation studies" or "English translation theory" or "English literature" or "English novel" or "English fiction" or "English poetry" or "English drama" or "English story" or "English literary theory" or "English feminism" or "English postcolonialism" or "English poststructuralism") AND (LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY," Egypt") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Saudi Arabia") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "United Arab Emirates") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Algeria") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Jordan") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Tunisia") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Lebanon") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Kuwait") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Morocco") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Oman") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Qatar") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Iraq") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Palestine") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Libyan Arab Jamahiriya") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Syrian Arab Republic") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Sudan") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Yemen") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Bahrain") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Comoros") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Djibouti") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Mauritania") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Somalia").

The parameters effectively used as tools of bibliometric analysis in this paper include:

- Number of Scopus articles on English linguistics by authors from different countries in the world over the period from January 1970 to July 2015.
- Number of Scopus-published articles on English linguistics by authors from the Arab countries over the period from January 1970 to July 2015.
- Scopus-published articles by document type
- Journals of the published articles
- Rank of the journal can be weighted by.
- Number of citations per article
- Relationship between the rank of the journal, which can be weighted by calculating its frequency, impact per publication, source normalized impact per paper and SCImago, and the number of citations per article.
- The SNIP or Source-Normalized Impact per Paper measures the contextual citation impact per article based on the subject field and frequency of citation.
- The IPP or Impact per Publication measures the percentage of citations in a year to scholarly papers published in the three previous years divided by the number of scholarly papers published in those same years.
- The SJR or SCImago Journal Rank measures the scientific prestige of scholarly sources.
- Relationship between the rank of the author's affiliation institution and the frequency of citations per article.
- Research partnerships between Arab and other scholars.
- Top prolific institutions
- Top prolific journals
- Top prolific authors

The data collected from Scopus is statistically processed by Microsoft Office Excel to calculate the sum, median, and mean, and to visualize and tabulate the output results.

3. Findings

First, Scopus databases list 2,735 documents written by scholars from different countries in the world on the field of English linguistics. As shown in figure (1), the countries with the highest research productivity in that field are the United States (18%), the United Kingdom (14%), Canada (4%), China (3.7%), Australia (2.7%), Germany (2.5%), Spain (2.3%), France (2.1%), Iran (2.1%) and Netherlands (1.8%). The sum of articles published by scholars from the above mentioned countries amounts to (53.2%). Arab scholars contributed 46 (1.6%) articles to English linguistics, a contribution that is less than that of Netherlands and Iran.

Figure (1): The total global research productivity in "English Linguistic" field (Top 10)

| SCR	Country	Articles	
		Number	Percentage
1st	United States	492	18.0%
2nd	United Kingdom	382	14.0%
3rd	Canada	109	4.0%
4th	China	101	3.7%
5th	Australia	73	2.7%
6th	Germany	68	2.5%
7th	Spain	63	2.3%
8th	France	58	2.1%
9th	Iran	57	2.1%
10th	Netherlands	48	1.8%

Second, three bibliometric trends can be noticed in figure (2). First, the number of articles published on English linguistics in Scopus journals slightly increased from one article in the years 1986, 1988, 1999, 2000 and 2006 to two articles in 2007 before it went down again in 2008. Second, there was a sharp increase in the number of articles from 2008 to 2012. The number increased to 2 articles in 2009, 4 articles in 2010, 5 articles in 2011 and 11 articles in 2012. Third, articles number sharply fell down to 4 articles in 2013, 5 articles in 2014 and 2 articles in 2015.

Figure(2): The number of articles published by Arab scholars over a period of 30 years
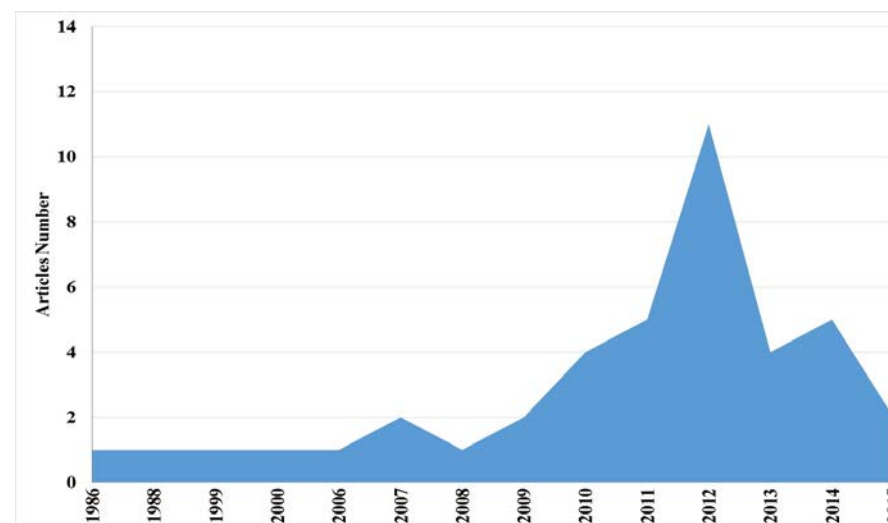
Third, published articles are classified by document type into articles (85.37%), reviews (7.32%), conference papers (4.88%) and errata (2.44%) as shown in figure (3).

Figure (3): Published articles by document type
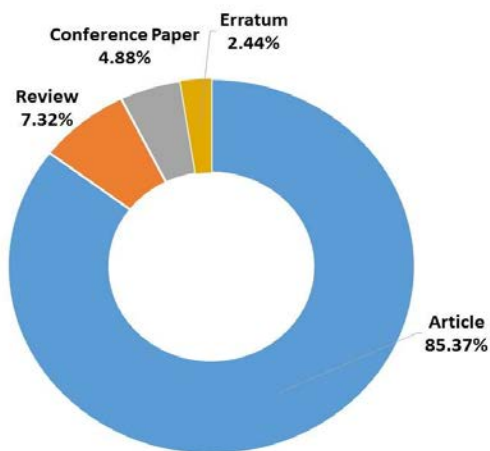
Fourth, research contributions of Arab scholars are compared based on their nationalities. Figure (4) shows that three quarters of the published papers were contributed by scholars from Saudi Arabia (29.3%), Jordan (17.1%), the United Arab Emirates (17.1%) and Oman (12.2%). The contributions of scholars from Iraq (7.3%), Algeria (4.9%), Bahrain (2.4%), Kuwait (2.4%), Morocco (2.4%), Qatar (2.4%) and Tunisia (2.4%) made up the last quarter.

Figure (4): Bibliometric analysis of the published papers by Arab countries

SCR	Countries	Number	Percentage
1st	Saudi Arabia	12	29.3%
2nd	Jordan	7	17.1%
2nd	United Arab Emirates	7	17.1%
3rd	Oman	5	12.2%
4th	Iraq	3	7.3%
5th	Algeria	2	4.9%
5th	Egypt	2	4.9%
6th	Bahrain	1	2.4%
6th	Kuwait	1	2.4%
6th	Morocco	1	2.4%
6th	Qatar	1	2.4%
6th	Tunisia	1	2.4%

Fifth, English linguistics related articles were published in journals of different ranks. Figure (5) classifies the journals based on the criteria of frequency, SJR, IPP and SNIP. In terms of frequency, *Babel Journal* published 4 (9.7%) articles, whereas *Dirasat*, *English language teaching*, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, *IUP Journal of English Studies*, and *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* published 3 (7.32%) articles. The *Journal of Applied Psycholinguistics* published 2 (4.88%) articles. In respect to the other criteria, the *Journal of Applied Psycholinguistics* recorded the highest level of the SJR, IPP and SNIP hierarchies for the year 2013. The journals with the second and third highest ranks are respectively the *Journal of English Language Teaching* and *the European Journal of Social Sciences*. The other articles were published in 20 more journals with a frequency of one.

Fig.(5): Top prolific journals in which English linguistics related articles were published

			SJR[a]	IPP[b]	SNIP[c]
SCR	Journal	Frequency	2013	2013	2013
1st	Babel	4 (9.76%)	0.100	0.028	0.126
2nd	Dirasat Human and Social Sciences	3 (7.32%)	0.100	0.000	0.000
2nd	English Language Teaching	3 (7.32%)	0.311	0.137	0.413
2nd	European Journal of Social Sciences	3 (7.32%)	0.118	0.128	0.246
2nd	Iup Journal of English Studies	3 (7.32%)	0.100	0.000	0.000
2nd	Theory and Practice in Language Studies	3 (7.32%)	0.169	0.041	0.129
3rd	Applied Psycholinguistics	2 (4.88%)	0.610	1.021	0.708

[a]SJR = SCImago Journal Rank, [b]IPP = Impact per Publication, [c]SNIP = Source Normalized Impact per Paper

Sixth, the most cited Scopus articles on English linguistics by Arab scholars are ranked in figure (6). The most cited article was published in the *Journal of Applied Psycholinguistics* in 2010 and cited 10 times. The second-most-cited paper was published in *the International Review of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching* in 1999. Mohamed's article on "Texture and Culture" and Dosary's "On the Relationship between Research Approach and Citation Behaviors of Political Scientists" were the third-most-cited papers. The articles of Abushihab (2011) and Al Kharabsheh (2008) came forth, whereas the other-listed articles by Menoret (2013), Nguyen (2013), Alhaysony (2012), Mart (2012), Hijazi (2011), Shafiro (2009) and El-Halees (1986) came fifth with only one citation.

Figure (6): Top cited articles in Scopus in the field of study

SCR	author	Title	Journal	Time Cited
1st	Bird, S. (2010)	Effects of distributed practice on the acquisition of second language English syntax	Applied Psycholinguistics	10
2nd	Mohamed, A.H., Omer, M.R. (1999)	Syntax as a marker of rhetorical organization in written texts: Arabic and English	IRAL - International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching	5
3rd	Mohamed, A.H., Omer, M.R. (2000)	Texture and culture: Cohesion as a marker of rhetorical organisation in Arabic and English narrative texts	RELC Journal	4
3rd	Dosary, F.M.A. (1988)	The relationship between research approach and citation behavior of political scientists	Library and Information Science Research	4
4th	Abushihab, I., El-Omari, A.H., Tobat, M. (2011)	An analysis of written grammatical errors of Arab learners of english as a foreign language at Alzaytoonah private university of Jordan	European Journal of Social Sciences	2
4th	Al-Kharabsheh, A., Al-Azzam, B. (2008)	Translating the invisible in the Qur'an	Babel	2
5th	Menoret, P., Samin, N. (2013)	The bleak romance of Tah{dot below}liya street	Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication	1
5th	Nguyen, T., Vogel, S. (2013)	Integrating phrase-based reordering features into a chart-based decoder for machine translation	ACL 2013 - 51st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics, Proceedings of the Conference	1
5th	Alhaysony, M. (2012)	An analysis of article errors among Saudi female EFL students: A case study	Asian Social Science	1
5th	Mart, C.T. (2012)	Encouraging young learners to learn English through stories	English Language Teaching	1
5th	Hijazi, D. (2011)	Comparison of students performance in english grammar using cell phone-based, computer-based and paper-based testing	European Journal of Social Sciences	1

Seventh, the institutions with the highest research productivity are Sultan Qaboos University and King Abdulaziz University which respectively published 4 and 3 articles as shown in figure (7). However, the institutions with the second highest research productivity are the United Arab Emirates University, Al –Balqa Applied University and the University of Hail. The bibliometric analysis conducted in this study identifies 39 other institutions with only one published paper.

Figure (7): Top productive institutions in the field of study

SCR	Name of Institution	Articles	
		Number	Percentage
1st	Sultan Qaboos University	4	7.7%
2nd	King Abdulaziz University	3	1.0%
3rd	United Arab Emirates University	2	0.7%
3rd	Al-Balqa Applied University	2	0.7%
3rd	University of Hail	2	0.7%

Eighth, the most prolific authors in the field of English linguistics are Jawad H. from Sultan Qaboos University, Bird S. from the United Arab Emirates University, Al Olaqi from King Abdulaziz University, Omer M. from the College of Girls' Education and Al-Ghazalli from Al Mustansiriyia University as it is shown in figure (8). The other 35 authors published only one paper.

Figure (8): Top prolific authors in the field of English Linguistics

SCR	Author	Articles Number	Affiliation
1st	Jawad, H.	3 (5.2%)	Sultan Qaboos University, English Department, Muscat, Oman
2nd	Bird, S.	2 (3.4%)	United Arab Emirates University, Department of Linguistics, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates
2nd	Al-Olaqi, F.	2 (3.4%)	King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
2nd	Omer, M.	2 (3.4%)	College of Girls' Education, Tabuk, Saudi Arabia
2nd	Al-Ghazalli, M.	2 (3.4%)	Al Mustansiriyia University, Translation Department, , Iraq

Ninth, most research partnerships are established between Arab and American scholars as shown in figure (9). Three other published articles were a product of research collaboration with Australian, Indian and Dutch scholars. Yet, two articles were written in collaboration with Arab scholars.

Figure (9): Collaborations between Arab countries and foreign countries in English Linguistic publications

Country	Articles	
	Number	Percentage
Arab- United States	**4**	**9.8%**
Arab-Arab	**2**	**4.9%**
Arab-Australia	**1**	**2.4%**
Arab-India	**1**	**2.4%**
Arab-Netherlands	**1**	**2.4%**

4. Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis conducted in this study has reflected upon the Scopus-published articles on English linguistics by Arab scholars, correlation between the rank of the journal and the frequency of citation per article, research partnerships between Arab and other scholars, and top prolific institutions, journals and authors. The study found that Arab scholars contributed 46(1.6%) articles to English linguistics; their research productivity either increased or maintained the same number of articles from 1986 to 2012. However, their contributions declined during the last three years (2013 – 2015). The study also disclosed that the most prolific country was Saudi Arabia; prolific institution was Sultan Qaboos University; prolific journal was Babel; and prolific author was Jawad H. It further uncovered that most research partnerships were established between Arab and American scholars. Eventually, the study observed that the higher the rank of the journal, the more frequently the article is cited.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Entrepreneurial Literary Theory. A debate on Research and the Future of Academia
Alexander Search, Suman Gupta, Fabio Akcelrud Durão, Terrence McDonough
(Shot in the Dark in 2017)

The debate presented in the book *Entrepreneurial Literary Theory. A Debate on Research and the Future of Academia* concerns recent trends on academic entrepreneurship with regards to literary studies, traditionally considered a humanistic discipline with no business projection. The volume raises questions regarding the potential benefits of literary research, the relationship between the corporate and academic sectors in opening avenues for cooperation, and the methodological trends that are becoming popular for the development entrepreneurial skills in higher education.

The debate is presented in the form of a dialogue between the authors, independent scholar Alexander Search, Suman Gupta, Professor of Literature and Cultural History at the Open University in the UK, Fabio Akcelrud Durão, Professor of Literary Theory at Universidade Estadual de Campinas Brazil, and Terrence McDonough, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the National University of Ireland. The four engage in a debate under Search's impulse. His neoliberal starting point is the assertion that "all literary research is or should be conducted with the ultimate purpose of generating profits for some enterprising sector of the economy; that is, through some corporate or governmental organisation." (2017: 7) Gupta and Durão, who think of themselves as within the spectrum of democratic socialism, respond to Search's arguments, convinced that academic endeavours should never be associated to economic interests. A professional economist, Dismal Scientist (one of the literary personas assumed by Terrence McDonough) makes occasional but important contributions to the debate. The book is divided into four sections: Panoptic, Knowledge Production, Scholarly Publishing and Leadership.

The first part, Panoptic, a term that echoes Jeremy Bentham and Michel Foucault (whose views are discussed elsewhere in the volume), concerns the overall view and characteristics of literary research as well as its current direction. Search summarizes the most important aspects around the study of literature: 1) the fact that it develops around cultural specificities, involving languages, particular geographies, etc., preserving historical memory, 2) the idea that literature articulates an understanding and a performance of Self and of Others as fictional re-constructions of human existence, 3) the conception of literature (and art) as based on emotional intelligence, therefore helping develop moral faculties, including humanistic conduct, 4) the view of literary texts as embedded in particular historical contexts and, thus, as vehicles of ideologies and, in a pragmatic sense, as political interventions, and finally, 5) the insight that art in general, and literature in particular, captures the complexity and ambiguity of world visions, and that this contemplation of the multiplicity and vastness of the world conveys a hint of wisdom, experienced with aesthetic pleasure. Search names these five characteristics of literary research: the philological, the idealistic, the liberal-humanistic, the politically conscientious and the secondary process of appreciation, respectively. In his view, nowadays the most relevant one is the politically conscientious, which helps support his own argument in favour of profit-making literary scholarship, a profession long under patronage support.

The counterargument given by Gupta is that Search focuses on the political precisely in order to de-politicise his own approach and present it as more pragmatic, thus helping sustain his argument in favour of the functionality of the arts. Durão's reply justifies the pleasure provided by literature and its non-usefulness in terms of market value. In his turn, Search contends that the notion of aesthetic pleasure as an *a priori* of art seems suspect, for, according to him, literature has no existence prior to its appearance as an industrial product. This last topic is taken again in the second chapter of the first part, where the authors discuss "the tricky anteriority of literature".

Once more, Search sets the debate in motion by arguing that "*all literature is produced by the literary establishment, in terms of the latter's authoritative and authorizing power structure and corresponding economic arrangements.*" (17, emphasis in the original). In this way, for Search, literary research might not originate in the researchers' desire to learn and share their knowledge, but its modes of circulation, which have already inbuilt an entrepreneurial character. Search's position is contested in the following section which inquires on the literary product itself. A narrative voice under the name Leandro Pasini offers a short response, emphasizing that, as a product, each literary text has its own rationale and that this might not be congenial to markets and profits. To which Search replies that "products seldom appear in the market *before* the industry that produces them" (19) and that texts are produced in a context of socialization and education, with particular interpretative communities in mind (he refers to Stanley Fish 1989 in this part). In chapter 7, Search illustrates this point in his study of the conditions of reception of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Not without irony, Durão responds that although literary conventions can endorse the worldview of the dominant elite, they can also give voice to neglected groups. To Durão, divesting literature of an *a priori* intrinsic meaning is "a precondition for it to become a properly sellable object" (21), and its levelling in particular interpretative communities might hide the fact that only the voices supported by the most powerful circulation (and publishing) mechanisms are the ones that resonate more strongly.

If the first four chapters of the Panoptic part clarify debate positions, chapter 5 moves the argument further into the entrepreneurial realm in general, and the case of Britain in particular. Gupta's main point in this part is that "profit making has behind it *a process of realisation* and before it *the mechanics of distribution*." (23) This line cleverly paves the way for a discussion on benefits and profits which takes place in the following section. Once more it opens with Search's 'universalizing' (although not totalitarian, he defends himself) arguments for a mutual dependency between benefits and profits for the public good, and his assertion that academic research should thus strive to maximize profits. He also indicates that such a rationale is nowadays already embedded in the educational institutions of the majority of states in the world, embodied

in their academic leaders, even if employees (lecturers, professors, etc.) might not accept it (the point is taken up again in page 40). Search also speculates, at the end of chapter 7, that literary research is basic research (as opposed to applied research), where benefits are indirectly experienced and not clearly linked to profits. In this context, entrepreneurial development is more difficult to achieve but also, according to Search, more desirable. The final consideration, brought up by Gupta later in chapter 11 is with regards to scientific advance as related to academic freedom. Gupta claims that "*Academic freedom is enjoined in arrangements for research work that allow basic researchers to pursue any line of enquiry pertinent to the natural or social or textual world for the sake of understanding and clarifying it, irrespective of considerations of benefits and profits, indifferently to the purposive calls of the public good."* (45 emphasis in the original) The final words in this section are Search's, who stresses that literary research can never be disinterested. It is at this point that a lurking "moral choice", to use Gupta's term (49) begins to emerge, and with it the grounds where Durão defends literature having a critical function with regards to the *discipline* of literary research (section 13). As the Panoptic part draws to a close (chapters 15-16-17), the discussion shifts to contemplating dialogical *inter-disciplinary* affiliations, and border crossings among institutional departments. Gupta points out that it is important to look at how the historical continuum of institutionally defined disciplines, which seem to have always been negotiated in relation to the university (60-61). His exploration, however, also shows that the current situation has shifted, and nation states no longer require the university to sustain their authority. This may also be one of the reasons (alongside the worldwide economic crisis) behind the reduction of public investment in higher education, and the opening of the university to corporate capital.

The above lines provide an idea of the complexity and implications of the topics under discussion in this volume. Far from clear-cut categories that might connect certain functionalities to particular profits and market niches, this first part shows the benefits of an inquisitive dialogical approach. The positive outcomes of getting lost in the 'open woods' (to use Umberto Eco's expression), wandering in the complex network of life's forking paths (to use Borges') might not be evident right away. To focus on final achievements, as market oriented perspectives often do, may miss seeing 'the forest for the trees'. Literary research is indeed about learning to argue and think critically. Although literary scholars might employ close reading (see Search in chapter 25), critical thinking is, in fact, a matter of maintaining a distant perspective (see discussion in chapter 28) in order to avoid short-sightedness. Distant reading focuses on the 'how', rather than on the 'what'. It panoptically strives to see the bigger picture (with the spatial including the temporal/historical as Gupta indicates).

Thus, once the 3D dimensions of the picture have been established beyond 2D approaches, the lengthier second part focuses on the institutional dimensions of knowledge production, the neoliberal privatization of the university, the balance between benefits and profits in the convergence between corporate research providers and the university, how all these aspects affect pedagogy and knowledge transfer and, finally, how they relate to academic responsibility. Although the debate is meant to address similar situations across the globe, the discussion is particularly related to the British case.

Further in this part, the debate focuses on the practice of close-reading and interpretative analysis as possible contributions to professional pre-purposed texts and open-to-purpose texts for professional objectives (see chapter 31), a trend that is particularly relevant to the current debate on strategic narratives as empowering devices (i.e. see projects developed under the research program http://www.ucm.es/siim). In this part, the discussion resembles a philosophical inquiry into the prevalence of Socratic and Platonic approaches to knowledge (chapter 34) as opposed to what Gupta considers 'deafness' and 'targeted cynicism' (146) towards the literary profession, traits that seem to emerge from Search's interventions. Indeed the tone of the debate in the entire volume is close to Plato's Socratic Dialogues; a tone often accusatory but with the freshness of casual conversation among dissenting friends. Hence Gupta's last line (section 34) where he stresses that "entrepreneurial authority is lodged vampire-like on the body of scholarly authority" (150).

The volume goes on like this, opening up the discussion only to bring it back to a point raised previously. For the pleasure of Joycean readers, it often brings the Irish writer into the picture (see for instance chapter 36); not only as a paradigm of the conflicted value of literature, the prostituted subject/object position under which the Modernists often saw themselves ("Circe" is indeed a turning point in Ulysses' journey). The fractal architecture of Vico's cycles is also present in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake,* a book that provides an early model for complexity and the mechanics of the so-called chaos theories. Indeed, dynamic systems theory is a useful tool to 'measure' (see chapter 37) the variations of the commercial value of shares at the stock exchange. As Search indicates, one of the ways by means of which the discipline of literature can have a real impact in the world is if literary researchers "disinvest from conceiving of literature and literary research as a discrete system," and "invest in thinking about literature and literary research as factors (or as sub-systems) within more complex and inclusive social system models" (166)

Interestingly, the volume goes on to prove that being a good Joyce reader can narrow the distance between literary utopias and the literary scholar, a professional of narrativity as a valid arbitrator of commercial success (154), since "*all apprehension of value is in the first instance subjective, whether that is understood in terms of need or desire, grasped as aesthetic or ethical or functional, perceived in relation to things or experiences – and, in the first instance, is expressible in relative normative terms."* (Gupta 156) In this way, Gupta's view is complementary to Search's assertion that "Precision of measurement is the key to possibly realising economic value in monetary terms, and activating the market" (157), because "*graded and precise measurement extricates objective valuation from all or any kind of subjective evaluation*" (157). He goes as far as affirming that "Happiness, pleasure, freedom,

love, suffering, guilt, beauty, intelligence, legitimacy, doubt, prejudice, violence, oppression, trust, life (or loss of life), etc. can all be brought within some kind of index of measurement, expressed in precise degrees according to some standard or paradigm, or organised into some sort of tabular or tractable form." […] "And then to conduct the measurements and analyse the data acquired in rationally robust ways to, as far as possible, come to grips with literary value." (158) This is the kind of "modelling" that Search believes can offer concrete impacts from the disciplines of literature to the world of profits.

Many literary professionals would tend to agree with Gupta, who finds Alexander Search's projects to give impact to the discipline of literature (described in sections 37 to 39) "unusually boring" (170). Additionally, Gupta finds agency and responsibility removed from the system-based models presented by Search. Similarly, Durão fears that at this rate the 'literary' will be dissolved, for instance, in the mass of books produced by the culture industry at large (174). And Dismal Scientist ponders on the difficulties of measuring cultural capital in general.

At this point the discussion moves beyond qualitative and quantitative measuring to concerns over the role of the teaching professional in the world of artificial intelligence, including a wide range of aspects such as the role of Corporate Research Providers of various automated services, MOOCs, etc., all of which might serve to reduce the cost of work performed by humans. Gupta fears that leaders and bureaucrats will follow this entrepreneurial direction in order to reduce costs and increase returns. He concludes as follows: "In brief, the shrinking teacher is complemented by growing (and distributed and coordinated) AI capabilities in the University. Inevitably, the profit-making potential of the entrepreneurial University is accordingly enhanced, insofar as competition allows." (181) Therefore, this part contributes to the discussion on leadership, ethics and responsibility in education as well as the possible role of corporate leaders in the university, which is introduced in more detail in part four of the volume.

The third part of the book explores scholarly publishing in a comprehensive way. It moves from the financial imprints and scholarly publishing agreements of academic works to the debate between commercial e-publishing and Open Access. The future of the monograph is another cause of concern. As with the rest of the volume, this part is carefully researched, offering up-to-date details regarding publication costs in various academic publishers and a wide range of useful information, always backed up with a wide range of relevant secondary sources.

The last part of the volume deals with "Leadership" and how, in Search's view, literary texts could be purposed for leadership education. According to Search this could be achieved if the texts were "treated as straightforward mimesis, without being complicated by stylistic, formalistic, aesthetic, historicist or inter-textual considerations." (246) His discussion offers various literary examples and their critical interpretations that serve to illustrate his point. As in previous counterarguments, Gupta is always blunt and conclusive: "Eventually the entrepreneurial rationale of AI

may erase the differences between leaders and followers among us, and realise the potential of freed *and leaderless* human beings. Perhaps the full scope of literary research can only be conceptualised with the horizon of freed and leaderless human beings before us." (252) The volume also includes an appendix with a text by Gupta (originally from 2015) where he articulates seven broad phases that rationalise academic work in cost-benefit accounting terms.

A must-read for anyone interested in the current debate on entrepreneurship in the humanities in general, and in literary research in particular, this well-written volume offers a comprehensive and fresh account, as well as a thought-provoking approach, to the different problems involved in *Entrepreneurial Literary Theory*. Full of secondary sources and useful information, the book is written in the form of a dialogue and debate between the narrative voices of the authors (in some cases more than one voice). With topics ranging from knowledge management to literature, cultural studies and philosophy, institutional politics, reports on the publishing world, the future of academia, and so on, the volume requires a reader who feels at ease with interdisciplinary approaches and inconclusive arguments. That is, a reader who might feel ethically drawn to enter the discussion, and perhaps lead on.
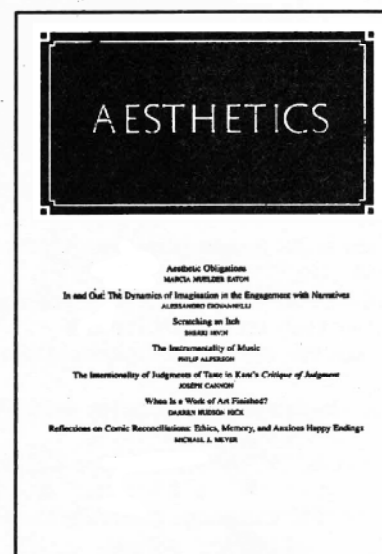
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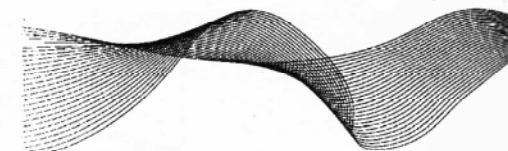
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