Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies (LLIDS)

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Time and Narrative
Emplotment
Cultural Hegemony
Migrants
Sexing the Cherry
Proust
Gnawa
Postmodernism
Infinite Jest
Jazz
Paul Ricoeur
Ethnic Identity
Threefold Mimesis
Festivity
Arab-Moroccan Theatre
Phenomenology

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EDITORIAL

Deeksha Suri

Now is a good time as any to reflect on our journey this past year as we complete the first volume of *LLIDS* with the publishing of its fourth issue. Since the inception of our journal we have attempted to advance new intersections and discussions through scholarly interrogations of our contributing authors. This journal was started as an opportunity for scholars to engage in research outside of monetary considerations and to provide a threshold across which new research can be accessed by diverse readership as part of larger discussions.

The journey till now has been an enriching learning experience not only in terms of its technical procedures that go into validating the publication of an academic journal, but also regarding constant engagement with research of diverse authors. Each issue of *LLIDS* is brought out with a humble hope that our attempt to carve a niche in the academic scenario by creating an archive of rigorous research will be appreciated both by our readers and authors.

Taking inspiration from T.S. Eliot's vision which "boldly assume[s] the existence of a public interested in serious literature, and eager to be kept in touch with current literature and with criticism of that literature by the most exacting standards," we strive to successfully furnish a bibliography that will help scholars from diverse fields of research to understand and critique the existing perspectives.

The Call for Papers (CFP) for this issue invited papers on Postmodernism but as before we have accepted special submissions from all subjects and disciplines under the rubric of Humanities and Social Sciences. The papers in the present issue assess the disruption of temporal and spatial structures in postmodern fiction and highlight its experiments with historiography. Within specific cultural contexts the papers also present a counter-discourse to dominant western forms of expression. The paper included in the Special Submissions section in this issue, while speaking to diverse disciplines like Philosophy and History, throw into relief various issues central to the contemporary discourse on theatre, religion, and time.

The four issues that comprise the first volume of *LLIDS* have demanded discipline, organization, hard work, along with creativity. Our editorial team has devoted its complete energies to improve the quality of research and its presentation. We endeavour to bring out CFPs on issues that are prominent within academic circles to invite contributions from scholars that may evolve larger discourses. The papers published in the journal go through a rigorous editorial process where experts of the field evaluate the research papers. For this and many more unsaid things we thank our authors, our advisory board members, our peer reviewers, and especially our readers. We would also like to take a moment to express our gratitude towards our friend and colleague, Md. Faizan Moquim, for his constant presence, tireless efforts and sage advices since the beginning of our journey. Our continual efforts to create an even better publication rely on your overwhelming support and we look forward to any suggestions for improvement.

We hope that everyone has enjoyed reading our issues as much as we have enjoyed putting them together.

Postmodernist Poetics in Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*

Pooja Sancheti

While postmodernism never had[1] a specific manifesto, it is usually identified with the following themes: contradiction, randomness, excess (Lodge); self-reflexiveness, metafiction, eclecticism, redundancy, multiplicity (McHale); discontinuity, intertextuality, parody, dissolution of character, erasure of boundaries, the destabilization of the reader (D'haen); pluralist, anti-reason, skeptical, resistant, interrogative, transgressive, highly self-conscious, and intertextual (Butler).

Linda Hutcheon points out an additional—and essential—aspect of postmodernism: it is not an "either/or" movement but a "both/and" one. In other words, it incorporates precisely what it wishes to contest, installs that which needs to be subverted, and centralizes that which has to be decentralized (3). It uses "…paradoxical doubled positioning to critique the inside from both the outside and the inside" (69). Therefore, postmodernism is not in the business of rejecting and omitting as it is in that of undermining and de-constructing, and one element that deconstruction exposes is how our understanding of the world is based on oppositional binaries (such as mythos/logos, in which one is culturally preferred over the other).

Another important pillar of postmodernist politics is its great suspicion of anything that makes claims of universal truth, voiced succinctly by Jean-Francois Lyotard through his credo "incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv). The notion that there is one universal, all-encompassing truth that exists beyond language is dismissed, and he calls into question all "metanarratives" or master or grand narratives such as Marxism, Kantianism, and Science that offer the promise of liberation: these narratives, he avers, confer authority on certain privileged emancipatory goals, depict history as a trajectory of triumphant progress, and suggest that all the systems of knowledge possess a secret unity that is waiting to be discovered.

Lyotard observes that the postmodern mind sees every -ism as suspect and recognizes that a grand narrative is simply a story written in a particular context but masquerading as the absolute truth. Metanarratives function like archetypes: given their totalizing tendency, they subsume within their overarching rubric a number of petit or minor stories and homogenize them. Such homogenization is unacceptable to postmodernism. Instead, it privileges little or minor narratives because these voices bring out the inherent diversity and the naturally existing disorder in human society.

Lyotard also asserts that postmodernism "…refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable" (xxv). Truth, history, facts—these are spuriously legitimized by metanarratives. For postmodernists, such master narratives are

[1]I deliberately use the past tense here, given that we may be wont to believe that the heyday of postmodernity in terms of philosophical input, theory, and fiction may have passed by now.

supplanted by discourses, which signify the provisionality, positionality, and heterogeneity of social reality against any unifying thematic or formal coherence. The distrust of metanarratives knocks down privileged "transcendental signifiers" like reality, god, and the human mind. It also problematizes conceptual binaries like body/mind, speech/writing, and literal/metaphorical. From a "decentered" perspective, it facilitates the existence of multiple truths, realities, and worlds. In effect, with the postmodernist ethos, "historical plurality replaces atemporal eternal essence" (Hutcheon 58) and does away with any "transcendental timeless meaning" (19).

Postmodernism's premise is to constantly highlight the "discourses"[2] through which significance, meaning, and identity are constructed (and are continuously being constructed). Once an idea is accepted as having no more than discursive reality, it can no longer have a sacred, fixed, and permanent meaning. Rather, it is in the nature of discursive meaning to be "open, unfinished ... 'future'" (Still 7). This idea of ever-incomplete meaning also finds expression in Derrida's act of deconstructive reading, which holds discourse, meaning, and reading as historical processes that are produced in the "processes of contextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization" (Culler 128). Language itself is "historically" constituted as a fabric of differences. Discourse, therefore, is historical and meaning is historically determined (129). Meaning cannot be defined univocally as the author's or speaker's intention or the reader's interpretation. Rather than attempt to decipher a truth or origin, deconstructive interpretation affirms "play" (131). Meaning is best understood as infinite implication (133).[3] While modernists were, in the wake of their sense of an ending, handpicking elements and creating tradition as salvation for their moment of crises, postmodernists were always more interested in interrogating the very assumptions and beliefs that go into producing such histories.

While some aspects of postmodernism are a continuation and intensification of some of modernism's aesthetic concerns, there is one area in which the two can be understood to be distinctly different: Modernism, by and large, sought to provide *structure* to the fractured present, and therefore tended towards mythic structures, archetypes, and symbols, while postmodernist poetics emphasized the notion of the *construct* of reality as well as history. It is

[2]The notion of "discourse" indicates "…a historically evolved set of interlocking and mutually supporting statements, which are used to define and describe a subject matter" especially of disciplines like law, medicine, and jurisprudence (Butler 44). Discourses also set up the political, moral, and social authority within a society and therefore hold the power to exclude "deviants." Discursive perspectives cannot be escaped; they are imbibed without conscious thought or will. They pervade all social phenomena, and the more dominant a discursive construct is, the more natural it appears to be (46-47). Postmodernism sets itself to the task of exposing the hold of discourses rather than of offering alternatives to them. After all, the idea of an alternative only strengthens the illusion that we might, if we so wish, opt out of a discursively generated reality.

[3]Patricia Waugh traces the deconstruction of oppositions through broad movements in literary fiction. She points out that the social structure was emphasized in eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction through family, marriage, birth or death, and the individual was almost always integrated into the relevant structure. In modernist fiction, the individual became painfully aware of the hold of such social structures and conventions, and struggled for personal autonomy by opposing the same. Such a struggle entailed alienation, angst, and often mental dissolution. However, since the power structures of contemporary society are "more diverse and more effectively concealed or mystified," the postmodernist novelist faces a greater challenge in "identifying and then representing the object of 'opposition'" (10-11). This implies that the postmodernist is often unsure about what the primary and the secondary terms are.

the complex process of meaning making that postmodernism brought to the fore. It constantly underscores the idea that there is no final truth to be discovered. Everything is a construct; the corollary is that that which is a construct can be de-constructed. Therefore, there is no pre-given sacrosanct center, truth, or reality. If any center can be imagined, however fleetingly, it cannot be done without simultaneously also keeping in mind the peripheral. Conversely, in order to define the local or the regional, the center needs to be provisionally fixed. However, the position of centrality, for logic, ethics, or politics, alters according to the context. It is from this sense of relativism that deconstruction arises. The negation of certainty is the driving force of postmodernism: truths are plural, relative, transient, and only contextually relevant. In such a schema, it is the correspondence between language and reality that is highlighted, and the notion that there is no such thing as unmediated reality strengthened. The postmodernist ethos rests on the idea that there are

> …all kinds of orders and systems in our world—*and* that we create them all.... They do not exist "out there", fixed, given, universal, eternal; they are human constructs in history. This does not make them any the less necessary or desirable. It does, however, …condition their "truth" value. The local, the limited, the temporary, the provisional are what define postmodern "truth"… (Hutcheon 43)

It follows that if truths are multiple and relative, then history, a form that claims to present the truth of the past, can certainly not be regarded as final and authoritative. Rather, it transforms into "historiography," an account that exists in language, is a narrative, is open to multiple versions, and is created through the belief system and context of a historian and her society. That is, history is essentially what the historian deemed worthy of being recollected and recorded. This recollection is often dictated by the discourse in which *a* history (and not *the* history) is being articulated (Barthes 17). Like other commodities, history and narrative are also consumed, and they are consumed (just as they are created) in particular contexts.

These notions are embodied in literary modes like historiographic metafiction, an intensely self-reflexive or metafictional mode (explained below) that appropriates historical events and personages but subverts the "historically verified" versions attached to them (Hutcheon 5). Historiographic metafiction creates skepticism about historical knowledge by distorting the content of history while mimicking the form of historiography. Such fiction suggests to us that both the form and the content of the past can be reworked and reimagined, but that at no point must the reworking itself become conclusive. Its aim is not to offer an ultimate alternative version of history but to erase the belief that history is more "authentic" than fiction. Historiographic metafiction is highly aware of its status as a creation in language while also being firmly grounded in historical and political actuality. As Hutcheon states, the aim of postmodernism, couched in historiographic metafiction, is not to "…deny the *existence* of the past [but to] question whether we can ever *know* that past other than through its textualized remains" (19-20).[4]

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[4]Christopher Butler suggests that postmodernist skepticism, especially of history, does not mean that historians are free to make up things as they go along. For instance, Holocaust deniers will not accepted even by the most ardent

If reality is so heavily mediated by language and discourse, then by extension, realism—the literary genre that simulates the historical mode—is not something to be taken at face value. Postmodernists would argue that realist language is guilty of naturalizing power structures. For postmodernist writers and readers, fictional narratives are no longer able to offer authoritative slices of reality, and the narrator/author cannot entertain pretentions of possessing omnipotent control over the landscape of the novel. Instead, a typical postmodernist novel either persists in being open-ended, or in being all too accommodating of multiple, mutually-exclusive possibilities within the same fictional world. A postmodernist novel may narrate actual historical events, but it is likely to also insert obvious distortions that compel the reader into accepting that history and "reality" is, after all, constructed through language. Postmodernist fiction revels in demonstrating how characters and narrators not only construct their subjectivities through words but are themselves just that–words (Waugh 26).

These theoretical underpinnings give rise to "metafiction," a mode of fictional narrative that self-consciously and systematically addresses itself as fiction or a construct. And it does so within the framework of the fictional narrative itself. John Barth defines metafiction as a novel that "imitates" a novel more than it does the real world (qtd. in Currie, 161). In expressing itself as a deliberate act of artifice, metafiction problematizes the presumed divisions of reality and fiction, and poses questions about the air of certainty that realist representations assume. Thereby, it "explores the problematic relationship between life and fiction ..." (Waugh 4). Metafictional writings "…not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text" (2). Reality is a highly suspect concept for postmodernism, and this is reflected in metafiction. "Meta" implies a level of discourse, an extra level, as it were. Using "meta" terms, we are able "to explore the relationship between this arbitrary linguistic system and the world to which it apparently refers." In fiction, it means the space to explore the relationship "between the world *of* the fiction and the world *outside* the fiction" (3). Most importantly, metafiction does not pose an opposition to "objective" facts of the "real world" but rather to the language that endorses such a view of reality (11). This idea ties in with the postmodernist belief that reality—or rather, its perceptions and narratives—is so rapidly changing that the art that claims to represent it must, perforce, be ready to admit to its own ephemerality, and even its own triviality (12).

Postmodernist texts highlight the confrontation between the world of the text and the world of the reader, disturb semblances of reality (and realism), question the available narratives of history, science, and rationality, and lay bare the art of the novel. Postmodernist texts are also very aware of the intertextual nature of the text, of the historical and social context of the text's production and consumption, and of the text's amenability to plural interpretations. It is in the contexts of historiographic metafiction, incredulity, and the provisional nature of reality, that I explore Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* (1989).

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postmodernists. In other words, novelists are not wholly free to concoct historical events. What they are expected to do, rather, is to expose, through fictional subversion, the narratives and discourses that constitute history. Essentially, the postmodernist novelist is expected to be "…more sceptically aware, more relativist about, more attentive to, the theoretical assumptions which support the narratives produced by all historians…" (35).

Much of *Sexing the Cherry* takes place in seventeenth century London. The novel revolves around such historical events as the Puritan Interregnum, the Great Plague of 1665, and the London fire of 1666. The England of this period is beginning to participate in sea voyages to far-off places, bringing back exotic flora, an activity which will eventually segue into large-scale economic botany as part of the colonial project. This is also a time of political, religious, and moral turmoil with the fall of Charles I and the rise of Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans. Against this historical setting, dotted along "actual" events and historical figures—presented to us solely through the narrative voices of the two protagonists, the Dog-Woman and Jordan—the novel weaves together a reimagined fairy tale and a myth, bawdy satire, and fantastic voyages to cities that defy all laws of physics or conventional reality. In the "Introduction" to the novel, Winterson lays out her agenda: "You remember that definition of a fishnet as holes held together by string? I am interested in the holes" (vii). The novel dips into such gaps via Jordan's travels, the Dog-Woman's embodiment of collapsed binaries, and the re-appropriated narratives of heretofore silenced literary heroines.

The first of the four main sections of the novel contains alternating first person narratives of the Dog-Woman and Jordan. The Dog-Woman (her real name, she says, is forgotten) is a giantess who lives on the banks of the filthy Thames for most of the story's span. She is, as her name suggests, a professional dog breeder, and, as the narrative unfolds, we discover that she is also a violent serial murderer. She sketches out her childhood and her adulthood with a great deal of satire, and her current strong opposition to those that oppress sexual freedom. She comes across as a staunch Royalist, a believing Christian, and a hater of the Puritans. She is simultaneously extremely maternal towards her adopted son, Jordan, whom she had found floating in a basket in the Thames and thought appropriate to name him after another river.

Her narrative alternates with Jordan's, who comes across as contemplative and curious. He is in awe of his mother strong and action-oriented mother, and mentions his childhood love for boats. This serves as an omen to his early apprenticeship, in 1640 to be precise, under the explorer and gardener Tradescant (who is a "historical" figure—John Tradescant the Younger [1608-1662] was the head gardener to Charles I and Queen Henrietta of England). Together, the two travel to exotic lands, with the objective to bring back plants and fruit that no one in England has seen or tasted before: tropical fruits like bananas, pineapples, and cherries feature prominently in the novel. The increasing interest in horticulture and the tradition of royal gardens (such as at Kew) are also invoked through techniques like grafting (the basis of the title of the novel). After Tradescant's death, he continues on solitary journeys to cities that may be "real" or flights of fantasy, we are never quite sure. Jordan confesses that he is obsessed with the "thought of discovery" of the unknown, albeit of more than one kind (Winterson 3), which takes him to these strange or realistically "incommensurable" (Lyotard's term) places (each in its own way obsessed with love or lust or lightness or space). During one such expedition, he chances upon a mysterious dancer named Fortunata. She is a character from an old fairy tale about twelve dancing princesses and has crossed over from the tale she was born in into the world of the novel, and into Jordan's life. Of course, his trajectory makes the reader aware that the novel itself is fictional (thus, the reader becomes aware of various degrees or kinds of fiction even within this construct) and, within this world, the bringing of the pineapple to England by Jordan is just as legitimate as a city that has escaped the bounds of gravity.

The second section veers away from the historical/realist setting and comprises mostly of a reimagined fairy tale, spurred by Jordan's desire to find Fortunata. The Grimm Brothers' tale, *The Shoes that were danced to Pieces* (also translated as *The Worn-Out Shoes*) is recreated as a set of twelve individual first-person narratives of women (the twelve princess sisters) in search of happiness after their conventional heterosexual marriages have belied their hopes and desires. The stories examine a number of issues related to feminine identity, subjectivity, desire, and homosexuality. The stories do end happily, but in ways that radically subvert our expectations from fairy tales. It is also important to note that this subversion gives voices to (Lyotard's) petit-narratives or narratives of the women characters who did not have a voice in the older versions of the story. The sisters barely speak in the received fairy-tale—they appear to dance secretly and trick their sleuthing suitors, but never speak. Here, they have the agency to not only turn their lives off the offered track but also narrate these to the reader. It is in such instances that the political dimension of Lyotard's incredulity towards metanarrative becomes crucial to the discussion of postmodern fiction, for this kind of fiction brings into focus the narratives at the periphery, the voices of the heretofore marginalized and subordinated, and the claims of those rendered powerless by the legitimizing power of the metanarrative,[5] in this case, the quintessential fairy tale.

The third section, titled "1649," returns to the historical period. The Civil War, the beheading of King Charles I, and the establishment of the Puritans is presented through the narrative of the Dog-Woman. Her moral opinions emerge clearly through these pages: she is particularly incensed at the Puritan men's excessively sanctimonious pretense and their greatly depraved and debauched behavior in private. Using the trope of bawdy humor, she explicitly describes their prurient behavior that she has witnessed first-hand. According to her, Puritans indulge in necrophilia, bestiality, and voyeurism: behavior that clearly belies their exterior of strict morality, denial of bodily pleasure, social propriety, and austerity. Her encounters with the Puritans, whose behavior is quite contrary to what historical accounts would have us believe, also expose history's status as a construction through discourses of power and in language. This section also contains snippets of Jordan's life, and many ruminations of a postmodernist nature about truth, reality, and verifiability. Jordan finally finds Fortunata, examines the nature of time and the flat earth theory, and notes down what he terms "hallucinations" that expose time and space as constructs rather than immutable givens. He returns to London after the worst of the plague has passed. The great fire of 1666 threatens to burn down London, and the Dog-Woman leaves the banks of the city with Jordan to journey to a new land. Unlike Macondo, which

[5]However, it must be kept in mind that postmodernism, by itself, is not necessarily an egalitarian movement even though its politics are geared towards examining power structures and thereby undermining voices that are invested with power. For the most part, it is willing to expose discourses that consolidate hierarchies but it does not think it is possible to abolish power structures. What it does, however, is level the playing field for those petit narratives that have always been excluded from the mainstream. This aspect of postmodernism bodes well for the "liberation" of the ethically and culturally oppressed communities that have so far possessed no voice.

"would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men" (García Márquez 448), London is purified by this purgatory fire so it can be rebuilt.

The last section is titled "Sometime Later." Set in contemporary twenty-first century London, we meet Nicholas Jordan (Jordan reincarnated) and a nameless environmental activist (unnamed, as a nod to her alter-ego, the Dog-Woman). Both narrate, in alternating first-person voices, their childhood and the passions that have driven them to their current states. Their accounts are of a highly realist nature until their nation's historical past begins to interrupt their lives in the form of the novel's other protagonists. They find themselves being visited upon by visions from a long ago past—visions they cannot fathom, but must accept as their destiny. The struggles and passions of the former historical selves (the Dog-Woman and Jordan) are carried forward in these modern day figures. This has the effect of creating parallels between the past and the present, and exposing how a nation may change very little over the course of a few hundred years. The activist and Nicholas meet at the end of the novel, with the inexplicable but tacit understanding that they have lived other lives before and have known each other for a long time. The Dog-Woman and Jordan also appear briefly here, embarking on a new journey, as does the last story that Fortunata had related to Jordan before they parted: Artemis's version of her own myth.

It is also important to note that the banana and the pineapple, both exotic fruits in that time in England and therefore historically relevant, play an important pictorial role in the novel: the banana ends Jordan's first-person narrative portions and the pineapple the Dog-Woman's. Similarly, Nicholas Jordan's narrative is marked by a split banana and the environmental activist's by a split pineapple. Such pictorial symbols hint at connections across time, space, and identities. The split fruits symbolize fractured and fragmented realities, and how the past interrupts the present.

Sexing the Cherry displays its elements of the grotesque and bawdy through its protagonist, the Dog-Woman. She is, by her own admission, a woman of monstrous proportions, and demands space literally and literarily.[6] She claims her size is supernatural: fleas rest in pockmark craters on her face (19); she can hold a dozen oranges in her mouth at once (21); the sweat pouring off her can fill a bucket (16); and as a young woman, she had once displaced an elephant in a competition of weight: "…[w]hat it says of my size I cannot tell, for an elephant looks big, but how am I to know what it weighs? A balloon looks big and weighs nothing" (21). However, she is not merely *like* an elephant. She is the same size and weight as one. Jordan, as a baby, could sit in her palm like a puppy. Given her abnormal appearance, her father had tried to sell her to a circus as a freak when she was still a child. She had killed him with alacrity, which she recalls was her first murder (122).

For most of her adult life, it is her size as much as her un-natural strength that defines her. She is not only strong enough to wring the necks of several men at a time, but also pulls a

[6]The novel has been read as a postmodern lesbian text (Aldea). A lesbian body is often expressed through excess because it does not fit categories that medicine and marriage define.

musket ball out of herself when shot at (69). She is practically invincible—a point proved further when she survives shoveling bodies of the victims of the plague into a pyre without falling prey to the epidemic herself. She is also a woman of strong opinions and a morality that is her own; she is a staunch devotee of monarchy and a devout Christian but thinks nothing of murder when the victim is someone she thinks deserves to die. For her, the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is secondary to another antecedent law: "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (92). Once, when incited to inflict violence on Puritan men, she enthusiastically wounds enough of them to collect 119 eyeballs and over 2,000 teeth which she rolls out to horrified church goers (93). Her agenda to rid the country of the "po-faced, flat-buttocked zealots" (70) is eventually echoed in the activist's desire to rid the country of corrupt and greedy "men in suits" who "want to build dams, clear the rain forests, finance huge Coca-Cola plants and exploit the rubber potential" (140).

The Dog-Woman is certainly a creature of contraries and, like a true postmodernist narrator, is also highly unreliable because the reader can never quite trust her stories about herself, nor resolve the contradictions she embodies. She is not a monistic figure that gravitates towards one side in a list of binaries with respect to physical, moral, or philosophical structures. Rather (echoing Hutcheon's point about postmodernism being both/and rather than either/or in its leanings), she smashes these binary divisions by being a creature of contradictions. She is a mother and a murderer, a coy lady and a bawdy comedienne. Though frustrated at never having found a deserving (male) romantic partner and holding a cynical view of men in general, she is nevertheless a doting mother to Jordan and caring towards men like Tradescant. She says that while she must turn sideways to enter or exit a door, she "can melt into the night as easily as a thin thing that sings in the choir at church" (8). She may kill easily, but must turn down a job at a whore-house due to her "frailty of heart" (40). All the same, her explicit descriptions of witnessed debauchery, delivered with an air of naiveté, are not for the faint-hearted. For instance, she uses scatological hyperboles to convince the guards at the king's execution to let her in: she bemoans how she has the clap, stinks like a heap of dung, has rotting genitals, and the pus leaking out of her smells like a dog that has been dead for three days (72). She is comically literal-minded at times and skillfully sly at others, and possesses a vocabulary well beyond the ken of the uneducated poor village woman she calls herself. She can quote from the Scriptures as well as from Shakespeare to emphasize her point (96), though she claims to be uneducated. While more than willing to kill men who oppress women, she is also a staunch advocate of the Church and monarchy, both strongly patriarchal institutions. She evokes laughter, but also pity, sympathy, and appreciation from the sympathetic reader for the way she is. She is almost like a modern day action super-hero, invincible but also extremely unreal and morally ambiguous.

From an intertextuality aspect as well, she is a remarkable figure, reminiscent most strongly of Rabelais's bawdy Pantagruel. Like the monstrous giant of French literature, the Dog-Woman is also a conventionally grotesque figure, scatological, explicit, violent, but also in a certain way innocent and humorous. Both Pantagruel and the Dog-Woman are born to un-natural parents: the former to a giant (Gargantua) and the latter to a witch. Both find comical, and what may appear to be absurd, justifications for their actions. Like Pantagruel, she also interacts with others in a free and familiar way, treating the reader and her conversationalists with a no-holds-barred approach.

The counter-point to the Dog-Woman's size, heaviness, and rootedness, is the corporeal lightness of Fortunata and her eleven sisters. In the novel, these twelve dancing princesses took off each night to a mysterious city (which was floating in the sky) to dance all night (109). When Jordan watches her dance, Fortunata appears to be as light as a floating point of brightness. She "believes that we are fallen creatures who once knew how to fly" (perhaps invoking the figure of Satan, the fallen angel), and teaches her pupils to turn into "points of light" that are not bound by gravity (76). The implicit belief that she personifies is that gravity is escapable. When the reader tries to contrast the Dog-Woman and Fortunata, at first, the differences appear stark. However, because the Dog-Woman is clearly a creature of contradictions, one wonders if Fortunata is just another spin-off of the Dog-Woman, or her alter ego (and if they are both alter-egos of the modern day activist). We learn that the Dog-Woman's heaviness is born from lightness, thus confusing the difference between the two. Her mother was believed to be a witch because she was light enough for the wind to carry her away, yet was able to carry her gigantic daughter for miles. "There was talk of witchcraft but what is stronger than love?" muses the Dog-Woman (21). It is with such paradoxes presented in the novel that the reader begins to understand the constructed nature of reality that relies on making choices from binaries (male/female, good/evil, light/heavy, etc.) and the cultural value each side is hegemonically assigned.

Jordan is the link between the heaviness represented by his mother and the lightness of Fortunata. Crucially, he finds both women to be better than himself. Both, sure of their beings and in control of the world around them, have already arrived where he wishes to be.

Jordan is also portrayed as a contrast to his mother's qualities: he is sensitive, delicate, and is desperately seeking to be a hero while also caught in philosophical quandaries of the true natures of time, space, gender, and truth that seem to have already been problematized by his mother and Fortunata. Constantly in awe of his mother's (masculine) physical and moral strength (115), he finds himself lacking in such traits as brashness, courage, and physical heroism (89). His desire to become an explorer is modelled on Tradescant—as an explorer, he "might be a hero after all, and bring back something that mattered" (115). He lives up to his riverine name, meandering and traveling through fantastic cities. His retrospective account of his journeys informs us of the postmodern untrustworthiness of records themselves:

> Every journey conceals another journey within its lines: the paths not taken and the forgotten angle. These are journeys I wish to record. Not the one I made but the ones I might have made, or perhaps made in some other place or time. I could tell you the truth as you will find it in diaries and maps and log-books. (2)

Statements such as these, alongside his explorations and anecdotes, focus on the constructed (and unreliable) nature of reality through language and the genre of the documentary—closely mirroring the postmodernist ethos.

The environmental activist of modern-day England is carrying out a one-woman campaign against mercury pollution, a lone evangelist for her cause just as the Dog-Woman is for the sexual freedom. Fighting her lost battle against water pollution, the activist remembers her childhood alter ego, an omnipotent and "huge and powerful" woman (142), presumably the Dog-Woman (who we may now think is a wishful creation of the activist herself, though we cannot be sure of that). The activist's physical bigness as a child became channeled into a "Rabelaisian dimension of rage" (141) against corporations and factories dumping chemical waste into rivers. She supposes that staying so close to the mercury is making her hallucinate. "I imagine I am huge, raw, a giant" (138). She fantasizes about kidnapping men from the World Bank, the Pentagon, and world leaders, and giving them compulsory training in feminism and ecology. In her and the Dog-Woman's struggles lie the political crises of their time, whether in the form of industrial pollution, ruthless capitalism, or the moral and sexual repression of Puritanism.

Nicholas Jordan is a naval cadet. Like Jordan, he was very fond of making and sailing toy boats as a child. As Nicholas Jordan reminisces about his childhood, we learn that he remembers a painting he once saw of the first pineapple being presented to England's king.[7] He also remembers an afternoon from his childhood when a man in terribly antiquated clothes had come up to him and asked him about his boats. This man had said, "I used to make them ... and sail in them too. I've been everywhere, but I still have a feeling I've missed it" (130). This stranger (Jordan) walks away, and Nicholas's friend Jack comments that this man must be a "nut" because he was wearing clothes nobody wears any more. Already we see the past interrupting Nicholas's reality. Six months after he has become a naval cadet, Nicholas is on board a ship at night when he hears a man's voice tell him that the king is being buried at Windsor. Again, he thinks "nobody wears clothes like that any more" (137). Nicholas looks at this man, and tries to remember where he knows him from. The suspicious reader may speculate that it is the memory of a painting or a hallucination, until Nicholas realizes: "I heard a bird cry, sharp and fierce. Tradescant sighed. My name is Jordan" (137). And so the past and the present become fused.

Nicholas Jordan and the activist are destined to meet, though they realise how improbable the feeling is that they have already known each other (159). The activist's final words in the novel to him are: "Let's burn it," "it" being a factory polluting the water (165). The novel ends with the Dog-Woman and Jordan as they turn their backs on the purging fire—whose flames she has fanned—swallowing a pestilence ridden London. By conflating these two story-lines, Winterson is bending time, and also substantiating connections that exist beyond logical (and realist) dimensions. The interruption of the past (the Dog-Woman) into the present (the activist) is also a reminder that cultural forces have always been tilted against women, especially those that openly rally against dominant (patriarchal and hegemonic) systems, and that this bias has changed form but not its essential nature.

[7]This is a reference to Hendrick Danckerts' 1675 painting titled *Royal Gardener John Rose and King Charles II*, which is indeed a painting of a pineapple being offered to the king. In the novel, Jordan is said to have brought the first pineapple to England in 1661 (9).

It can be inferred from Brian McHale's notion of the ontological dominant in postmodernist fiction (11) that readers are expected to think of fiction as being beyond questions of true and false. Through the "ontological perspective," we see fictional worlds as capable of violating the rules of logic. Characters and events can be outrageously transformed in an ontologically pluralist world. Positions become relative and unstable. The boundaries of fiction and the real world are rendered porous, and the distinctions between the various kinds of fictional worlds (fantastical, real, historical) erode as they are nestled within one text. It is not uncommon to find these varied worlds intruding into the worlds of other texts in postmodernist fiction. *Sexing the Cherry* also displays this kind of pastiche of literary modes and genres.

As mentioned before, its setting is deliberately historical, and liberally peppered with historically verifiable dates and events (for instance, Charles Stuart I's trial that began on 20 January 1649 and lasted seven days, the Civil War, the formation of the Parliament, the Puritan Interregnum, and the Great Plague), and historically "real" figures. These create a reference system that cements the novel's time in the past. However, this historical narrative becomes postmodernist historiography by inverting the gaze from a bird's eye view record to a subjective and particularized one. We are informed of these historical events and others through the first-person narratives of the Dog-Woman and Jordan. Clearly, these events cease to be merely documented facts; rather, the reader encounters them as selected incidents that affect the characters in peculiar ways, and the events themselves stand altered from conventional accounts given the positions of the narrators who are also actors in this historical account.

The historically realist setting is interrupted first by Jordan's desire to "fly" away to fantastical cities, a quality that he finds reflected in Fortunata's dance. These voyages are opposed to the Dog-Woman's rootedness to land. She "anchors the historical narration in the material and visceral, while Jordan's stories are ephemeral flights of fancy" (Aldea 95). She appears abnormal but provides a historically accurate account; he appears normal and aspires to be a supernatural hero (Winterson 114), but travels through magical means to strange cities (reminiscent of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*). Neither of them can be treated as reliably realistic though. The Dog-Woman's real world feats are unreal and excessive; Jordan's fantasy is rendered real through his empirical approach. He says:

> I've kept the log book for the ship. Meticulously. And I've kept a book of my own, and for every journey we have made together I've written down my own journey and drawn my own map. I can't show this to the others, but I believe it to be a faithful account of what happened, at least, of what happened to me. (Winterson 115)

Jordan's journeys suggest that the boundaries between the real and the fantastical are porous. Besides, the verifiable and the fantastical, the experienced and the imagined, appear to be complementary and reversible. These journeys are also postmodern insofar as they question the stability of time and space, and cut through intertextual worlds (a fairy tale, references to Sindbad, Gulliver, and the myth of Artemis) that are fully appropriated and re-configured into the main fabric of the narrative. One must consider that given fantastic/unverifiable accounts of eye-witnesses on long sailing trips, one may be inclined not to dismiss Jordan's accounts as flights of fancy. All the same, whether these journeys really take place is always doubtful, and the novel does little to resolve this question. The log suggests that he has made these journeys, but he simultaneously also claims that: "To escape from the weight of the world, I leave my body where it is, in conversation or at dinner, and walk through a series of winding streets to a house standing back from the road" (11). This may indicate that the cities he purportedly visits may exist only in his imagination, but it could also mean that the boundaries between the real and the imaginary are contiguous and porous. Linear time also ceases to matter in these journeys. He notes: "The scene I have just described to you may lie in the future or the past. Either I have found Fortunata or I will find her. I cannot be sure. Either I am remembering her or I am still imagining her" (104). The line between truth and falsehood is very fine too: "And so what we have told you is true, although it is not" (106).

The fairy tale is the second intrusion into the underlying historical fabric of the novel. A fairy tale usually takes place at an undefined time, and in an undefined place. In the Grimm Brothers' version of the story deployed here, the sisters are locked up each night but secretly escape underground and go dancing with twelve princes. Each morning, they are found exhausted, and their shoes torn. Baffled, the king proclaims that whoever deciphers this mystery can marry the princess of his choice; of course, the princesses have no say (or voice) in the matter. Many princes try and fail because the eldest princess mixes sleeping draughts in their drinks. One poor, wounded soldier proves impervious to this trick and follows the sisters one night. Having successfully discovered their secret, he gets to marry the eldest princess and becomes the king. In this novel's retelling, the princesses go dancing to a floating city and their secret is discovered by a young prince. The twelve girls were promised to the prince and his eleven brothers. Fortunata is the youngest and runs away from the altar. The remaining eleven live through failed marriages, and are forced to make choices in order to truly live happily ever after (although they no longer dance). Through first-person narratives, we become privy to the lives of these women after the point where a conventional fairy tale ends. Each woman exemplifies the various ways in which conventional heterosexual marriage can oppress women, and these women's narratives are a fresh collage of alternate desires, passions, and freedoms. Their stories represent the confines of marriage and domesticity, the desire for homosexual love, the ignominy of unfaithful husbands, and several forms of sanctioned cruelty. After being freed of their marriages, the eleven sisters have come to live together again in a sort of sisterly commune. This is where Jordan meets them and hears their lives tales.

Winterson's use of a reworked fairy tale[8] woven into the historical world of seventeenth century England is in "…the manner of a playful palimpsest that simultaneously evokes and critiques through its critical, parodic distance from the pre-text" (Makinen 149). She twists the seemingly innocuous fairy tale to raise questions about genre as well as subjectivity. Although fairy tales are widely circulated, narrated over and over again, and exist in both oral and written

[8]The use of a reworked fairy tale is a literary style also seen prominently in Angela Carter's work of fiction *The Bloody Chamber* (1979).

traditions, their tropes, characters, and plots remain more or less fixed. Further, they are inherently patriarchal, and reinforce stereotypes about women. In Winterson's choice and reworking of the tale, these stereotypes are challenged: the princesses in the original tale are not docile to begin with, and rebel against patriarchy (the king, their father) by sneaking out at night. However, in the original tale, they are selfish and think nothing of the men being beheaded after they fall asleep and are unable to discover the princesses' secret. In the reworked version, the murders of the husbands are an act of rightful rebellion and a desire for individual happiness. Through the use, re-use, and ab-use of such a story, the author creates space for alternative voices, change, and the restructuration of identity within a familiar context, but also highlights the limitations of a genre. Once again, Lyotard's contention that petit-narratives from ex-centric points of view are an integral part of postmodern narrative becomes germane.

Finally, Artemis's story is reworked and narrated to present yet another facet of being a woman in a patriarchal culture. Fortunata claims she was in the service of the Greek goddess and it is from her mouth that she heard this story. Artemis begs her father Zeus to let her live alone on an island and hunt instead of marrying and bearing children. In her solitude, she discovers the joy of traveling and being alone as only men could be. She knows "…about the heroes and the home-makers, the great division that made life possible. Without rejecting it she had simply hoped to take on the freedoms of the other side..." (150). Artemis here becomes an example of what Hélène Cixous refers to as the fluid notion of bisexuality, "…understood not principally as a form of sexuality, but as an embodied recognition of plurality and the coexistence of masculinity and femininity within individual subjects" (Onega 97).

However, Artemis's quest for equality and solitude is rudely interrupted by Orion, a massive hunter with a terrible reputation. His sole intention is to disturb her for the choices she has made: "She was a curiosity; he was famous. What a marriage" (Winterson 151). He eats her goat, scatters her goods, rampages on her island, and finally rapes her. However, she does not suffer in silence: "[h]er revenge was swift and simple. She killed him with a scorpion" (152).[9]

This version of the myth is another intriguing reversal in the world of the novel. A mythic goddess must struggle in her quest for freedom from patriarchal norms, while a mortal (the Dog-Woman) has no trouble sustaining hers. It is, therefore, not a goddess, but the Dog-Woman, who is the alter-ego for the environmental activist. We are aware of the fictionality of the Dog-Woman, but she is real in the historical-realist world of the novel. Artemis and the princesses are also rendered "real" in the novel, but the source of their origin is other stories. In using these "literary" women, Winterson is creating a narrative space for them to renegotiate their destinies, and offers the readers with alternate histories.

[9]The myth of Artemis has several versions. In one such version, Artemis and her companions are portrayed as strict virgins who are very harsh on any man who threatens their virginity. Actaeon, for instance, chances upon Artemis and her followers bathing in a secluded pool and is unable to stop staring at the beautiful goddess. Enraged at this violation, Artemis turns him into a stag and sets his own hounds upon him. Another story is that Orion, a giant and a hunter, rapes her and she kills him with an arrow or a scorpion. A different version of the same story is that Apollo, jealous of Orion and Artemis spending time together, and challenges her to shoot an object at a great distance: the object turns out to be Orion's head.

The idea that two contradictory terms combine to form a new kind of organism, or affect, manifests in several ways in *Sexing the Cherry*. Primarily, the title of the novel is based on the horticultural technique of "grafting" wherein a tender or weaker plant is fused artificially with a hardier strain, which produces "a third kind, without seed or parent" (84). Jordan and Tradescant manage to successfully graft a cherry branch for the royal garden in Wimbledon. However, the Dog-Woman echoes the Church's sentiment that grafting is an unholy, unnatural act of artificially creating things. She believes that things that have not grown naturally have "no gender" and are "a confusion to themselves." Jordan mollifies her by saying that "we have sexed it [the cherry plant] and it is female" (85). The essential point being made here is that gender is not automatically assigned at birth. This third kind of plant acquires gender eventually.

Postmodern feminist philosophy has stated over and over again that gender is not a "fact" but a social construct. It is "…a space in the psychic life, a hole or lapsus in identity onto which are projected the images, archetypes, or stereotypes comprehended in terms male and female" (Front 109). That is, as exemplified by grafting, gender is belatedly determined by societal norms rather than by birth. This is also personified in the figures of Jordan and the Dog-Woman who display a clash of stereotypical gender roles: she is endowed with traditionally masculine strength, logic, and fearlessness whereas he is sensitive, intuitive, and imaginative. Jordan, under pressure to be a conventional hero, wonders if the technique of grafting can be applied to him as well: he believes that if he could be grafted onto the stronger hardier Tradescant (Winterson 85), he would find it much easier to be a hero. This belief rests on Jordan's notion that if these stereotypical qualities are not innate, one should be able to acquire them from elsewhere. Further, such an idea implies that the features of a hero are culturally decided upon, and one can become a hero if one is not born one.

There are several instances where the novel creates a new kind of gender performance, which is a mix of both masculine and feminine characteristics. For instance, Jordan dresses up like a woman in the brothel, and at the King's execution (29, 72). He turns into a woman in the eyes of those around. Further, he claims that he is not the only one to do this: "I have met a number of people who, anxious to be free of the burdens of their gender, have dressed themselves men as women and women as men" (28). Gender stereotypes, therefore, are not only a construct but also a burden.

The grafted cherry plant is also an instance of hybridity. Hybridity "shakes our assumptions about the boundaries between the sexes and between species" and it "violate(s) categories in different ways" (Caroline Walker Bynum qtd. in Onega 96-97). The cherry plant may be termed female, but it is essentially a third sex, having been ascribed to the plant belatedly (Front 109). In a similar fashion, the Dog-Woman's personality is also a hybrid. She cannot be classified as either completely masculine or feminine; her being oscillates between gender stereotypes, and creates a third kind that cannot be neatly compartmentalized as masculine or feminine (88).

It is important to remember that postmodernist poetics does not seek an alternative final truth. Its aim is not to merely reverse the value invested in one of the pair of binary oppositions. Rather, by destabilizing or deconstructing dichotomies, identity and meaning become fluid constructs. Winterson appears to posit, through the characters in her novel, the desire to turn binaries into hybridity, thereby adding newer dimensions to reality itself. As readers, we too cannot decode the Dog-Woman with any kind of finality, for she is simultaneously pious and profane, coy and murderous, coarse and ladylike, heavy and light, desirous of (patriarchal) order and the agent of political chaos. In these ways, her character deconstructs the clear distinctions between assumed masculine and feminine gender identity markers. If anything, she identifies herself with nature: "I am too huge for love. No one, male or female, has ever dared to approach me. They are afraid to scale mountains" (32). In her fluid personality, the Dog-Woman transforms into "…something that escapes these categories, something which appears as supplemental to the realist realm where these binaries are expressed" (Aldea 97).

Yet another relevant aspect is channeled through the ontological concerns voiced by Jordan when he ruminates over the hybrid nature of time and space, wherein the binaries of here and now and then and there are dissolved and recreated anew. Jordan lists four anachronistic short stories in which characters (echoes of the novel's protagonists) find time and space jumbled up. They find themselves inhabiting a reality that cannot be defined by logical/accepted parameters of time and space. From these stories, Jordan gleans the "lies" that we believe in: thinking of time as a straight line; believing that we can be in only place at a time; assuming that the past has occurred and the future has not; and accepting reality to be synonymous with truth (Winterson 90). These "lies" mirror both postmodernist concerns, and posit the basic fallacy of existing in a system of dualities, and allowing it to circumscribe reality. This blurring of neat boundaries between past and present continues when Nicholas Jordan and the activist are revisited by their previous versions.

The novel also contains traces of postmodernist self-reflexivity and self-conscious narrators. For instance, Jordan recognizes that there is written proof of his voyages, but his own life is a piece of fiction: "I discovered that my own life was written invisibly, was squashed between the facts, was flying without me like the Twelve Dancing Princesses who shot from their window every night and returned home every morning..." (2). The Dog-Woman is also aware that her life is a story chosen over another equally plausible story. She remembers the time her neighbor, a witch, had predicted that Jordan would abandon his mother and go away, and thinks to herself, "I should have killed her and found us a different story" (7).

Postmodernist ontological concerns are especially voiced in the conversations between Jordan and Fortunata. When he asks how it was that the sisters flew every night to an enchanted city to dance when there are no such places, Fortunata responds: "Are there not such places?" (106). We do not receive any direct and final answers to such questions, but these instances press the reader to ponder over not the possibility of the existence of such worlds but what such an existence means. Rather, *Sexing the Cherry* demands that the reader remain in a constant state of awareness of the hybridity that rests on a collapse of normative dualities, a typical postmodernist trait.

The novel closes with these words: “And even the most solid of things and the most real, the best-loved and the well-known, are only hand-shadows on the wall” (169). It aptly sums up what I have pointed out as a postmodernist trait: de-constructing assumed notions of reality/realism and history/historiography and turning the binaries that dictate our understanding of the world into hybrid entities exemplified in theme, character, and genre.

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On Gnawa and Jazz: Melodious Rhythms Sing Back to Power

Jamal Akabli

Gnawa, historians agree, was introduced to Morocco mainly through the gates of Essaouira, a coastal city in the South West of Morocco. The musical tradition travelled with the slaves brought from Sudan, Mali, Ghana, and other African countries under the reign of Ahmed Al Mansour and later on by Moulay Ismail, the founder of the first black army. In the meantime, Morocco was at the crossroads of the trade route, and many sub-Saharan Africans together with their customs traveled along with their itinerary of caravans. Hence, ethnographers or, perhaps more aptly so, ethnomusicologists categorise the music as being distinct along these lines. The slaves, having been freed, mixed and mingled with their compatriots and subsequently with locals, gave birth to hybridised rituals which were translated into an artistic expression that came to be labeled Gnawa music. These individual and communal stories of diasporicity are here lyricised, versified, and composed into rythms specific to this genre and entermeshed with others, all the while being invested and infused with the power to merge and blend perfectly with other trans-Atlantic genres such as jazz.

New Orleans, Chicago, and New York are to jazz singers what Marrakech, Essaouira, and Fez are to gnawa singers. Ake notes that “New Orleans remains, in spirit, the most African city in the United States” (10). The music the city dances to transpires with Africanness. This said, the music being performed is far from uniform for being partitioned along “… two distinct African-diasporic communities—the Francocentric gens du couleur or “Creoles of color” and the English-speaking slaves and their descendants” (10). It is apparently conspicuous then that the latter, having experienced the ravages of slavery, have a lot in common with gnawa, whose fate was no better. Both groups seem to have found in music a path to forging and carving an identity entrenched in the throes of enslavement, forced journeys under duress, separation from kins and land and, last but not least, of exploitation and expiation through embracing the religion of the host country. In America, the slaves converted to Christianity and used the church as their sanctuary where they congregated in choirs to sing psalms. Elements taken from Islam, therefore, colour the music of gnawa gesticulating to their conversion to Islam, a religion that condems all forms of slavery, without abandoning who they really are or where they come from.

Thanks to Essaouira Gnawa festival, gnawa music has now garnerd more attention than ever before, thus harnessing an ever-greater power, which catapulted the singers on the local stage and then worldwide. However, such a universalisation has been met with malcontentment and skepticism. The staging and spectacularisation process of gnawa music has been regarded as nothing more than fetishistic and carnivalesque. When gnawa rites are thus “… appropriated, it not only affects its performance context - the social milieu of its exchange - but the practice itself is transformed,” (Kapchan 54). The Lila is not lost on stage as Kapchan thinks it would, but it multiplies into Lilat, each of which is similar to Lila but not quite so, testifying to the power inherent in this music to metamorphose. The internationalisation of the music amounts to its objectification as it turns it into a fetish, creating “the category of the “sacred” in a transnational context” (54). Kapchan disregards the fact that in being taken out to the public sphere, gnawa music, previously confined to the precincts of the private sphere, is gaining international appeal and recognition, enabling the subaltern to become the sovereign subject of history with a voice/voices to vent out their experiences and thoughts (Chakrabarty 102). By speaking on their behalf, Kapchan denies them agency. Kapchan, it appears, would rather museumify and mummify the music than see it taken out to the public to taste and savour. Her not-so-flexible take is commensurate with her ethnographic approach. As she documents, with an opulently stereotypical foreign eye, the way the French colonisers reported on Morocco and other colonies, she lapses into obsessively ritualising the music and possessively transfixing it into a condition without giving in to its power to transcend and transform its conditions of birth. Having arrogated to herself this exclusive right, she alone is privy to a world over which she claims ownership. In Saidian parlance, "Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (Said 15). The essentialised binaristic division which Kapchan is so keen on upholding leaves no room for either resistance or co-existence, for the post-modern condition of being and being together, thus, condemning the Oriental/the gnawi to perpetual backwardness and oppositional inferiority. Having thus interred the Oriental in the abyss of history as a changeless subject, Kapchan condemns gnawa to perpetual stagnancy and constancy.

Said ascribes the origin of all the nuances, epistemes, and intimations made about the Orient to ritualised violence rooted in "… a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (16). The Oriental, a gnawi in this case, is but a passive, inert, submissive, and subservient being hardly able to unshackle himself from the fetters imposed on him. He is still in many ways possesed and cannot dispossess his body and his past, let alone the present. However belated their response is, gnawa have risen beyond the seamlessness of this monolithic and denigrating portrayal by crossing borders. Kapchan obfuscates the fact that music, like any other merchandise, lives its age, the age of postmodernism and commodification. Jameson elucidates that "What has happened is that aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation" (56). In a rejoinder, Chakarabarty notes that, "Subaltern pasts are like stubborn knots that stand out and break up the otherwise evenly woven surface of the fabric," (106) and are thus worth untying from a historiographic rather than an ethnographic point-of-view, Kapchan's in this case.

The blending of the two not so different styles, gnawa and jazz, which Kapchan is reticent and recalcitrant about, endows them with a freshness that sells, offering gnawa one of those rare moments that resist pigeonholing. These "superstitious contemporaries", according to Chakarabarty, serve "as examples of an "earlier type," as human embodiments of the principle of anachronism" (238). One may as well contend that there is a malign and malicious form of residual "thinking which permeates and structures contemporary practices and representation" (Shohat and Stam 2). With gnawa's phenomenal rise to stardom, these dichotomies will be upset, differences will be blurred in the name of universal ethos. In due course, the gnawi will also acquire more visibility and audibility while ethnographers will be stripped of their trappings, denuded legitimacy, and hence their presence denied. This fear of what would become of them, of becoming redundant and superfluous, and of unbecomingness is what puts ethnographers on the defensive. What better way to turn the tables than by attacking any attempt at internationalisation.

Compared to recent trends, jazz was scantily colorful at its inception being more tied up with the then status quo the slaves were mired in. Their artistic expression which sprang from feelings of oppression met with further suppression as slave owners prevented their slaves from getting together to sing lest the drums should incite black communities to rebel in the face of their owners (Tirro 1993). The 1920's constituted a watershed in the history of jazz as it established a name for itself. Among a plethora of pre-eminent singers with unquestionable stature such as Smith, Morton, Oliver, Armstrong, and Bechet, none other than Paul Whiteman, ironically a white man, was labeled as the "King of Jazz" in the movie with the same name which came out in 1930 at the peak of ragtime. That a white man should be thus credited could be seen as evidence of the suppressive and oppressive attitude America held vis-à-vis the then speaking/singing subjects once held as abject objects. The heroism with which early jazz singers are now bestowed as the pioneers of America's classical music is but an afterstate, an overdue avowal that should by no means eclipse a longue durée of denial (Ake 11). Reactions to the rising popularity of jazz were far from being unanimous. While some Americans readily embraced the music, others condescendingly disapproved of it and even thought it to be morally twisted. Americans, who were repulsive of and averse to jazz, thought it only appealed to their feet instead of their intellect (Mooney 4). Shohat and Stam amply document the dialectics of presence/absence in musicals wherein jazz music is deafeningly audible, but the Afro-Americans "presence is largely inferential" (223) being conspicuous by their mere absence. Film directors intrusively appropriate these subgroups' musics and obtrusively screen them out in an act of stealth reminiscent of what happened to artefacts now found in European museums. While the music sounds good, the Afro-Americans behind it are not 'good' enough to appear in American movies. Black Americans were musically suppressed and their music was hijacked by the whites putting their Euro-American seal on what was essentially an Afro-American artistic expression. In a schizophrenic stance, Shohat and Stam state that while "black sounds were welcome, black images remained taboo" (225).

For many, jazz has played an especially strong role in representing "blackness" in America, and musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Nat "King" Cole, Miles Davis, Archie Shepp, and Wynton Marsalis have long exemplified the evolving hopes, fears, dangers, joys, and frustrations of living as African Americans" (Ake 11). One may dare say that the singers wore their hearts on their sleeves to express their sorrows. The insistence on blackness may be construed as part of the bands' craving for recognition. Thus, the apparel becomes an extension of their skin, race, and identity. The same things may be said of gnawa, who are almost always black given their lineage. In this respect, the hats gnawa wear are usually dotted, letting out threads resembling dreadlocks, but wearing these seems to be an unforfeited tradition for recollection, pointing back to still unforgotten sub-Saharan roots. That all the band members don the same attire points to a deep-seated desire for equality otherwise lost. Unlike jazz singers, in gnawi bands, the master stands out with his differently colored outfit. The master with his *guembri*[1] occupies the center stage very much like the lead guitarist, the trumpeter, the saxophonist, or the pianist in jazz. He is surrounded with castinet players who are

[1]Editor's Note *(hereafter Ed. N.)*: A musical instrument also known as sintir.

also gifted dancers, acrobats, and choreographers. The drummers stand on the edge, but their drumming is so deafening as to drown all else. Dancing, an inherent characteristic of both gnawa and jazz, takes various forms and shapes. Within a pattern, the dancers lurch forward or backward, move in circles or demi-circles, in pirouettes on one foot or two. “The origins of jazz music and dance are found in the rhythms and movements brought to America by African slaves. The style of African dance is earthy; low, knees bent, pulsating body movements emphasized by body isolations and hand-clapping” (Nalett 2005) much of which finds an echo in gnawa music and dance. “The rhythms and movements of African dance: the foot stamping and tapping, hand clapping and rhythmic vocal sounds,” Nalett posits, reverberate through jazz and gnawa as well. Just as jazz and tapping go together, so does gnawa and clapping. In fine, what the feet do in jazz, the hands perform in gnawa.

Drums, *qraqebs* or localised castanets, and above all a *guembri* are all it takes to carry the auditor/audience to the mystic and mysterious world of Gnawa. *Guembri*, “a three-string bass lute with a wooden soundbox… covered with dromedary skin” is that “voice that whispers and leads the lament, the evocation and the invocation” (Morato 189), solicitations, supplications, declamations, and guembrification, so to speak. Despite its claim to predominance, its centrality, the *guembri* cannot be without its retinue, its attendant servants. According to some *mqadmin*[2], guembri is a phallic symbol which can only be aroused by the presence of female genitalia, which the drum with the castanets stand in for. The master is the one entrusted with the *guembri*, but without his band, his dancers, his ‘dendin,’ and strumming, it will not suffice. The drumming and clinking seem to carry the master in moments of respite, but also to abyss during crescendo. This is largely applicable to jazz. The saxophone, the trumpet, the guitar, or even the double bass synechdocally come in to mean what the *guembri* symbolises while the drums fulfil the function of arousal by carrying the tune and filling in the void. So, since its birth, gnawa singers have been using the same instruments while jazz singers have changed their ways introducing new instruments like the ones aforementioned.

The stage which typically represents the world from Shakespearean parlance, the gnawi and the jazz singers, once slaves, in someone’s possession, are here in a position to rise atop the Hegelian master-slave dichotomy by dint of the very discourse which subdued and subjugated them. Their tale-telling, call and response, frees them from servitude, their mixing in with and appropriation of each other’s styles figuratively salvages them from bondage without losing them their distinctness, their multilayered identity. This decolonisation/abolishionist process, of which art is the instigator, the liberator, entails “… a radical dis/mantling of European codes and a post-colonial subversion and appropriation of the dominant European discourses” (Tiffin 95). The gnawi and the palm trees so distinctive of his new home resemble each other in more ways than one could possibly enumerate.Through a number of songs, the gnawi affirms having roots as deep as the palm trees entrenched in his past in what one may describe as reconciliatory introductory phase to the present. Through other songs, which may be likened to a trunk so strong no winds can shake, the gnawi produces evidence of his long fought-for recognition, one sculpted with bare hands in the land that is now his and of which he is a member, an ambassador. The new mix and remix represents newly forming and formed branches sprouting onto the sky and branching out to merge with jazz, pop, rock ad infinitum.

[2]Ed. N.:Translated as ‘wardens of religious shrines in Gnawa community.’ Source: *Sharing the Sacra:The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations around Holy Places,* Edited by Glenn Bowman.

The gnawi's prowess and power to adopt and adapt to a variety of styles signifies that Morocco is in full reconciliation with its past and now ready to open up to the future, to embrace other experiences from without, which makes the process of nation making and nation imagining, an all-inclusive ongoing one. The moments of grief which this music is steeped in as well as the exuberence which seeps through it call to mind the the ups and downs that led to the formation of present day Morocco one takes pride in. In this respect, gnawa and jazz recall each other in that "… both acknowledge the source in Africa itself – Abdullah El-Gourd by invoking the ma'llemin (pl.), the early Gnawa masters that left their legacy to the present in the bodies and songs of those who possess tagnawit[3] today, and Randy Weston by making frequent reference in his performances and presentations to mother Africa – the place – also defined as the source of musical and spiritual tradition" (Kapchan 2015). Gnawa and jazz empower the musicians to rise from the ashes of history to prominence and eminence. Having been marginalised for far too long, the disenfranchised claimed their own music to rewrite history in melodious terms. As Bhabha puts it forth, "art creates the conditions for a beginning, a practice of history and narrative" (35).

Although some would contend that the ritualised aspect is being absented and scanted, the Essaouira festival, which brings jazz and gnawa on the same stage, needs to be credited with elevating the heretofore ostracised Moroccan musicians to heights of fame they would never have achieved had they kept their music indoors. The festival also attracts famous singers from the world over to participate alongside Gnawa and to give their compositions the much needed gnawi air, the Oriental breeze. The contention that hybridity contaminates that state of purity inherent in music does not stand once tested. First and foremost, the very state of authenticiy purists are keen on defending cannot be retrieved as such, for it simply does not and has never existed. The lesson to be learnt in this regard, Appiah points out, "... is surely that we are all already contaminated by each other, that there is no longer a fully autochthonous pure-African culture awaiting salvage by our artists" (124).

Nothing could be further from the truth than to presume and assume that external tampering with gnawa undermines its power to resist. The hybridising process which contact zones imbricate and implicate, "rather than indicating corruption or decline" should be understood to be "…the most common and effective form of subversive opposition since it displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (Ashcroft 9). Parry, having examined Bhabha's discourse on hybridity, comes to the conclusion that what should be retained from this discussion of whether hybridity serves the natives or subverts their enunciations is that as long as the hybrid moment, a thing in and of itself different from, if not opposed to, texts produced elsewhere, is fraught with "incongruities," it lays bare "…the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text" and denies "it an authorizing presence" (42). In coming together, gnawa and jazz musicians produce "postmodern knowledge" that "… refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's (the musician's) paralogy" (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxv). Hegemony, the postcolonialist's currency, thus cedes way to

[3]Ed. N: Translated as 'Gnawa tradition.' Source: Re-creating Paul Bowles, the Other, and the Imagination: Music, Film, and Photography. By Raj Chandarlapaty.

heterogeneity, to a plurality of being and being together. As such, this togetherness, while celebratory of homogeneity, does not altogether discard differences.

Blanketing and bracketing all discourses of resistance from within, quite a few postcolonialist theorists, including JanMohamed, "… configure the colonial realm as a confrontation based on differences in race, language, social customs, cultural values, and modes of production" (18). In Signs Taken for Wonders, Bhabha stipulates that "The exercise of colonialist authority, however, requires the production of differentiations, individuations, identity effects through which discriminatory practices can map out subject populations that are tarred" (33) and forever and ever marred. Speaking in Manichean allegorical tropes will only lose us sight of the multitudinous possibilities inherent in reconfiguring, transfiguring, and hybridising the relations holding the West with other parts of the world without altogether effacing and defacing these differences. In precolonial times and during periods of colonisation, imperial powers mobilised the military to conquer land and ethnographers to collect data and produce knowledge to maintain the upper hand in what Said construes as a dialectic of information and control.

Undeniably, East has been an inspiration for musicians across the world, and they do so without giving Easterners their due merit. However, one ought to aknowledge that these same musicians do Morocco a great service by giving the music a global recognition. Within the subversive discourse of Moroccon music, one can pinpoint moments of insurgence and resistance. The conspicuous silence Spivak records is here a vociferous and perspicuous presence, a lingering one. Essaouira provides an idyllic venue where, to some extent, a fair exchange among the players takes place. While on stage, both Moroccan and occidental singers find themselves on a par. Instead of being a place of coercion, the stage has now become a negotiated territory where musics overlap and musicians interact on an equal footing. As Ahmad concludes, instead of defining the world "in terms of a binary opposition," academics and researchers ought to probe "contradictions, differences, and profound overlaps" (80).

Erstwhile, "in the context of colonial production, the subaltern" was bereft of history and left speechless (Spivak 28). In contemporary context, nevertheless, the subaltern writes off oppression and narrativises his/her own history/story in his/her words using instruments of his own making against the dominant Western discourse. On stage, the Westerner is now seen stripped of the paraphernalia of power which he once came studded with to occupy our land. Contrary to Spivak who stickles that "the 'true' subaltern group, whose identity is its difference" (27), cannot know and speak itself and hence cannot represent itself , I deem it only appropriate and opportune for the subaltern to foreground these differences that set them apart to be able to speak/to sing. Differences in attire, in language, in the choice of instruments, in choreography, among so many others, are being revisited, reasserted, juxtaposed and transposed to create an artistic creolised form of expression I may now chance to call *jaznawa*. In a symbolic redistribution of power, the native and the foreigner now occupy the same stage and bask in equal power, each asserting their presence through difference. Rather than baffle and muffle the gnawi, the jazz singer gives his rival a golden opportunity to shine and show his talent, and so does the gnawi. This works both ways in the sense that the gnawi does not only legitimise the presence of the Westerner, but also supply him with the chance to outshine his former self. In short, disavowal turns into mutual recognition. "In granting value to (what the centre calls) the margin or the Other, the post-modern challenges any hegemonic force that presumes centrality, even as it acknowledges that it cannot privilege the margin without acknowledging the power of the centre" (Hutcheon 132).

Ahmad's classical repartition of the world or what he refers to as the ideological classification "between those who make history and those who are mere objects of it" (78) is upturned and upset here through the power music is imbued with. Stage, representative of the world, is bridging the divide and blurs the differences between those who make and do and those who are mere spectators. The occupants share their birthplace, the fused music is their newborn, the feeding of which is biumbilically sustained and maintained. Should one of the two not fulfil their parental duties, the whole process will miscarry. The fusion this encounter occasions represents the syncretic realm, the third space, where cohabitation is largely made possible and manifested through sonic blending. The only rivalry there is, if there is one, is manifest in the strife of each and every musician to achieve excellence to win the hearts of the cheering crowd. In fact, the collaborative process by which psychedelic trance or swing feeling, as it is known in jazz, are produced and induced only means that the success of one is by definition the success of the other. Either we thrive together, or we fall together. Both jazz and gnawa have in them what makes the audience want to dance, clap hands, and stomp feet. Grafting elements from these two styles, one onto the other, is sure to swing and entrance audiences across borders, on both sides of the Atlantic.

What makes the process possible is the fact that jazz and improvisation are two faces of the same coin. This interdependence/symbiosis can only indicate that the subaltern has at last spoken. The differences are not absolute, nor are the divergences nihilistic, insofar as it is plausible to weave a whole new argument that regards the confluence of the two traditions of music. The two bands, now larger than life, represent not just their nations but a collective experience, and hence the pertinence of Ahmad's insights with regard to nations and collectivities. Ahmad states that, "If we replace the idea of the 'nation' with that larger, less restrictive idea of 'collectivity,' and if we start thinking of the process of allegorization not in nationalistic terms but simply as a relation between private and public, personal and communal, then it also becomes possible to see that allegorization is by no means specific to the so-called Third World" (82). The music carries universal themes which people on both sides of the Atlantic can identify with and dance to. In short, the music being produced is reflective of experiences common to mankind which are bound neither by time nor by space.

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Abdelkrim Berchid: Festive Theatre and the Post-Colonial Condition

Abdeladim Hinda

Director, playwright, theorist, and drama teacher, Abdelkrim Berchid,[1] (1943-) is the founder of the festive project in Morocco. His appetite for theatre has always been gargantuan. No Moroccan theatrical experience elicited as much crucial attention as did his festive experience, which has peremptorily announced a new direction in theatre-making in the Arab World. This is because he broached problematics that provoked rancorous disagreements inside the kingdom. More importantly, his avant-garde experience has largely dislodged several theatrical concepts and in their space carved ones that became in due course central to Arabic dramatic discourse. In fact, his theatrical experience has staunchly elbowed itself into prominence and pushed its way into academic circles in and outside the kingdom as it successfully evolved a new form of stagecraft to present the Arab post-colonial vision. Berchid would be wary of any introduction that presents him as a temporary monolith, or an ever-lasting hater of flux.

Berchid occupies a key position on the post-colonial theatrical map of Arab territories. He is a dramatist who combines creativity, criticism, and theorization. In Khalid Amine's words, Berchid is "…the most prominent representative theoretician, who has not only voiced his disavowal of the Western theatrical enterprise, but also presented a theatrical form as an alternative. This form is called the festive theatre" (Moroccan Theatre 106-107). Amine further elaborates: "Throughout his career, Berchid has produced a corpus of theoretical manifestoes and critical writings, polemical publications here and there, and most importantly, a corpus of plays– many of them related to the Shakespeare canon" (106-107). He thus deserves to be called the spiritual harbinger of the festive trend in the Arab-Muslim World. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his theorizations played an overarching role in the changes that altered the course of Moroccan theatre following the 1970s.

Without studying *Al-Ihtifaliya* (festivity)[2] and understanding its ideational and aesthetic/poetic frames of reference which prompted its establishment, one could hardly do justice to Berchid's plays. Yet it is Berchid's creative, critical, and theoretical writings that constitute these frames of reference. Can we therefore examine Berchid's plays and theatre independent of festivity? Is it possible to explore festivity without reference to Berchid's creative, critical, and theoretical baggage? Festive theatre is best examined with recourse to both festivity and Berchid's whole corpus of theoretical baggage. This is to appreciate its merits and understand its complex system of aesthetics and poetics.

Festivity has preoccupied the minds of theatre practitioners and critics interested in histrionic arts since the 1970s. Nurtured in Maghreb as a problematic, festivity has presented itself as an aesthetic-ideational project capable of delineating a plethora of issues of solid

[1]Editor's Note *(hereafter Ed. N.)*: Author has preferred to use Abdelkrim Berchid over its alternate spelling - Abdelkrim Berrechid. The latter has been used in Don Rubin's edited *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*, volume 4, The Arab world, Routledge, 1999.

[2]Ed. N.: On Moroccan Theatre in Don Rubin's edited *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*, *Al-Ihtifaliya* has been translated as "celeberation Theatre," but the author has interpreted the same as "Festive Theatre."

germaneness to the domains of creativity, criticism, and theorization. This article sheds light on the reasons that pushed Arab theatre harbingers to think of a theatrical theory in light of which they could express themselves without feeling trapped in Eurocentric patterns. It also examines Berchid's keen interest in theorization and highlights festivity's aesthetics and poetics of difference.

The post-colonial turn constituted a critical stage in theatrical criticism in Morocco. It was during this stage that Berchid first attempted theatrical theorization and effected his festive manifestoes. This act of theorization would mark a new stage in theatrical criticism premised on a hybrid aesthetics that sought inspiration both from Arab-Muslim heritage and post-structuralist legacy. However, this theorization triggered an avalanche of criticisms and commentaries at a time when most theatre critics wondered whether theorization was even feasible or not. For example, Ahmed al-Iraqi declared that theorization requires "... the existence of quantitative and qualitative accumulations which could elucidate the necessary markers of theorization that shape the field's productions within the theatrical space" (25).[3]

When theatre critics were wondering whether Moroccan theatre had achieved these "quantitative and qualitative accumulations," Berchid forcefully affirmed that the new leap in Arab theatre had already been carried out:

> With the advent of the 1970s, Arab theatre experienced a new leap, which will always remain new until it achieves the attribute of antiquity. This leap manifested itself in diligence, experimentation, research, and the serious endeavor to harmonize ideational theory with scientific practice. Therefore, Arab theatre has moved to 'the third stage,' namely the stage of looking for an ideational theory with both aesthetic and ideational dimensions (The Form of Arab Theatre 180).[4]

The truth is that the third stage to which Berchid refers clearly shows the correlation of festive theorization with the socio-political clashes that marked the 1970s with cataclysmic events on the national and international scenes. Such events include the emergence of the armed struggle in Palestine in 1965; the June defeat at Arab-Israeli war in 1967; the cultural revolution in China; May 1968 events in France; the fall of American imperialism before the Vietnamese forces; the hippy movement as well as the avant-garde movements, etc (Salem 4).

Prompted by all these events, the twentieth-century Moroccan theatrical movement produced a raft of manifestoes, papers, and publications that express a strong will towards theatrical theorization. In fact, this obsession with theorization was a common state of affairs in the Arab-Muslim world: Youssef Idriss, Tawfiq al-Halim, and Ali al-Rai in Egypt; Saad Allah Wanouss in Syria; Izz Din al-Madani in Tunisia; *al-Hakawati* Troupe in Lebanon; *Fawanis* in Jordon; *Saradiq* in Egypt (Ramdani, "Masrah" 13-14). The will to theorize came about when Arab dramatists felt that the Western theatrical model was alien to their environment and did not fit within their histrionic versions. The act of theorization is linked to their understanding of the

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[3]*Idaa* [Enlightenment]– a periodical published by *Jam'iyat al-Aqni'a* in Fes, Morocco,Issue 2, May (1982), 25.
[4]See Also Abdelkrim Berchid, *al-Ihtifaliya: mawaqif wa mawaqif modada* [Festivity: Attitudes and Counter-Attitudes] (dar tinmel litiba'a wa nachr, Marrakech, 1993).

problematic of ‘theatrical origins.’ Such an understanding enabled them to discern the exclusivist nature of Western theatre, which treated them as ‘blank slates’ and ‘empty spaces.’ With the benefit of this hindsight, the harbingers of histrionic arts in Morocco and elsewhere called for the return to the festive springs of Arab-Muslim popular legacies, and took the lead of putting forward the first foundations of Arab theatrical theory.

However, these harbingers failed to achieve such a goal because their theories lacked scope, comprehension, and clarity. This failure led some theatre critics to emphasize that theorization requires documenting oral materials together with establishing laboratories and clubs for experimentation along with theatrical researches. This process entailed inventing an ‘original’ formula for Arab theatre which had to be ‘rooted’ in Arab-Muslim ideational needs, cultural aesthetics, and social requirements. To this end, this theatre had to return to tradition, thanks to the collective efforts of dramatists, anthropologists, archeologists, and others in acoustic and optic fields (al-Nocayri, “Stage structure” 28).

Mohamed Messkin saw that these theorizing discourses were premised on reasonable justifications. First, a mixture of concepts and theatrical formula were made available owing to the spirit of adaptation which highly characterized the period. Second, there was an absence of a diligent pursuance, study, and criticism of problematics and phenomena which encourage genuine theatrical theorization. Third, theorization from within generated only a search for ‘leadership’ that gave birth to local theatrical trends. Fourth, there was a search for a solid theory capable of granting Arab-Muslim playwrights/dramatists historical as well as aesthetic legitimacy. Messkin contends that these harbingers’ quest for a theoretical framework must be seen as a project that should reflect the concern for rooting their expressive forms in Arab cultural education along with finding a sui generis identity for their histrionic praxis: “The significance behind generating such a framework cannot become clear to us if this step is not taken first. Theatre is an act, and will always need a theoretical proof” (Present Absent 16). Messkin thus saw the various theorizations that appeared in the Arab-Muslim world as a project intended to engender a theatrical theory in light of which the Arab creator could masterfully perform his theatrical works. By calling these theorizations a mere project, Messkin alluded to the fact that these endeavours were incompetent to grasp the essence of the theatrical process which entails a clear conception capable of creating a coherent theatrical theory (16).

Berchid was aware of this challenge and continued to critique his contemporaries on this basis.[5] He propounded the festive theory as an alternative to the existing theatrical models. He also realized that theory should be perceived as a project that requires the collective efforts of Arab researchers, creators, and artists. It was in this spirit that he published the first manifesto of festive theatre. In the manifesto, he criticizes existing theatrical models, explains his conception of the suggested model, and calls for ‘rooting’ theatrical formula in Arab-Muslim social imaginary. This won him fame and recognition because, in Hassan Lemniai’s words, “he shouldered the burden of defending the school of festivity” (Moroccan Theatre 7). The claims that his theorization and manifestoes were intended to create a theatrical trend for a particular social class have no bearing whatsoever on the truth which festivity called for. One has to see festive theatre as a formula and a model that boasts Arab-Muslim histrionic practices. Berchid

[5]See for example Abdelkrim Berchid, *hodod al-kain wa lmomkin fi al-masrah al-ihtifali* [The Limits of the Actual and the Possible in Festive Theatre] (dar attaqafa: Casablanca, 1985)

confirms that "…festivity is not a mere theatrical current amongst other currents. Nor is it a mere part of a whole. It is rather Arab theatre in its entirety" (Critical Vaccinations 9). He even asserts that to renounce festivity would be to quicken Arab theatre's fall into decay which would only shore up Orientalist trends. Indeed, this renouncement would only buttress Eurocentric tropes of empire by esteeming the appropriated Western theatrical model at the expense of the local one. To emancipate Arab theatre from Eurocentric shackles, Berchid calls for embracing festivity, which he sees as "Arab theatre in its entirety" (9). Despite his propagandist, if not centric, approach, Berchid says festivity should not be regarded as a school with followers (Festive Theatre 12).

Establishing dramatic discourse in Arab-Muslim culture was carried out in the spirit of a quest for a lost civilizational identity. This endeavour also aimed at dis-appropriating prevailing Eurocentric discourse, for the post-colonial condition imposed its intellectual burden upon Arab-Muslim consciousness to redefine itself and question the validity of Eurocentric theatrical projects which treated our performing traditions with excessive arrogance. Arab-Muslim 'connoisseurs' thus saw it fit to revolt against imperialistic thinking which stripped them of their civilizational identity and alienated them from within and without. Festive theatre championed this revolt and raised a plethora of relevant avant-gardist questions: is there an aesthetic philosophy particular to Arab creativity? Can Arab thinking attain independence without depending on the West? In this vein, Mustapha Ramdani maintains that

> ... these questions generated an avant-gardist movement in the field of drama, which started with creativity, criticism, and then theorization. When we talk about dramatic discourse, we automatically mean the entire structure of what we call theatrical performance; a structure that does not allow the separation of cognitive, ideological and aesthetic levels. (Theatre of Abdelkrim Berchid, 24)

Establishing this discourse was meant to induce a vision dissimilar to the prevailing one in terms of playwriting, direction, acting, performance, and stage-auditorium relationship. Old dramatic discourses, which prevailed thanks to rampant Western modernity, played an overarching role in marginalizing spectators not only through indoctrinating and producing them as docile bodies, but also through their emphasis on the use of the alien Aristotelian theatrical model. In this regard, festivity's great significance resides in reconsidering stage-auditorium relationship with recourse to unprecedented aesthetics.

Festivity is best understood as a project that aims at actualizing a *sui generis* dramatic discourse premised on constituents firmly rooted in Arab-Muslim civilization. However, festivity should not be understood as a trend calling for innovation, which should *ipso facto* transcend old formulas or models upon which new one(s) must be established. Festivity does not call for an innovation of this sort at all. It simply claims that Arab theatre during colonial times till the advent of the post-colonial turn could barely be called Arab because it functioned according to Eurocentric patterns and parameters that excluded national concerns and alienated Arab-Muslim cultures from within. Ramdani observes that festivity sees the discourse on this act of establishment to be remarkably connected to the issue of rooting Arab dramatic discourse, which could not be achieved without interrogating our social imaginary (Theatre of Abdelkrim Berchid, 25). The essential factors which prompted the appearance of the festive process can be listed as follows: 1) the absence of an 'original' aesthetic philosophy in Arab histrionic praxis; 2) the widespread emulation of theatrical performances; 3) the focus of Arab theatrical researches on trivialities rather than essences; 4) obliterating theatrical lineaments of local popular performing spectacles; 5) the failure of some Arab theatrical endeavours due to their focus on individual rather than collective work; 6) the urgent need for defining a comprehensive theatrical discourse that venerates Arab-Muslim identity and the need to create a theatre that unites people together; 7) the failure of amateur theatre to establish a coherent theatrical theory despite the weightiness and multiplicity of its performing experiences (Theatre of Abdelkrim Berchid, 25).

Though festivity rejects amateur theatre's formula, it remains indebted to it in the last resort. Amateur theatre, which has been credited with setting up the cornerstone of modern Moroccan theatre, is an off-fringe theatre practice which is avowedly avant-garde. It is an experimental movement, which had drawn the salient lineaments of modern Moroccan theatre. These amateurs constituted a group of people–both students and professional workers–who championed progressive values and entertained aesthetic ambitions. They expressed Arab-Muslim concerns through purposeful performances that counteracted the consumerism of professional theatre, which ignored Morocco's temporal-historical realities. In this way, amateur theatre can be seen as the brainchild of the national Moroccan culture. Remarkably, it was this theatre that gave birth to and nurtured the festive tradition.

With the advent of the 1970s, festivity came to 'authenticate' Arab dramatic discourse at the time during which Amateur Theatre was battling against the forces that were striving to distance it from its devoted audiences (Theatre of Abdelkrim Berchid, 27). By animating a direct interaction between art and society, festivity has elbowed itself into prominence as an effective histrionic movement in the history of modern Moroccan theatre. It regards Arab-Moroccan legacies as a fund which Arab dramatists can tap for aesthetic forms that could eventually give birth to a theatrical model markedly different from the Aristotelian one. It should be emphasized that festivity is not a mere *form* pertaining to theatrical techniques of playwriting and direction. It styles itself on a different *conception* of Man on the axis of history, economics, politics and arts. In this sense, festivity is not a philosophy confined only to theatre but is a broader theory concerned with human life as a whole. It aims at revolutionizing the Arab taste which was submitted to the terrible *Entfremdung*[6] process that is driven by the forces of appropriation and commercialization.

Festivity should be seen as a theory with aesthetics rooted in Arab culture. Such aesthetics are, however, subject to change and are indeed adaptive. Because human life itself is fleeting and ephemeral, festivity serves as a barometer of change in human life. It insists on experimentation because "…it seeks to accompany the progress of Man alongside the relentless movement of history" (Theatre of Abdelkrim Berchid, 27-28). The human taste evolves by virtue of this progress as do the conditions and mechanisms of human communication. In this sense, festivity becomes an open workshop that enables spectators to possess or control the aesthetic means of production. That is to say, it is by definition a theory for popular theatre.

[6]Ed. N.: Sometimes translated in English as alienation or estrangement. Here, it refers to social alienation in the context of Karl Marx's theory of alienation.

In festive hermeneutics, the concept of *acha'biya* [popularity] resists all forms of political containment. It is this concept which explains why festivity refuses 'to present a theatre to the people' and why it insists on 'having this people, with the aid of a creator, present a theatre catering for their needs.' The latter gave birth to a theatre grounded in spontaneity which could be attained through the recipients' participation, while the former subjected them to a process of indoctrination. Festivity in this sense aims at emancipating its audiences from the alien forces of *Entfremdung* because the meaning of *popularity* in the festive philosophy relates to production, not consumption:

> The question 'what's popular theatre?' has always yielded the answer that it is the theatre that meets with people in factories, markets, workshops, or crossroads, and that it is the theatre that addresses people with vernacular languages. I believe this answer would remain insufficient should we discard other significant sides of the subject matter. This understanding is by and large premised on the consumption principle as it equates consumption with popularity (Berchid, "Popular Theatre" 15).

To attain the level of *popular*, festivity revisits Arab-Moroccan festive legacies; namely ceremonies and customs. It is closer to the widest section of people, for it appeals to their common sense, concerns and daily life situations. It is a dramatic discourse that addresses the popular imaginary using simple popular mediums. Such a treatment of the popular is not arbitrary at all and has come to supplant the Aristotelian mediums of communication which fail to induce spontaneous theatrical interaction in Arab-Moroccan theatrical spaces. Festivity distrusts the Aristotelian histrionic formula that impedes visceral stage-auditorium interaction and presents theatrical performances as mere commodities. Amine notes that "... if the dramatic script is dynamic and the actor is free, the festive theatrical performance is informed by the same spirit of dynamism. It is not a passive representation that the audience sees in performance, but the festive performance event with all its multiplied participatory energies" (Moroccan Theatre 109-110). Hence, "Berchid's notion of performance as a collective game wherein stage and auditorium combine to constitute a unified platform of collective festivity, bringing about a de-constitution of the long-standing Western division between stage and auditorium" (109-110).

In the festive dictionary, performance is equated with consumption. Festivity offers *al-ihtifal* [celebration] as an alternative. Celebration suggests meeting, participation, and the collective (co)presence of celebrators. In this sense, festive celebration opposes consumerist performance. It is very similar to what Erika Fischer-Lichte calls "the actual performance" that "... emerges out of the encounter between performers and spectators, with unforeseen reactions and responses constantly changing the planned course" (Interweaving cultures).[7] These types of performances are characterized by a high degree of contingency because they "rely on autopoietic processes" that involve the bodily (co)presence of performers and spectators. The exact courses of these performances cannot be predicted or fully controlled because many elements tend to emerge during these performances "as a consequence of certain interactions" (Interweaving cultures).

[7] See also Erika Fischer-Lichte 'Culture as History: Theatre History as Cultural History' in *Centro de Estudos de Teatro*, (2004), 1-14.

It is for this reason that festivity rejects the sender-receiver duality which suggests that there are active creators *sending* messages to passive consumers *receiving* these messages. Spectators in the festive theatre are Boalian[8] spect-actors who participate in the making of the festive spectacle along with the playwright, director, actor, and the technician. The festive theatrical performance transforms itself in due course into an artistic popular demonstration with all the celebrants partaking in the creation of its ceremonies, which are changing, open-ended and contingent. In his book *Hodod al-kain wa lmomkin fi al-masrah al-ihtifali* [The Limits of the Actual and the Possible in the Festive Theatre], Berchid outlines the ideological significance of the festive theory, the gist of which has been captured by Amine:

> [Festivity aims] to change social relationships and liberate the individual from the state of reification through addressing all his human potentialities (intellectual, physical, emotional, imaginative…). The achievement of such liberating stimulus is effected through a transformation of the theatrical apparatus including the playscript, the actor, director, scenography, and the audience. (Moroccan Theatre 107-108)

It is on this basis that festivity rejects the Aristotelian understanding of the dramatic *text*/*telos*. The Aristotelian theatre, which is an author theatre, falls from favour in festivity's scales due to its collective spirit, which treats the author as an element in the entire theatrical process. The author presents a project susceptive to alterations which the celebrants are freely entitled to undertake. These alterations are indicative of festivity's open-endedness in terms of *time* and *place*: interventions of the celebrants may elongate or shorten the allotted time and may also expand beyond the defined theatrical place to include larger squares or big streets. The existence of a celebrant taking part in the celebration may perforce mean the existence of a dramatic text. Thus, there is no need for a rigorous author as long as the content of the meeting itself forms the text. It is this theatrical meeting that originates participation, discussion, argumentation, thinking, movement, change, criticism, etc. In Amine's words, "…the dramatic script should be active and alive rather than a closed ensemble or sub-text that imposes its authority and closure on its materialization upon the stage" (Moroccan Theatre 108).

In classical theatre, the dramatic text is an indispensable element. The actors perform in light of the author's directions and instructions, while spectators occupy the auditorium as passive recipients. Festivity rejects classical theatre and regards it as an institution of indoctrination wherein stagecraft-statecraft cooperation happens without interrogation. Festivity calls for dismantling this cooperation by encouraging collective participation because dramatic discourse from the festive vantage relies upon the human presence represented by both the creator and the audience. This presence actively obtains its vitality and vigour thanks to the recipient who is treated as a mature person endowed with a faculty to think. Thus, the recipient is deemed an active force and is, in Adib Slaoui's words, "the end for which all the possible means and tools can be employed" (Festivity in Modern Moroccan Theatre 141). This shows how important participation is in festive theatre. If spontaneity and collectiveness are held in high

[8]Augusto Boal (1931-2009) is a Brazilian theatre director, drama theorist, and political activist. He is famous for his Theatre of the Oppressed, which combated oppression actively. For further information on Boal, see an interesting article by Shomit Mitter in Shomit Mitter and Maria Shevtsova (ed.), *Fifty Key Theater Directors.* Routledge, 2005, 102-107.

esteem in the festive theatre, individualism has no place in the festive system of aesthetics. It dissolves individualism for the sake of collective self insofar as the object of the festive expression resides in elevating collective feelings as a way of overcoming all forms of exploitation and falseness.

Festivity rejects ready-made counterfeit narratives. It considers the dramatic script as "only a project that is to be fulfilled within a theatrical festivity," and as "…an unfinished product that needs completion through another writing, stage inscription" (Amine, Moroccan Theatre 108). In Ramdani's words, the dramatic work "exists already as a text and does not exist as a real event until it is presented on stage" (Festive Theatre Issues 32). At the heart of festivity's notion of performance lies the shift from theatre as a work of art to theatre as a physical event. Thus, essential to this project and to the shift from art object to art event is the collapsing of binaries headed by that of subject and object or in the case of performance–spectator and actor.[9] It is in this context that festivity regards acting as a counterfeit act and therefore rejects it as a form of deception that aims at inveigling recipients into stagecraft-statecraft forms of power. It, thus, calls for a spontaneous diagnosis to lay bare and add up to the exposition of the corrupt practices of these false forms of power and submit them into debate. More than that, it sees *reality* as a form of falseness representative of actual reality's shade. It also considers individuals' relationships to one another in a society as mere representations of oppressive behaviour. Actual reality is thus left absent, and is only revealed at the moment individualism is exposed thanks to its spontaneous and automatic treatment of the other, that is to say, during celebration at which individual selves are held on an equal footing in the service of the collective self (Berchid, Popular Theatre 32). In a sense, "change and social praxis constitute key concepts in the festive theory," and "…theatrical festivity, then, is primarily an aspiration for a better future and an action of persistent change as opposed to fixity and stillness. This dynamism, according to the festive theory, should be manifested from start to finish in the theatrical chain" (Amine, Moroccan Theatre 108).

Due to the Aristotelian theatre's inherent one-dimensionality, which is indicative of its view of the recipient, festivity holds that this theatre should be relegated to the margin as a mere decorative form of consumption incapable of reflection and criticism. It presents its special mechanisms to address human reason and emancipate it from the shackles of consumption imposed by the proscenium arch theatre. Festivity aims to debunk such a model in the hope of dispensing the restraints that the former imposes upon both the creator, whom it turns into an exhibitor, and the recipient, who is treated as a consumer. Suggesting an equivalent to this hegemonic stage, festivity endorses a liberal space capable of absorbing events with considerable spontaneity. Hence, a legion of stage directors such as Tayeb Saddiki (1938-2016) presented their theatrical productions outside the theatrical building. Armed with post-colonial consciousness of denial, these artists have become convinced that proscenium arch is a prison: 1) that imprisons creators and recipients with recourse to its histrionic deception; 2) dictates rules for the deceptive theatrical game; 3) imposes both the time and place of the game; 4) and even prescribes the mechanisms of scenography as the director is left with no choice but to completely submit to the prescribed place of production. It thus aims at rationing the scenography levels

[9]This view is reminiscent of Herrmann's notion of performance. See Marvin Carlson, 'Introduction: 'Perspectives on Performance: Germany and America'' in Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York & Londres: Routledge, 2008), 1-10.

together with the performers' movement. This rationing act robs the performance of spontaneity and reduces it to acting and deception. In the end, it becomes a spectacle of tricks driven by illusions that run counter to celebration which, in turn, embraces the variegated concerns of the festive group without resort to make-believe.

Indeed several popular arts fall within the purview of festivity. These arts underscore the presence of the other—the recipient—because action according to festive theory is "... released and liberated. It is in that release that the festive play finds itself distinct both from its preliminary inscription on the page and from other narrative fictions that remain bound to the page" (Amine, Moroccan Theatre 109-109). In this sense, festive theory, according to Amine,

> ... puts much emphasis on the apparatus of making spectacle, and on theatre as a social happening and a living collective experience rather than on theatre as an exclusively written text or a literary genre. Changeability and openness exempts the producer from being confined to a literal representation or mechanical doubling of a dramatic script as a given presence (Moroccan Theatre 108-109).

Amine further notes that "…to highlight dynamism and movement in his plays, Berchid rejects the mainstream division of a play into acts, parts and scenes," and "…invents instead a new appellation that alludes to the fact that he considers a playscript as a 'living being with two lungs,' for the play interacts with its receiver and his everyday life within the parameters of what Berchid calls the here and now of the festive event" (108-109).

The presence of spectators in festive theatre transforms the performative process into a popular conference in which decisions emanate from below. This presence challenges and exceeds anything stationary and unchanging at the levels of time, place, and action: *time* because the past is revived to continue in the present and future; *place* because celebration is a revolt against the fourth wall in the Brechtian sense; *action* because creators and spectators together transcend everything prescribed previously in order to give a chance to expressive spontaneity. This action can be construed as an endeavour intended to construct actual reality according to the requirements of reform and exigencies of the festive moment. This process elicits wonder and surprise as effective means to stir up recipients' feelings and dazzle their minds with complex situations. The act of using surprise and wonder also compels the recipients to exercise their critical faculty.

Feelings in the festive theatre are transitional. However, wonder and surprise are springboards to more active and effective action. Festive theatre can potentially destroy the rationalism of things as it appears to the layperson. Despite festivity's fierce assault on Brecht's theatre, an assault justified under the pretext that it elevates reason at the expense of feelings, it remains true that festivity equally elevates reason, and regards it as one of the recipient's multifarious tools without which celebration's perfect quality is virtually unattainable. It follows that festivity's emphasis on this purported difference should be downplayed. Festivity, as Berchid sees it, should renew its tie with Epic theatre in the Brechtian sense, and challenge the wrong assumption advanced by some theatre scholars that festivity is predicated on dramatic theatre. Assuming that Epic theatre discards feelings, some theatre critics wrongly conclude that festivity is a theatre that discards reason and consequently falls into the trap of emotional, (melo)-dramatic and sensational theatre. These critics misread festivity because festivity, as a project, has not perhaps sufficiently underscored its ties with Epic theatre. Festivity and the criticism it has elicited need to be revisioned.[10]

An act of revisionism is warranted on both sides. Festivity is at odds with dramatic theatre. The latter arouses the recipients' feelings, involving them in a cathartic process of emotional purgation. Driven by feelings rather than reason, dramatic theatre constitutes a showcase of stagecraft-statecraft collaboration, as it aims to turn its audiences into docile bodies willing to mimic others. Festivity is the anti-thesis of dramatic theatre. It thrives on "…the comedy-tragedy duality that confirms the meaning of absence: the absence of the recipient as an active member at the celebration. It also confirms *ightiyab* [calumniation or malicious gossip] which is the laughing of the present at the absent" (Berchid, "Popular Theatre" 35). In this sense, festivity sees dramatic theatre as "a shaking discourse" (35). Through comedy, festivity achieves "emotional detachment through laughing at anyone who is alien to us." Through tragedy, it prompts "…emotional attachment by making us feel pain through watching the tribulation of those closer to us" (Popular Theatre 35). Festivity suggests this dual tragedy-comedy division in denial because in both cases emotionality on the part of the recipient is achieved. When the nobles are watching, the topic of theatrical rendition is always comic and the actors are plebeians. When the plebeians are watching, the topic is always tragic and the actors are nobles. Feelings of pity for the plebeians and of dread from the nobles are thus generated thanks to the cathartic process of emotional discharge.

As an alternative to this division, festivity offers the concept of *al-Hafl* [celebration] in which both feelings and reason take part. The aim is to deepen the human vision towards man and reality in the hope of a better life characterized and governed by honest relationships. It offers an entertaining yet convincing spectacle in a bid to impose common relationships. In its quest for establishing a massive popular theatre that draws upon the variegated aesthetics and the rich legacies which the Arabs and Muslims have celebrated for centuries, and in an attempt to break away from the dictates of Greek theatre, festivity is a *sui generis* aesthetic formula. Although it embraces Arab-Muslim expressive formulas, it does not at the same time avail itself of the teachings established by Western theatre practitioners; namely Brecht, Piscator, Grotowski, Artaud, Pirandello, Craig, Brook, Kantor and many other avant-gardists of equal importance. Berchid maintains that the process of authenticating Arabic dramatic discourse cannot be achieved unless Arabs and Muslims turn to their advantage avant-garde theatrical experiences, which called for the return to Eastern theatre. Ramdani rightly notes that festivity relates the efficacy of authenticating Arabic dramatic discourse, first, for establishing dialogue with the Other in its totality and, second, for considering daily conditions of reality with all their variations and constancies (Berchid, "Popular Theatre" 36). It is this humanist character of festivity in particular that invited criticism and challenge to the festive view of theatricality. Its concepts of man and reality are very abstract. Indeed, reality from the festive vantage "has no permanent and exact size" (Adib Slaoui, "Festivity in Modern Moroccan Theatre" 106). One has the right to wonder which reality festivity entails! Yet despite the nebulousness surrounding some festive concepts, the concept of reality renders itself very palpable in festive theatrical performances; hence my contention that any study of festivity would lack objectivity should it discard its manifestoes and theatrical performances.

[10] See for example Meg Mumford, *Bertolt Brecht* (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008).

Berchid rejects parochialism and embraces the human formula in its entirety. Reality is never local but is always laden with various contradictions. In this vein, Ramdani observes that reality in Berchid's sense of festivity is "… the reality man experiences along with all its contradictions either inside or outside the nation. Perhaps it is this fact that justifies its rejection of the Epic as it (festivity) sees it (the Epic) as a formula treating society from the class struggle vantage, whereas struggle is of different types" (Berchid, Popular Theatre 37). Festivity, thus, rejects Brecht's treatment of actor/performer dyad as an ideological tool of indoctrination which preaches certain ideology through enthralling theatrical means on the grounds that the spectators are endowed with the capacity to absorb ideological discourses. Accordingly, this rejection is premised on the Epic's treatment of the recipient, who, instead of being granted the freedom to bestir himself and ask questions, think, and participate, is hampered with an ideology. This argument explicates Festivity's rejection of Brecht's *verfremdungs effect* as a form of 'a totalitarianism of opinion.' It propounds what I may call *verfremdungs festive* or what it calls *al-indimaj almonfasil* [separate fusion] which is a process enabling spectators to discover contrarieties and paradoxes by means of surprise. One has to understand why festivity regards the Epic as a platform of spreading mystification and deception in a manner reminiscent of the mass media.

This clear-cut festive stand on Epicization is fraught with much misunderstanding. It is very visible in the fact that Brecht himself had a clear attitude towards struggle and at no point did he intend his theatre to be similar to mass media. He always insisted that Epicization can be implemented through the conscious practice of the ideological attitude within the social class that determines the individuals' consciousness. Thus, it does not impose guardianship upon the recipient. To the contrary, it invites the recipient to participate as an active member and makes him question everything with recourse to *verfremdungs effect* principle. Brecht does not put the recipient in a position to take a stance unless he is consciously convinced. It is for this reason that his theatrical performances had to do with the paradoxes filling actual reality, which force the recipient to take part in the existing struggle in a bid to push him to solve his problems himself rather than imposing upon him solutions from 'above.'

The Epic theatre's aesthetic role should not be overlooked in spite of its emphasis on ideological orientation. This is manifested in Brecht's insistence on associating entertainment with ideology in theatrical theorizations. He regards them as inseparable (Nacif, "Epic Theatre" 56).Therefore, despite its several merits, festivity has fallen as a result of borrowing the Orientalist system of representation and politics of dominance in what I may call *festive Occidentalism* which is informed by a certain will or intention to dominate, control, even to incorporate, what is apparently a different (or alternative and novel) world,. It is within this conjunction that I define festive Occidentalism as an Arab-Muslim style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over Western theatre—or more precisely over Epicization—which is almost a festive invention. It is created–or, as I would like to call it, 'Occidentalized.' In other words, Epicization exists in festive discourses as an invention, a creation, a representation, thus, a misrepresentation. Hence, my definition of festive Occidentalism as a style of thought reposes upon ontological and epistemological difference(s) invented between two theatres: the Western and the Festive. In this sense, Occidentalism reposed on centrism is the inspiring ideology of festivity.

Festivity also has its own perspective on social struggle. All its manifestoes insist on transforming the theatre into a popular forum. Yet it rejects agitation and propaganda. This explains the criticism which wrongly regards festivity as an ideological form of conspiracy serving the feudal-bourgeoisie coalition. Such an impressionist critique has failed to grasp the thrust of Berchid's project or in Ramdani's words "…it does not transcend the husk of words in dealing with the phenomenon. It neither delves into the general context of festive theorizations, nor shoulders the hardship of pursuing festive theatrical performances as practical forms of these theorizations" (Theatre of Abdelkrim Berchid, 39). These critics refuse to concede that some amateurs made some mistakes when they turned their performances into ideological speeches. In their dramatic discourses, theatre troupes which featured in the Amateur theatre festivals may perchance realize the undue emotive energy of instigative bannerist styles used (40).

Although festivity came out of the womb of amateur theatre, it succeeded to steer clear of its pitfalls. Instead of resorting to bannerist styles, it seeks inspiration in the usage of simple tools discernable by the audience such as plain yet suggestive poetic language, folkloric dance, narrative and open spaces of traditional performing spectacles such as *al-halqa* and *Lbsat*, etc. These tools hail the actor/performer as the lord of the theatrical performance and release him from the restraints imposed by the script and the director to finally impersonate with full liberty "…the synthetic dynamic character: namely, the actor manipulates a set of different dialogues manifested in the actor-author dialogue, the actor-director dialogue, the actor-audience dialogue, the actor-character-in-play dialogue, the actor-real-character dialogue, and the actor-onstage-emergencies dialogue" (40). In light of the power granted to him by festivity, the actor enjoys an inventive energy without submitting to the mercy of the signed author-director compact, which, in effect, concerns the audience. In this sense, the actor does not play a role, nor does he diagnose an event or a situation. Rather, he impersonates the role he plays with accurate and sophisticated skills. When we start to doubt his detachment from the character he is playing, he consciously dissolves this doubt and detaches from that character. In the festive conception, these acts of impersonation and detachment are called *separate fusion* roughly corresponding to Brecht's *verfremdungs effect*, which is driven by detachment.

Some critics claim that the *separate fusion* principle generates catharsis and thus runs counter to Brecht's *verfemdungs effect*. Yet I fail to observe an elemental difference between the two concepts because both festive theatre and epic theatre suggest that the actor should detach himself/herself from the role s/he is impersonating the very moment the recipient becomes aware of the paradoxes involved. Also, both theatres insist on creating a distance between the recipient and what s/he is watching on the stage to make him/her aware of the impersonation tricks (41) I argue that Arab-Muslim performing spectacles are run according to this separate fusion principle. For example, the narrator, encomiast or *al-hlayqi* coexists with the narrative events while the spectators flank his person. He addresses and has fun with them, approaches and distances himself from them for evermore according to the requirements of theatrical acting and the exigencies of *verfremdungs festive*. He impersonates his role with exact accuracy and high liveliness and returns to his real character with precise spontaneity and surprising facility. It is natural enough for festivity to avail itself of aesthetic mechanisms of Arab-Islamic performing spectacles, which constitute the backbone of festive theatre.

If the actor is the center of festive dramatic discourse, festive scenography levels tend to play functional roles. That is why festive theatre plays down ostentatiousness in scenery, lighting, music, and accessories. Scenography levels depend on economy and suggestion. The other devices function as helping tools to aesthetically prompt a successful communication. The actor exposes every theatrical trick by donning his masks or changing the stage décor before his spectators. This is to emancipate them from delusional 'truths' the performance may unintentionally create. In this sense, the festive actor gathers and summarizes all human relationships and dialogues including his dialogue with his actual reality because he exists at the crossroads of predominant relationships in his society. Yet he is not an abstract humanist endowed with an elusive-delusive character (Hassan and Chrif, "On festivity" 43).

In conclusion, the festive trend has imposed itself with unexampled insistency in the Arab-Muslim world. It aims at engendering an aesthetic-poetic philosophy for rooting Arab-Muslim culture in its time-honored legacies. Due to festivity's gigantic influence on the Moroccan theatrical map, several experimental endeavours in the theatre have availed themselves of its aesthetic apparatuses and philosophical concepts. This interaction demonstrates festivity's inclusive tendencies. Indeed, festive theatre is a theatre of pluralistic difference. It managed to breathe a new impetus in Arab-Muslim theatre, which paved the way for what can be called modernity in Arab-Muslim dramatic discourse. The modernity of festivity resides in its defiance of and revolt against all that is ready-made in a bid to create a future very different in terms of its aesthetics and intellection, ideology and cognitive knowledge. In the last analysis, it represents *a sui generis* theatrical theory that reflects Arab-Muslim post-colonial consciousness of denial. It has always aimed at rehabilitating the eclipsed theatrical identity of Arabs and Muslims including Moroccans.

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Literature and the Extra-temporal: Paul Ricoeur on Proust's Novels of Time

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> One of the paradoxes of modernist fiction is that extended time is often figured by brevity, the fullness of experience by absence or an empty space. In each case, the limits of the form or the delineation of a gap gesture to the unrepresentability in narrative of long duration. In this respect, there is always a dialectical relationship in the modernist novel between brevity and length and between the immeasurable and nothing.[1] (McCracken 278)

Franco Moretti defines this genre as 'modern epic' and deems it 'one that is virtually unread' (4). Its conscious embrace of difficulty also invites a new engagement with narrative (LMN 274-75). While no single novel is the standard, the second volume of Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (1985) is another critical text[2] on a form of narrativization which seeks 'irreconcilable' perspectives and includes the concept of 'extratemporal' (McCracken 276-78). In this work Paul Ricoeur chooses to investigate novels which detect "temporalities that are more or less extended, offering in each instance a different figure of recollection, of eternity in or out of time [...]" (101). He rejects the idea that Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* is about the life of its author (131). In *Time Traversed: Remembrance of Things Past*, Ricoeur borrows from Gilles Deleuze the notion that the hero passes through an "apprenticeship" under a triad of signs—the world, love, and sensory impressions (363–71). He interprets the role of *writing* as the means through which a consciousness of time is achieved, because it permits the writer "to posit" the extratemporal from which lost time can be regained (Ricoeur 141; McCracken 279).

In accordance with the readings of Roger Shattuck and William Carter, Gian Balsamo stresses the "total reorientation" in the novel brought about by the silent encounter between the hero and another character (589). In this interpretation the position of Mlle de Saint-Loup is that of a master trope which "stands for the cartography of convergent destinations," among which is also Marcel's love quest (Balsamo 588). Ricoeur acknowledges this identification as "the ultimate recognition scene" (Ricoeur 149; Balsamo 595).

When it comes to the function of reminiscence, there are similarities between the views of Proust and Arthur Schopenhauer (Balsamo 599). In the former, the character of a sensation experienced in the present coincides with that of a sensation imprinted in memory. With the intensification of such experience by imagination, this case becomes the fullest sensation - a past event is being concretely resuscitated. In *Le temps retrouve*, this imaginative appreciation of the present conveys the impression called "outside of time." The freshness of a previous experience is analogous to Marcel's actual situation; not bearing negative connotations, it relieves him of self-awareness and bestows the aura of "essence" on circumstances (450-51). According to Balsamo (598), in Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* (1966, 3: § 38; 1891, 2: § 38, 231–34), there is a "protocol for this mnemonic process of emancipation" from ordinary

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[1]McCracken, Scott and Jo Winning. "The Long Modernist Novel: An Introduction." *Modernist Cultures*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2015, pp. 269–281 is referenced here as LMN.
[2]Together with the previously-mentioned work of Moretti

conditions. The "pure contemplation" is akin to involuntary memory (Proust); it is mediated by recollection and regulated by the faculty of phantasy (Balsamo 599).

From Balsamo's point of view (589), a permanent, integral self of the hero replaces previous selves which correspond to sentimental adventures. This affirmation of identity is expressed as self-instantiation, "not on the plane of individual life, but in the mode of existence that represents his (the artist's) true life" (Proust 1987b 548; *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower* 133). It follows that the only validation of a nonhistoriographic and nondocumentary autobiography is "the creation of a work of art" (Proust 1989b 457; *Time Regained*, 273; Balsamo 600). The artistic program which Marcel elaborates upon (Proust 1989b 453, 474; *Time Regained* 299) consists of: aesthetic coping with the "ecstasies" of involuntary memory, the principles of which had been mentioned by Ricoeur *(Time Traversed* 380–81); the ethics of "vision" which copes with solipsism and defines the responsible tasks of Marcel's artistic vocation (Balsamo 601). Available through ephemeral, intrasubjective analogies between present and past, the "essence of things" is in a dimension "outside of time" (Proust 1989b 450–51; *Time Regained* 262–63). If its general application is in the guise of "signs" offered to the intellect (Proust 1989b 457; *Time Regained* 273), the task is of working out a "style" that inscribes both solipsistic rapture and the way of decoding its signification (Balsamo 601).

In his summary Balsamo accentuates two aspects. On the side of aesthetics, Marcel wants to become the author of an autobiography that narrates of a vocation affirmed through a love quest; on the side of ethics, he wants to encourage his readers into a kind of self-decipherment that gives preeminence to the "signs of love" over all others, extracting out of them "laws and ideas" of applicability (602). Through such a correspondence between author and reader, the novel is given away by Proust as subjective self-instantiation (Balsamo 603). On the other hand, if *Remembrance...* (as an example of a process) cannot succeed in bringing the truth of life and its impression together, then, what it can do is make the reader aware of the act of contemplation needed to regain lost time. So, the attempt at narrative understanding of the experience of life can generate only an 'interim time' (Hans Robert Jauss), or that of "a work yet to be accomplished" (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 152). This idea of 'suspended time' may also suggest that the modernist narrative project is unfinishable; it remains an ideal (McCracken 279).

In the study of fiction the topic of time usually includes the way things of past inhabit the present. The overall accent in Mark Currie's book, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time*, is that the experience of time has altered and fiction has been one place of this change. The idea is that a mode of being which experiences the present as the object of a future memory is characteristic for our culture (Currie 6). This approach is committed to the 'now of reading.' To say that contemporary novel is characterised by future orientation means prevalence of prolepsis in the modern world which is increasingly conscious of its own present in an anticipatory mode of being (Currie 27-8). The attention of Currie is primarily on the interrelation between storytelling, future time, and the nature of being. The reading of fictional narratives is "a kind of preparation for and repetition of the continuous anticipation that takes place in life."(Currie 6) The decoding of the *preterite* in the act of reading is a kind of making present of that which is in the past and this presentification corresponds to a process of depresentification which might take place outside of fiction. Currie's analytical model includes asking: How might the present be structured as a future narration of the past outside of fiction? The present can be conceived and even lived in a mode of narration in the past. Experiences are recorded in the present as if recounted in the past (lived in a mode of anticipation of the act of narrating them afterwards). The mode of 'experiencing the present as the object of a future memory' has its depresentification in the following way: if my lived present is translated into the conventional preterite of fictional narrative, a temporal depresentification is involved in the transformation of present into past; further, a spatial self-distance is involved in the translation of first person pronouns into the third person (Currie 40). In this argument (for the relationship between reading and living) the hermeneutic circle makes us live life as if it weren't present and read fictional narrative as if it were. In the novel, time is both a matter of content and a matter of form: it is a theme of the novel and it is the logic of storytelling itself (Currie 86-7).

Similar questions about the world and time of an imitation of action concern Ricoeur's thesis for *threefold mimesis*. The immediate referent (*Bedeutung*) of historical discourse is real events which include the products of actions of human agents seeking, more or less self-consciously, to endow their world with meaning. Their narrativization is a "representation" of the processes by which life is endowed with meanings continuous over generations of human time (White 150). But Ricoeur grants to fictional narrativity a deeper insight into the 'human experience of temporality.' The mediation of narratives by a triple act of hermeneutic interpretation must evoke an unity of life; narrative reaches "its full meaning when it is restored to the time of action and suffering" (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 1: 70). This process is fulfilled in the reader (vol. 1: 71) who actualizes a new meaning of our world within a concrete place and moment. Bringing together the limit "points" of the *arc of mimesis*—*distentio animi* and *plot*—the correlation between time and narrative makes unifying meaning turn to the outside of the text (de Leeuw 75). As the notion of temporality is deepened toward the realm of existence, our concern points to our self-understanding (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 4-6; Jervolino 141). We have something to say about the experience of orienting ourselves in worldly situations. "*Language is for itself the order of the Same. The world is its Other*" (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 1: 78).

Our references are to what emplotment aims to signify in a world and to the reader who must be able to place the narrative within the meaning-structure of a concrete world (de Leeuw 76-7). Ricoeur uncovers the interweaving of historical and fictional intentionalities on the basis of a common space between these two spheres. Historical retelling mixes documents with forms of creative imitation: the story of the past becomes what history "stands for"; literature, even as virtual, imaginative story, represents an idea of human action and experiences (*Time and Narrative* vol. 3: 158; de Leeuw 78-79). Fictional narratives give 'human time' its most truthful expression, yet it does not escape a level of historization in referring to a "quasi-past." As Ricoeur writes: "To enter into reading is to include in the pact between the reader and the author the belief that the events reported by the narrative voice belong to the past of that voice." (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 3: 190).

Fiction relates facts that are past to the narrative voice that addresses itself to the reader. In the third volume of *Time and Narrative*, the analysis of quasi-fictive history and quasi-historical fiction consists of showing that both are rooted in a temporal synthesis of the heterogeneous (vol. 3: 190). Narrative structure always holds a fictional, *as-if* aspect. Refiguration or the origin of the so called human time is "where the standing-for the past in history is united with the imaginative variations of fiction against the background of the aporias of the phenomenology of time" (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 3: 192). If this reciprocal relationship evokes 'human time,' then, the subject must appear as a 'narrative identity' which aids the synthesis of elements (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 3 : 246-305). In both versions of '*narrated time*' consciousness reflects on its own world of human concerns; while the historical remains tied to Aristotle's "time of the world," the fictional is closer to St. Augustin's "time of the soul" and seeks sense over nonsense.

While permanently threatened, life narratives are motivated by the desire for cohesion and unity. With this conclusion Ricoeur emphasizes the autonomous narrating of a life-story. The projection of interpretation onto existential temporality offers a possible coincidence between knowledge of ourselves and world. Often the disproportion with the "elusive character" of living points to life-as-such (*Time Traversed* 468), but imagination responds to effective human practices. Emplotment reconciles without resolving the enigma of time. It is an anthropological coming to terms with an aporetic of time. On Ricoeur's view, the human need for narration is related to the experience of time, but the condition of *narrative being-ness* is revealed as an ethical level (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 1: 75). He characterizes 'human time' as a reverberation across poles of narration, across cosmological time and phenomenological time (de Leeuw 81-3). The tension between the first aspect of formation and its experiential background leads to a re-assessment of the roles of text and reading. The controlling claim of *Time and Narrative* is the principle of literary autonomy which refers to no actual past (Dowling 14) and offers both a refiguration of reality and of time. As an imaginative reordering, fiction uses the "unreal" to show variations of the real or the not-yet-thought. Novels come closest to an expression of the actual human temporal experience when the world of the textual structure is intersected with the *life-world* of the reader (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 61-99; Jervolino 141). For Ricoeur, this opening of a work onto a world gives way to fantasizing modes of inhabiting or to playing "tales in time."

In the light of *time loci* which structure the communication - narrated, narrator and reader, Ricoeur's study of fictional time proceeds from the relationship which both Gunther Muller and Gerard Genette accentuated. He pursues the tension between narrated time (*erzdhlte Zeit*) and the time of narration (*Erzahlzeit*) in the Modernist novel. If we may call this relation a '*game with time*' (Genette), its stake is the temporal experience (*Zeiterlebnis*) intended by the narrative. Muller defines three times: narrated time (counted in years, months, days, etc), time of the act of narrating (chronology), and the time of life ("compression" of a time "set aside") (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 81). In his essay, *Zeiterlebnis und Zeitgerust,* Ricoeur used the term 'armature of time' (229-311) to introduce the interplay between narrated time and the time taken to narrate. The task of *Morphologische Poetik*[3] is to uncover the way in which the quantitative relations of time agree with the qualities of time belonging to life itself. Ricoeur notes that the temporal qualities are brought to light only by the play of derivations and insertions, without grafting the thematic of time onto them (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 80). Ricoeur improves on this study by claiming that fundamental time is "codetermined" by the above-mentioned tensional relation and by the resulting "laws of form" (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 80-1). Accordingly, experiments with narrative techniques may be aimed against the experience of time, but the polarity between temporal experience (*Zeiterlebnis*) and temporal armature (*Zeitgerust*) is inescapable (81).

In the essay *Uber die Zeitgerust des Erzahlens*, Muller states: "the way in which the evolution of time is handled has become a central problem in epic representation, a terrain for narrative experimentation, in which it is first of all a matter not of speculation on time but of the

[3]Muller, Gunther. *Morphologische Poetik*. Edited by Elena Muller, Tubingen, M. Niemeyer, 1968.

'art of narrating'" (392).[4] Genette draws a radical consequence from the acknowledgement that the game may take precedence over the stakes. The way he reworks the couple *Erzahlzeit - erzdhlte Zeit* is a result of different levels to which temporal features are ascribed. The relation between the statement and what is recounted is set in Saussurean terms. Meaningful is the discordance between temporal features; anachrony[5] gives rise to typology.

In the context of '*games with time*' Ricoeur is concerned with the end of anachronic variations. In the case of Proustian analepsis, whether it completes the narration (by bringing it into the light of the antecedent), fills in a lacuna or corrects an earlier interpretation, what governes the meaning is the work as a whole. This sense of *meaningfulness* opens a perspective on narrative time that goes beyond the literary technique of anachrony (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 84). For example, the notion of narrative voice (the fictive "I" uttered by the narrator-hero in *Remembrance of Things Past*) does not do justice to the narrator-hero's experience of time (in its psychological and metaphysical dimensions). The latter is fictive, but is also called 'experience' by virtue of its relation to the world projected by the work; it is also crucial for giving meaning to the notions of time lost and time regained. As Ricoeur writes, the notion of the *world of the text* constitutes what is at stake in the novel (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 85-6). It requires us to 'open up' the literary work to an 'outside' that it projects before itself and offers for critical appropriation by a reader. This view does not contradict the closure implied by the formal principle of configuration. The claim that a literary work '*is about'* is with respect to the 'temporality' of the virtual being-in-the-world proposed by a particular text (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 100). In the intersection between this fictive experience and the reader's actual experience, the world of the work constitutes a transcendence immanent in the text itself (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 101).

Ricoeur borrows the distinction between '*tales of time'* and '*tales about time'* from Adam A. Mendilow (*Time and the Novel* 16). From this angle, his analysis concentrates upon novels which explore modes of discordant concordance that affect also the lived experience of the characters. While the expression "fictive experience of time" (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 100) designates the projection of a work, capable of intersecting the sphere of action, the phrase '*tales about time'* reveals unconsidered aspects of the experience of time (Jervolino 142). In Ricoeur's conception, imaginative variations of reading pertain in the first place to the refiguration of ordinary temporality. However, within the limits of the fundamental experience of discordant concordance, he picks up a work like Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*[6] for its exploration of the relation of time to eternity.

An alternative to the latter perspective (Ricoeur's) is Currie's emphasis on the resonance of the concept of '*aboutness*'—the hidden sense of '*backwards time*' (4). If we leave aside the differences between narrative (as a reflection on the subject of backwards motion) and the way time works in life, the present for a reader is somebody else's present related in the past tense. We are narrated to in the *preterite*, but we experience the past tense in the present. Fictional narrative encourages us to think of the past as present. Theory has explored this implication of

[4]The narrator does not have to speculate about time in order to intend poetic time; this is done by giving a configuration to narrated time.

[5]The study of anachronies (prolepsis, analepsis and their combinations) may be superimposed on Harald Weinrich's study on 'perspective' (anticipation, retrospection, zero degree).

[6]Editor's Note *(hereafter Ed. N.)*: Marcel Proust. *Remembrance of Things Past*. Translated by C.K. Scott-Montcrieff, T. Kilmartin & A. Mayor, Random House, 1981.

presentifying[7] of the past through the aspects of retrospect. Along this line of thought Currie follows Peter Brooks who has in mind the tradition for which "in telling everything is transformed by the structuring presence of the end to come" (5). He also notes that many studies have been less attentive to the relationship between storytelling and the mode of continuous anticipation in which we attach significance to present moments. Narrative cannot really be understood as retrospection without also being understood as anticipation. Thus, a fictional narrative invites us to think also of the present as a future past; because of the *preterite* we know that there is a future present, in relation to which the present of the narrative is past. On this side of the correlate is the tradition, for which the action takes place before the eyes as a "kind of quasi-present (of reading)" that is in relation to the structural retrospect of tense (Brooks 22; Currie 4-5).

In his preface to *Proust et la philosophie aujourd'hui*, Mauro Carbone asserts that *Remembrance of Things Past* "addresses directly those who approach it, whether they are philosophers or literary figures, giving them material to think afresh" (13). According to Jeanne Marie Gagnebin, Ricoeur choses the text to demonstrate how it tells of a 'time' that otherwise escapes conceptual understanding (105). A parallel suggestion of Gagnebin is that Proust's manner of inscribing time allows us to experience this passing. Ricoeur reads the novel as a fable on time, because it is a quest by the hero-narrator "for whom the challenge is precisely the passage of time" (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 131). He argues against reading *Remembrance…* as centred on the power of involuntary memory, because such moments have no apparent meaning for the hero (Dowling 91). The childhood narratives are dreamlike associations. Combray is the time in which "the faith which creates" (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 201) cannot yet be distinguished from the illusion of the bare and silent reality of external things. The narrator's recurrent dream thoughts and the material excess of ordinary impressions (195) create an obstacle to the history of an artist's vocation. However, for Ricoeur, the search for meaning goes first by way of words and then by way of writing (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 138); until then, nothing allows us to interpret lost time; it is quite simply lost in the sense of being over and dispersed (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 139). All that might suggest the idea of time regained would be the weight accorded to rare moments, summed up in: "how paradoxical it is to seek in reality for pictures that are stored in one's memory, which must inevitably lose the charm that comes to them from memory itself and from their not being apprehended by the senses" (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 462). Remembrance itself seems to be like a struggle where even the happy transforming of present and past impressions into one is overshadowed by forgetfulness (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 141). Hence, *Remembrance...* is a *tale about time* to the extent that it is identified neither with involuntary memory nor with the apprenticeship to signs. The novel poses the issue about the relation between these two levels of experience and the incomparable finale. Ricoeur points out that the fortuitous experiences of involuntary memory are lacking the scope of long apprenticeship to disillusionment. Childhood memory also moves away from speculation on the involuntary; even remaining almost incommunicable (Poulet 57-69), it still points in the direction of apprenticeship to signs (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 137). Always ahead of the hero's progress, the narrator comes to the revelation about the relation of art to eternity only at the climax of the story. Marcel's reappearance in Paris bears a convinction in the falsehood of an ideal, but the crucial moment in the Guermantes' library enables the perception of literature's power to bring change in the

[7]See also Ricoeur's referrences in *Time and Narrative* (3: 66, 78).

writer's and the reader's selfhood. Yet, the discovery of the extratemporal dimension of the work of art serves as an eccentric to the apprenticeship. For Ricoeur, time is at stake as soon as it is a question of making a very long journey to the final which must retrospectively characterize the preceeding.

Attentive to this interpretation, Gagnebin takes several notes: First, *Remembrance...* is structured upon the distinction between two voices. The narrator makes it possible to thematize a temporality of writing that goes forwards and backwards, and *"*gives the meaning to the experience recounted*"* (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 134). The problem of time is to be understood only if we keep separate this level (present earlier in the story only to mark the conscious recreation of the voice of an earlier self) from the voice of the hero. It is significant that the narrator prepares for the birth of a writer by passing through stages, among which (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 709) is relinquishing the attempt to relive the past (if lost time can somehow be found again). This consequence is "brought by Time" which symbolizes the power of destruction (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 142). The final revelation follows after a sort of nothingness or "absence of emotion," introduced in the narrator's story by reporting events and places under the sign of misfortune and decline (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 886-87; *Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 142). These are also encounters with a detachment from life in realities which "...death has already drawn within its shadow" (890-2). It is then that the hero "receives again" experiences from his childhood, but solves the enigma of intense joy in the fortuitous conjunction. It is experienced "like a certainty" about the relation of involuntary memory and the invisible history of a vocation (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 143). Second, the novel's route gradually leads to the union of the two voices, at which point the vocation is finally recognized. Ricoeur considers the extent to which this dialectic between 'we' and consciousness resembles Aristotelian *muthos*, that is, reveals a temporal structure (Gagnebin 106). In a kind of treatise on art the narrative status is maintained by thin diegetic transitions between the major scene and earlier events on the hero's path to initiation. Grafting a thematic level onto the moments of happiness and their premonitory signs, the narrator anchores the speculation on time in the narrative as a founding event. In this way, the role of origin in the history of vocation is assigned to speculation, while assuring its irreducibly narrative character. What places this speculation at a distance is the fact that it brings to light the very suspension of time (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 904; *Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 143-44). In a vision of an art that permits a glimpse at "extra-temporal" reality, illumination by literature becomes the true life. Third, the philosopher compares the work to be done by the narrator with the lenses made by the "optician of Combray."[8] Through the prism of threefold mimesis, we may interpret this image (of seeing better) as a reconfiguration of the world of the reader, but Proust's idea of reading is restricted to individual psychology. Fourth, the reflection on Proust's theory of metaphor pertains to the phenomenon of 'recognition' (Gagnebin 107).

Gagnebin observes that in Ricoeur's hermeneutics the signs play a dual role - to prepare the narrator for disillusion and death, and also to form an explicit announcement at the end of the book (108). These two positions "...serve at once to separate and suture the two foci of Remembrance. Separation, through the signs of death, confirming the failure of an

[8]Ricoeur (1985, 150) cites Proust (1981, 1089): "For they [my readers] will not, according to me, be my readers, but real readers of themselves, my book being nothing more than a sort of magnifying glass like those that the optician in Combray holds out to a customer; my book, thanks to which I will provide them with the means to read themselves."

apprenticeship to signs that lack the principle of their decipherment. Suture, through the premonitory signs of the great revelation" (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 143). In such terms, the emphasis is on the construction of the book. By "drawing" an ellipse in which remembering and visitation are the foci[9] (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2, 151), Ricoeur takes seriously what comprises the body of the novel and avoids eliminating the issue of quest and discovery (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 132). The '*tales about time'* is an elliptical basis for interogating the relation (established by the project of the work of art) between time regained and time lost. This proposal depends on bridging the gap, on joining together the two valences. Thus, only a decision to write straightens the dual meaning of "time regained."

These observations must strengthen Ricoeur's analysis, yet, Gagnebin discerns a dimension (in Proustian descriptions of memory) where it is the body that has the initiative (through the senses of taste, smell, touch). Anchoring involuntary memory in corporeality is essential to the sudden rediscovery. Gagnebin insists on not leaving these elements without comment.

Ricoeur argues that—from the sensation with the madeleine up to the final accumulation—the joy felt by the hero comes from the new understanding of time that the experience of 'recognition' permits, although such reasoning is explicit only in the end (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 136). Therefore, a more cautious reading could yield the idea of advancing from a state of confusion to that of being awake: "...the ecstasy of the madeleine opens up the recaptured time of childhood, just as the meditation in the library will open up that of the time when the vocation, recognised at last, is put to the test. The symmetry between the beginning and the end is thus revealed to be a guiding principle of the entire composition […]*"* (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 137).

For Gagnebin, the proliferation of the novel has escaped construction, as if its movement became independent of the author's will. In order to interpret it as a kind of writing that has something to do with an organic pulse (109), he refers to Anne Simon's work, *Proust ou le réel retrouvé,* where *Remembrance…* is read in the light of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Simon states that in Proust's writing *"the general physicality of word"* seeks *"to make meaning surge forth" "from the interior of linguistic materiality*" towards sensitivity (93). Gagnebin affirms this characteristic as a plausible way to establish a parallel (in the text) between *writing*, which escapes the control of the mind but still nourishes consciousness, and *involuntary memory* which is awoken by an olfactory and tactile sensation, or by primitive, pre-intellectual organization of vision. The body's involuntary remembering exibits also a sort of internal mode, still dulled by slumber.

> And even before my thought, oscillating on the threshold between time and form, had identified my dwelling place while reconciling it with the circumstances, it – my body – was recalling every detail of the bed, the positions of the doors, the angle of the windows, the existence of a corridor, together with whatever I had been thinking when I went to sleep, and which I found myself thinking again upon waking up. (Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* 1981)

The narrator dubs bodily memory a guardian of the past "that my spirit should never have forgotten," yet, being indispensable for searching and recognizing the lost time of the past, it can

[9]Ricoeur uses the term '*visitation*' with its evangelical connotation.

also deceive about chronology. For Ricoeur, this will be the case until both speculation and writing begin to restore the intention of a work to be done (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 143-44).

Extratemporal contemplation does not exhaust the meaning of *Time Regained*. Meditation on the origin of art remains unconnected to actual inscription (144). This point reveals the meaning of the narrative process constituting the '*tales about time'*. The narrator also anticipates the role of mediation between the two valences of time regained: "[…] this distinctness of different events would entail very considerable difficulties" (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 903); "Always, when these resurrections took place, the distant scene engendered around the common sensation had for a moment grappled, like a wrestler, with the present scene" (*A la recherche du temps perdu* 908). Gagnebin notes that the spirit must give memory a name, but it also needs to hear a language that is mute, or it would not be able to create on its own (110). Accordingly, *Remembrance*... reflects also the importance of this listening in Proustian writing.

Ricoeur applies a similar mode of inquiry in *Freedom and Nature*: *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, where the theme of the "broken cogito" is also linked to the necessity of opening oneself to the corporality that constitutes the subject without her/him having chosen it. To put it in phenomenological perpespective, he writes: "Extension of the cogito to include personal body in reality requires more than a change of method: the ego must more radically renounce the covert claim of all consciousness, must abandon its wish to posit itself, so that it can receive the nourishing and inspiring spontaneity which breaks the sterile circle of the self's constant return to itself." (*Freedom and Nature* 14); "Thus the intention of this book is to understand the mystery as reconciliation, that is, as restoration, even on the clearest level of consciousness, of the original concord of vague consciousness with its body and the world" (*Freedom and Nature* 18). In a parallel conclusion, Gagnebin underlines that this second enigma still nourishes thinking (110-1). The closing scenes in the final volume of Proust's novel show that *remembrance* may be a threat to narrative unity, because "in order to become visible," it "...seeks bodies and, where ever it finds them, it seizes them in order to shine upon them its magic lantern" (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 146; Gagnebin 112-13).

Whether or not we must add the notion of body memory to the realm of hermeneutics, for Ricoeur, the gaze through ordinary existence to a reality outside time is also a recognition of the reality of mortal time. The last dinner party is a scene where such realization is also meant for the reader (Dowling 91-2). The narrative character of the birth of a vocation is assured by the test that follows. According to the narrator, the spectacle offered by the guests "...threatened to raise against my enterprise the gravest of all objections" (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 959-60). "Death" is what makes the difference between the two meanings of time regained (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 144-45). Regarding this relation, Proustian memory may also appear as a kind of temporal '*ek-stasis*.' Connotation to the movement of the soul (St. Augustine) is not foreign to the narrative theory of Ricoeur, yet, according to Gagnebin, another essential element here is the threat that remembering poses to continuity. If the "mystery of the body" is a theme that connects Ricoeur's early work to the legacy of Merleau-Ponty, why does he not continue the project of "carnal hermeneutics" (R. Kearney) on the occasion of the analysis of Proustian resonance? Gagnebin (111) refers to Ricoeur's *Intellectual Autobiography* (1995): in the description of the path to the second volume on philosophy of the will - *Fallible Man*, the theme of corporality is only picked up again in the theme of the "gift of life." Grondin (2013) cites passages on this problematic in *Freedom and Nature*, and underlines the fact that the second volume is dedicated to analyses of guilt, sin and the importance of will. *The Symbolism of Evil* offers a theory of the modern world as an epoch characterised by the loss of "the essential link" of man to the "sacred," interpreted as "dehumanization" (Grondin 63). In the light of ethical preoccupations, the accent on the "all-encompassing dialectic of activity and passivity" replaces Ricoeur's initial problematic of the owned body. From the point of view of a just ethic of action, hermeneutics reinterprets the necessity which is attached to cultural works that signify. But this "long detour via symbols and myths" forgets that the phenomenology of the body describes something that is not exhaustible in terms of linguistic signifiers (Gagnebin 112). From another angle, within the frame of *Time and Narrative* (volume 2), destructive time would be stronger than the vision of time regained through the work of art, if the labor of writing did not take place in a time that is the same as lost time (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 971; *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 146). To the artist who preserves the tension another side of time is revealed: "the power to renew in fresh forms" the identity that beings preserve despite appearances (Proust 977-78). The concept of '*recognition*' points to the reconciliation between the two figures of "time regained" (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 147)

For Ricoeur, fiction retains a trace of the world of *praxis*, but it also "invents" features of experience. This prospective relation explains why Goethe, Schiller, and Schlegel expected the emergence of a new quality of time from aesthetic experience. Distant from a poetics of narrative, Genette stresses that *Remembrance of Things Past* shares the realist tendency to attribute "...the overlappings reflected in the anachronisms of the narrative" either to life or to memory (158-60; Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, 87). Ricoeur values these contradictions as central for the fictive experience of the narrator-hero and as belonging to a search under the sign of the "extratemporal." This resume of the way time experience may be ultimately interpreted skips the historical influences on the conceptions in question.

Harry Jansen begins his tropological analysis[10] by pointing out that, according to Stephen Kern's research on the chaotic first quarter of the 20th century, the conceptions of time proposed by Henri Bergson and Walter Benjamin were alternatives to Hegelian approach to the topic (5). According to Kern, novelists also rejected the romantic intrigue continuing in irreversibile, uniformal time (288). For Jansen, '*Zeitromane'* are paradigmatic for three different temporalities. On this view, while Ricoeur combines the Augustinian thematic with Aristotelian diachronic thrust, and ascribes lack of dimension to Bergsonian temporality (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 28, 168; *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3: 270), Proust defends a Bergsonian heterogeneous time (Jansen 1-2). The latter comes to the fore when the novelist, via his narrator, rejects a cinematic approach to reality: "...and what we call reality is a certain connection between these immediate sensations and the memories which envelop us simultaneously with them - a connection that is suppressed in a simple cinematographic vision [...]" (Proust, *Time Regained* 289).[11]

[10]Jansen, Harry, *Triptiek van de tijd*. Vantilt, 2010. shows how novels of time let us explain different temporalities in historiography. Proust's metaphor exposes a heterogeneous time. Mann's synecdoche problematizes the temporality of rise and fall. Virginia Woolf uses a metonymy founded on human atomism that takes the form of "simultaneity of the dissimultaneous." This approach is close to Reinhart Koselleck's mediation of human experiences of time—the temporal modes in *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000—"long-term system changes" and "simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous," (132-133) which display similarities respectively to Jansen's treatment of *The Magic Mountain* and *Mrs. Dalloway*.

[11]To single out this quote as a clear expression of the Bergsonian view, Jansen refers to Bergson (361) in Bergson, Henry. *Creative Evolution.* London, Random House, 1911. He cites also Armstrong: "This is why Bergson spends much of the chapters analyzing the cinematographic mechanism of thought. Bergson believed if we could remove ourselves from this illusionary mechanism we would finally be immersed in a true vision of the world and be closer

Ricoeur presents Proust's configuration of time as two features which are intertwined in a double movement. The protagonist experiences in a forward direction what the narrator tells in a backward direction (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 83, 134). But the experiences and the sensations are too heterogeneous to form a plot of continuous and homogeneous time. The double Marcel, hero and narrator, is suggested in the end of the novel by telling often in the form of involuntary memories and flashbacks. On Ricoeur's view, the final is a way to "...encompass in the same look the distance of the heterogeneous and the simultaneity of the analogous." Jansen offers another version of this problematic—metaphor in Proust's novel is a juxtaposition of two times which is intended to display a heterogeneous temporality (21). The sentence *"*I was made to doubt whether I was in the one or in the other*"* (Proust, *Time Regained* 262) signals this option for exploration. For Bergson, time is not an inner stream of consciousness from the past to the future or the reverse (*Time and Free Will* 98-101). It is an intuitively discovered, ceaselessly fluid, qualitative multiplicity. Bergson's comparison of the latter to empathy (2018-19) must qualify completely different, even opposing feelings and experiences. In addition, as these continually changing moments interpenetrate one another, time is also a "stretched now" —a present which endures and has nothing in common with immutability or instantaneity (*The Creative Mind* 124-132). Jansen notes that in *Time Regained* the past encroaches on the present.[12] While the novel displays contradictory characteristics, its title can be found in Bergson's *The Creative Mind* (15; Jansen 17-8). To claim that the focus on involuntary memories is borrowed, Jansen (20) refers to Shattuck (115) and other scholars who underline similarity, in disagreement with Kern (58)[13] who follows Proust's statement to the contrary.

According to Jansen, the perspective of "a work yet to be accomplished" is a turn to unilinearity. For Ricoeur, the connection between the lost time of the apprenticeship to signs and the contemplation of the extratemporal is the itinerary of the book (Jansen 21-2). The interval "from the idea of a distance that separates to that of a distance that joins together" (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 151) is the third stage of his investigation; the relation that the narrative establishes between the two foci is characterized as time *lost-regained*. On the scale of *Remembrance*…, the resolution is ambiguous, because infinitesimal experiences constitute the laboratory for the relation upon which the act of regaining time is built (Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 147). The entire apprenticeship to signs falls under a twofold sense that intelligence has to clarify. Sensations and memories turn into or are enclosed within "...the necessary links of a well-wrought style" (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 924-5). In this sense, for Ricoeur, *time regained* is time lost that becomes eternalized by metaphor (148).

In an essay on *Remembrance of Things Past*, Anne Henry stresses the significant question about identity.[14] Ricoeur (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 132-3) disagrees with her thesis that the work of Proust shows an unbridgeable gap between mind and material world. Regarding Henry's and Ricoeur's (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 152) positions, Jansen suggests that metaphor is the

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to the fundamental principle of existence." See Armstrong, S. G. "Deleuze, Bergson and the Movement in Cinema." *A Collection of Literary and Philosophical Criticism* 1, 2012.

[12]"[...] between that distant moment [the sound of a bell] and the present one, unrolled in all its vast length, the whole of that past which I was not aware that I carried about within me" (529).

[13]According to Kern, Stephen. *The Culture of Time and Space*, Proust's narrator emphasizes "the shock and pleasure of being suddenly immersed in time which has been experienced discontinuously"; Bergson's experience of time is interpereted as showing a "continuous gnawing of the past into the present."

[14]The theme of reconciliation of mind and reality originates in the Romantic era.

only trope that displays this problem. He takes Proust's title (*Time Regained*) to indicate the fulfilment of vocation (22). While the loss of time is in numerous sensations and memories, the narrator discovers that emplotment is founded on "re-creation" of impressions, or that the basis of a work of art is the deepening of memory (Jansen 23). On the same point, Proust writes: "truth... can be attained by us only when, by comparing a quality common to two sensations, we succeed in extracting their common essence and reuniting them to each other, liberated from the contingencies of time, within a metaphor" (*Time Regained* 290). Ricoeur sums up this use of metaphorical relation as the standard of the novel's temporality, or as "the matrix for all the relations in which two distinct objects are raised, despite their differences, to their essence" (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 148). He acknowledges the existence of distinct moments in time, but prioritizes "concordance of the discordant." What is placed under the aegis of metaphor calls for a complementary "optical solution," that is, the experience of regained time is a question of vision (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 931). '*Recognition'* is the mark of the extratemporal on lost time. Happy moments are miniatures of stereoscopic vision—forms of recognition. In this respect, the Guermantes dinner party bears also the sign of non-recognition (971-90). Ricoeur considers metaphor and recognition (the second is the temporal equivalent of the first) as sharing the common role of elevating two impressions to the level of essence, without abolishing their difference (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 149).

Jansen reads the above quote from Proust as a claim that metaphor exposes *the (in reality experienced) contingencies of time*, that is, metaphor merely underlines the heterogeneity of time. This observation is based on Bergson's way of uncovering temporality, but also points to a figure of discordance which makes conditions impossible in reality communicable in words (23). The difficulty in relating style and vision to each other touches upon the problem of the relation between writing and impressions as well as literature and life. Shattuck points out that Proust bids on recognition: "[…] the provisional nature of life disappears in the discovery of the straight path of art" (37-8). Along this trail, time regained is the impression regained. The narrator's reply to the difficulties—in preventing the substitution of literature for life, and in keeping from dissolving the impression in a psychology or sociology, divested of all narrative character—suggests that literature goes in two opposite directions at once: *"*Since every impression is double and the one half which is sheathed in the object is prolonged in ourselves by another half which we alone can know, we speedily find means to neglect this second half, which is the one on which we ought to concentrate*"* (Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* 927).[15] Ricoeur thinks this equation as a reversibility between the impression preserved in its trace and the work of art that states the meaning of the impression (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 150-51). In this third version of time regained the two ways of *Remembrance…*—style (metaphor) and vision (recognition)—must join and reconcile (in the fruit of the labour of writing which includes forgetfulness and death). Both make explicit the relation (between life and literature) upon which *impression regained* is constructed. If the extratemporal transforms "discontinuous periods" into a continuous duration, the work of Proust is far from a Bergsonian vision of duration free of all extension. The final images in the novel—duration and Time carrying us within it—confirm this dimensional character (*A la recherche du temps perdu* 1107; *Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 151-52).

[15]On the one hand, the impression must act as "...the very proof of the trueness of the whole picture" (913). On the other hand, reading the book of life is "...an act of creation in which no one can do our work for us or even collaborate with us" (913).

The function of narrative is usually thought of as the site of self-conscious reflection both on past events and on the nature of writing about them. This is the double time of *In Search of Lost Time*. With Proust, the idea of forward movement involving a backward narration might be thought of as the shape of time itself, or as the structure which, filling out the blanks of origin, always comprehends the past from the point of view of the present. The fact that the word '*recherche*,' in the penultimate sentence of *Time and Narrative*, refers to *A la recherche du temps perdu* opens the re-consideration on what may appear inconclusive or vague in both Ricoeur's (*Le Temps raconte*) and Proust's (*Le Temps retrouve*) volumes. Rhiannon Goldthorpe proposes the option that both approaches apply the absence of transcendent vantage-point as a kind of (self-)subversion. Proust's narrator reaches his aims in the narrative's linear movement, yet, the author's own hypothesis—reinstating time within the same provisional limits, is falsified by the hero's intuitions that time can be transcended (84). Ricoeur's own concern is with the stages of a process of threefold *mimesis* which effect resolutions where speculation fails.[16] The thesis of fictional mediation is based on the characters' experiences of 'transcending' the 'discordant' lived experience within verbal structures, which are offered with a view towards the refiguration of the reader's ordinary temporal experience (Goldthorpe 85-6). If Ricoeur performs a test within the frame of the novel, his contention is that Marcel's intuitions at the Guermantes party come as transitive between the experience of time lost (whether past, wasted, or dispersed) and the retrieval of lost time through the composition of the work of art (Goldthorpe 86). He argues for the hero's awareness that the latter must occur within the unstable dimension of lost time. Emplotment thus sets the intuition of eternity versus disillusion, thereby exploring the aporia of time as dispersal and as unity (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 2: 143–8).

Regarding reading, Ricoeur discloses a tension between the linear (forward movement in renewed realization of '*discordance*') and non-linear aspects of Proust's plot—the '*concordant*' moment in Marcel's intuition of the extra-temporal. The exposition of the thematic of the novel intimates a number of solutions: stylistic (metaphor), "optical" (recognition) and spiritual (the retrieved impression) (*Time and Narrative,* vol. 2: 148–51). But the process is more seriously undermined at the very moment of our reading and the undermining is not enunciated (Goldthorpe 87). It occurs at a points when the reader confronts the '*said*' with the '*unsaid*': at a place of indeterminacy (Ingarden) or a blank which arises 'out of contingency and inexperience-ability' (Iser). It underlies the processes of interaction between reader and text. When the '*unsaid*' comes to life in the imagination of the reader, the '*said*' takes on greater significance than might have been supposed (Iser).

In the light of this paradox and in the wake of Ricoeur's insistance that our experience of time (as distinct from temporality) is mute, Goldthorpe proceeds to investigate two levels of the text. What are we shown/told at the level of '*said*' (1)? The protagonist/narrator perceives the relationship between involuntary memory, self, and artistic creation, which brings joy, irrelevance of death, and suggests an *identity* between the present and the hitherto forgotten past

[16]The aporias of time which our urge to narrate confronts are: 1, the impossibility of reconciling the phenomenological perspective of lived time with the perspective of cosmological time; 2, the problem of reconciling our experience of the dispersal of time in the ekstases of past, present and future with the notion of time as a whole. In the third stage (mimesis3) Ricoeur develops Wolfgang Iser's theory of the act of reading which suggests that the textual configuration offers instructions which the reader actualizes in order to enable, particularly in the process of rereading, the achievement of a new evaluation of time and reality. The latter must itself open out onto the world of action.

(*A la recherche du temps perdu* 445–8; Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* 898–901). In this revelation the common elements are shared outside time. Such intuition must be re-made into art; the metaphoric superimposition seals what is identical between two moments in time (*A la recherche du temps perdu* 468). What happens is also an affirmation of necessity (Goldthorpe 88). According to the explication of the articulation of time-experience at the implicit level of the '*unsaid*' (2), we are shown an undermining of the extra-temporal at the moment of its postulation. It occurs through a 'blank' in the narrative, showing (without commentary) two mutually self-cancelling memories of the same moment. Metaphor functions not as the abstracting and superimposing of a common element, but as metamorphosis, or constant redescription, which the reader percieves not by closing the gap between first and second term, but by reading the gap between successive second terms (Goldthorpe 88-9). These mobilities of memory and metaphor arise from those places of indeterminacy which are registered in the act of reading. This particular sense at the level of refiguration still depends upon the time of narrative and reading. The process, whereby the '*said*' is negated by the '*unsaid*' and moves to a new significance, exemplifies implicitly a discordance which brings back to life the earliest recollection about a book which Marcel's mother had read aloud to him (Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* 920–21). It is exemplified in the last remembrance at the Guermantes party (Goldthorpe 89). The reader must notice that an earlier retrospective account of the reading of *Francois le Champi* had not come from involuntary memory. It had been a part of associations always within Marcel's recall (*A la recherche du temps perdu* 41-3; *Remembrance of Things Past* 44–6). For the reader, the availability of this segment maintains continuity within an otherwise discontinuous relation of revived memories. But its last involuntary recollection, along with the whole chronology, and the point in time of the retrospective narration, becomes indeterminate. Its quality remains until a new discontinuity intervenes: involuntary memory implies the narrator's having forgotten that he had always been capable of remembering the experience in question (Goldthorpe 90). This discrepancy within the narration of time—between narrated time and read time—leads to a reflection on the '*unsaid*' indeterminacies of chronology and memory in experience itself (91). For Goldthorpe, these apparent textual imperfections stimulate, at the thematic level, a more complex refiguration of experience. At the moment of rediscovery the fragility of continuity and the vulnerability of consciousness are radically dramatized, generating a sense of irony which is not registered by the narrator (91).

Therefore, in order to find other ways of satisfying the fundamental urge for coherence (Iser) in the act of reading, the reader may seek to motivate consistency at the level of the requirements of narration itself. The sudden recall dramatizes the major reversal of what is taken to be the '*plot*' of Marcel's own history (or that of Proust's fiction). Such recognition may absorb the apparent inconsistency of what is narrated into the coherence of the narrative form; it corresponds to a need for narrative pattern. The reader becomes aware of the paradoxes of time through the implicit dramatization of the relationship (space) between experience (figuration) and emplotment (configuration) (Goldthorpe 91). Thus, the subjection of narrative to the interdependence of history and fiction (*Time and Narrative* 180–92) reminds of the elusiveness of meaning, and of discrepancies between creation and reception (*Remembrance of Things Past* 919). The charm of the book (*Francois le Champi*) may be in the sought for coherence in the background of gaps in readings (*Remembrance of Things Past* 45; Goldthorpe 92). Marcel refuses to fill in those blanks. Further, the reader may not notice the 'embedding' of the motif of loss and recovery when the older Marcel finds the book again and rediscovers the child he used to be (93). Finally, Goldthorpe reminds that reading about someones experiences might depend on vagaries of performance, knowledge, interplay of repression, wish-fulfilment, creative afterthought, and memory (94).

In conclusion, the instability of involuntary memory is a fragile basis for the extra-temporal stability of identity which Marcel thinks he has found in his trust in metaphor. For if involuntary memory is a passively undergone mediation between past, present, and future, its expression is the metaphor. This experience is a *lived metaphor* which turns contingency into necessity and the transient into the eternal. As Marcel, the narrator, tells: "[…] truth will be attained by [the writer] only when he takes two different objects, states the connexion between them—a connexion analogous in the world of art to the unique connexion which in the world of science is provided by the law of causality—and encloses them in the necessary links [circle] of a well-wrought style […]" (*Remembrance of Things Past* 924–25). Style can achieve eternity only through metaphor (Proust, "Contre" 586), or as Goldthorpe (94) notes: a superimposing of the same within the other in an invention of identity (between self and external world) outside time. He goes on to say that intuition of mystical stasis could resolve these aporias, if it wasn't difficult to read the recreations of Marcel's experiences in a way which confirms the narrator's commentary on metaphor. When read in the light of our own reading memory, their order expresses the movement of time. As moments of reading they carry their own potential for anticipation and retrospection (own retentions and protentions). For example, the metaphoric vision of the sea, from the time of the first visit to Balbec, might bring the sense of superimposed identical moments which abolish the passage of time. But the reader's mind is cast forward to a later memory with a different association, dating from the second visit, however, the change does not bring a sense of discontinuity (Goldthorpe 95). A painter in the novel had shown (by exploring the limits of sea as land) that metaphor is a matter of transposing elements, or of making difference visible, rather than identity (96-7). Goldthorpe compares permeablity to the 'other' and to human conscious *activity*, whether practical or aesthetic, to the activity which is the essence of Ricoeur's notion of *mimesis*. Thus, the concept of redescription, the process of '*seeing as*' in *La Metaphore vive*, can be read here as a crucial to developing a temporal interaction of consciousness and world (97). For Marcel metaphor is a dialectic which maintains a negation of past habituality along with a new vision, thus, enacts change in time. As a new intending of a world in which traditional categories are held in tension with their dissolution, it reminds of Ricoeur's redefinition of metaphorical truth as the preservation 'of the "*is not*" within the "*is*"'(Goldthorpe 97-8). Goldthorpe notes that a theory of metaphor as opposition of the extra-temporal to the decline through time holds narrative at a level foreshortened by a sense of closure, but this tension is replaced by a metaphor which plays on a single word. The ambiguity of this image— '*anneaux*'—is highlighted by a divergence in the translations[17] of '*les anneaux necessaires d'un beau style.*' Marcel's word may be read either as 'rings' or 'circles' (circularity), or as the distinct but interdependent links of a chain (continuity); in short, closure is kept in tension with the progression. To the objection that the narrator aims to enclose ('*enfermer*') his experiences of involuntary memory in the chains of metaphor, Goldthorpe replies that the verb is in the mode of deferral (98). The retrieval of lost time remains a project for a future book. This ending of the novel resembles the postscript to *Time and Narrative*, where Ricoeur reminds that the effort to resolve the aporias of time has its limits. For the philosopher,

[17]In the first English translation is '*the necessary circle of fine style*'; the revised version - '*the necessary links of fine style*'. See *Time Regained.* Translated by Stephen Hudson, Chatto & Windus, 1931, p. 239, and *Remembrance of Things Past.* Translated by C. W. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kiimartin, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1983, p. 925.

success lies in defining *narrative identity* as an inclusion of change and mutability within the cohesion of a life (*Time and Narrative* 246). But the novelist's enterprise appears to be more radical: perhaps, the idea of provisional book (despite intuitions of eternity) serves to accompany the one already written, thus, both form a metaphor for a gap in consciousness which can never be closed in self-coincidence or in self-knowledge. Finally, Goldthorpe considers the sentence: "And thus my whole life up to the present day might and yet might not have been summed up under the title: A Vocation" (*Remembrance of Things Past* 936), as a suggestion that the act of reading must endlessly refigure an unwritten book which 'lies beyond' configuration (99).

In explicating the argument of Ricoeur, discussions of *Time and Narrative* tend to privilege the appropriation of Aristotle, thus, the idea of 'emplotment' is seen as crucial to the exegesis of the '*threefold mimesis*.' Narratives give plausibility structures for the experience of reality according to the idea of '*narrated time*.' Richard Rosengarten adds a theological key to this conception. He regards the *threefold mimesis* as a hermeneutic refiguration of the temporality of Augustinian *Confessions*. The central aporia of Book 11 concerns the meditation on the being and non-being of time, reflected in the tension between distension and intention (173). In this sense, controlling emphasis in *Time and Narrative* becomes the ontology of the *distensio animi*. At stake is understanding the relationship of the latter to narrative (171). Ricoeur distinguishes Augustine as recognizing the rhetorical approach. Time cannot be described without being discussed. It is always already where words about it are inevitably 'practical' rather than 'theoretical' (Rosengarten 173). The dynamic of restoring Augustine as Aristotle's counterpart crystallises in Ricoeur's formulation of '*the presumption of truth*.' The bridge in this dialogical project depends on the relation between discordance and concordance. With Augustine the problem of the soul that 'distends' itself even as it 'engages' itself remains impenetrable. But his formulation of the threefold present opens the crucial aspect of Ricoeur's reading. In the contrast of time with eternity is incipient Aristotle's formulation of *discordant concordance*. Where the Augustinian *distensio* describes an experience of discordance, Aristotelian concordance through tragic *muthos* is silent. But the *Poetics*' concern with composition cannot remain internal, with no reference to the audience. In Ricoeur's terms, the plot's 'structuration' requires a reader to achieve its completion. If the reader lives in the condition of distension gesturing to intention, then the formula of *Time and Narrative*—time elicits narrative and narrative elucidates time—must include an accent which is ontological rather than textual (Rosengarten 175). Ricoeur argues that the comparison Augustine makes pertains also to the mind. For Rosengarten, the Augustinian view that the mind's distention finds its counterpart in time's gesture to eternity[18] "heralds" the concluding claim of volume I of *Time and Narrative*. The *distensio* concerns the controlling theme; it necessitates narrative and is also its arbiter (Rosengarten 174-75).

With this option, Ricoeur's conception of '*narrated time*' may be specified as a way towards 'thinking (simultaneously) about eternity and death' (*Time and Narrative*, vol. 1: 87). The third phase of elucidation of the *threefold mimesis* relays the modes essential to '*narrated time*,' that is, their distinction and convergence. Fiction, as standing for the intersection between world of the reader and world of the text, works inversely to history. This difference articulates[19]

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[18]Rosengarten considers this formulation with reference to St. Augustine's citations of the *Psalms* throughout *Confessions*.

[19]In their relation to documents, historians may adopt a hypothesis of sameness (*re-enactment*), or of otherness (de Certeau's '*pertinent absence'*) or of analogue (White's tropes). In their relation to narrators, readers of novels may

a version of the hermeneutical circle (Rosengarten 176-77). Identifying mimesis with the aporetics of temporality, the treatment of Augustine establishes a draft for the circle, but Ricoeur accentuates the need to arrive at the shared practice of history-and-fiction, characterized as 'time-consciousness.' According to Rosengarten, he reinstates the tension between Augustine and Aristotle in the modern version of the aporia of time, the *distensio* is the implicit conditioning agent and explicit ground from which the project is expressed (176-77). Ricoeur's demarcation of the latter employs two aspects: a '*space of experience'* and a '*horizon of expectation*.' They reflect both our ways of living (action) and, our hopes and fears (suffering). For Rosengarten, the triadic discussion on *traditionality*, *traditions,* and *tradition* mimics the necessitation of the project by the distension. At stake is the way history and fiction allow us to think about continuity and discontinuity using the resources of the past to affect the future in the present. Ricoeur formulates the possibility as a synthesis of experience and expectation in a '*presumption of truth*.' This option must balance a debt to the past with an agency towards change (Rosengarten 178).

In *Conclusions*, the second ending of his trilogy, Ricoeur identifies another limit of the capacity to achieve a '*narrated time*' in which the aporetics of temporality and the poetics of narrativity coincide (Rosengarten 178). What if the argument's mode—a way forward to the relation of time and narrative—amounts to totalising the dimension of poetics? Is the call to rational, public interrogation of tradition sufficient to its assignment?

Rosengarten also outlines two objections which affect the construal of the project, or how the expression of *mimesis*—the *distended experience* of time and *structured representation* of time—is understood. The focus from the vantage point of narrative ethics (a model ensuring intelligibility in a practical description of narrative as a structure by which disparate phenomena are held together) privileges an Aristotelian view, according to which Ricoeur does not fully appreciate the narrative order imposed on ontology.[20] From the point of emphasis on the history of theology, Ricoeur's account is seen as a misinterpretation of the relation of psychology to cosmology. On this view, the innovation of *Confessions* is the link of *distensio* with the mind (*distensio animi*) (Rosengarten 179). As narration, it is a movement from *distentio* to *intentio*: the former is subverted by the latter and the mind has an experience of recovered unity. The difference between Books 1–9 and Books 10–13 of *Confessions* corresponds to a way from philosophy to theology; respectively, Ricoeur does not fully appreciate a revision of the classic philosophies of time, does not elicit the dialogical partner of *distentio*.[21]

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similarly adopt a hypothesis of sameness (reliability), distanciation (unreliability), or analogy (responsive to form). These parallels crucially set in the context of different frames of reference; allow the articulation of a complementarity in which history and fiction each use the other to reconfigure time.

[20]The bacis texts are MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory.* University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, and Hauerwas, S. *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic.* University of Notre Dame Press, 1981. For a review of these two books see Barbour, J. "The Virtues in a Pluralistic Context." *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 63, 1983, pp. 175–82. For the range of this conception of narrative in relation to religion see Crites, S. "The Narrative Quality of Experience." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* vol. 39, 1971, pp. 291–311, and Stout, J. *Democracy and Tradition*. Princeton University Press, 2004.

[21]See Marion, J.L. *In the Self's Place: The Approach of St. Augustine.* Translated by J. Kosky, Stanford University Press, 2012; Pranger, M.B. "Time and Narrative in Augustine's Confessions." *The Journal of Religion, vol.* 81, 2001, pp. 377–93; "The Augustinian Moment." *The Journal of Religion*, ed. W. Otten , vol. 91, 2011 (special issue).

The end of the current survey repeats a resume by Rosengarten (180) on the conviction and commitment in *Time and Narrative*. Both are expressed in Ricoeur's double hermeneutics: on the one hand, elaborations of fiction and history with complexity of tradition, on the other hand—a dialectic between Augustinian and Aristotelian methods. In this version subsequent reformulations do not afford phenomenological closure. Rosengarten highlights the acknowledgement that the plausibility structurations of narrative are not immune to the ontology of the *distensio animi*. He points out that a final statement hinges on one point: the fundamental experience of *distentio*. The aporetics of time and narrative poetics meet each other under the aegis of Ricoeur's maxim—"to think more and to speak differently."

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Recruiting the 'Tirupathi' in Serampore: The Policy of Telugu Migrants to Construct an Ethnic and Cultural Identity for themselves in the face of Bengali Domination

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The aim of this paper is to analyze the role played by the spatial construction of religious practices, the public display of religion, and inter-religious (also, intra-religious) interactions in determining the ways in which religion functions as an appropriate medium for working class migrants to subvert the exploitative measures of the host society and constitute their own religious and ethnic networks and identities as part of the social picture of Serampore, a town of varied cultural and economic importance in West Bengal, India.

Serampore's contribution to the economic development of colonial India lay in providing an ideal site—owing to its strategic location near the local jute and cotton market and as an efficient transportation route via the Hooghly river and G.T. Road—for the establishment of the first jute mills in the country (Ray 1974). By the nineteenth century, the township had already established its own religious heritage in the country through the famous Mahesh *Rath Yatra* of Jagannath Temple[1] and the *Rash Yatra* of Radhaballav Temple,[2] both of which had developed elaborate networks with Calcutta by drawing rich indigenous devotees from the city (Mitra 2013). The construction of Serampore's social and religious spaces was interlinked with the ways in which the working-class, which migrated to the town from other regions of India, was excluded from such spaces and forced to inhabit the fringes of residential neighborhoods.[3]

The logic behind emphasizing on the importance of religious practices lies in the fact that religion and religious dynamics have proven, through my own research of inter-social relations between resident communities of Serampore, to be one of the most important media for the working-class migrants to strengthen their social position and resist the social domination of the host society, but have mostly remained unanalyzed in India's labour history. In charting the economic and social relations of jute and cotton mill workers to the factory administration and amongst themselves, the seminal works[4] on the labouring class took a significant step in bringing

[1]Editor's Note *(hereafter Ed. N.)*: Rath Yatra is the oldest and biggest chariot pulling festival in Bengal, India. Idols of Lord Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra are placed on a 45 feet high chariot and devotees pull it along the sacred journey line.

[2]Ed. N.: Celebrated on the full moon day in *Kartik masaam* (Hindu calendar month that typically overlaps October and November), the Rash Yatra is a procession of clay deities of Lord Krishna and Radha. The *Yatra* (journey) is preceded by a month long Rash *Mela* (fair) in West Bengal celebrating the divine love of Sri Krishna and Radha. The Rash Yatra of Sri Krishna is mentioned in the Bhagavata Purana and in the Vishnu Purana.

[3]The working-class migrants to Serampore from outside West Bengal generally arrived from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (or the United Provinces as they were called), Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh. More information on the areas of migration is available in the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India. (1931). Elabourate discussions on the living conditions of working class can be found in Municipal Proceedings 26-27. (1889), and Miscellaneous Files M 1-M/8 1. (1896). WBSA.

[4]This is in reference to the research of various labour historians and anthropologists on the jute and cotton mills of India. Most significant among them are Dipesh Chakrabarty's work on the jute mills of Howrah, Rajnarayan Chandavarkar's work on the cotton mills of Bombay, Leela Fernandes' work on the jute mills of Howrah, and Arjan De Haan's work on the jute mills of Titagarh. For further reference kindly see Chakrabarty, Dipesh. (1989). Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal, 1890-1940. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan. (1994). The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working-Class in

to the forefront the importance of the consciousness and agency of the worker while being a part of the concerned social and economic structure, how such an agency operated through mutually interactive factors like caste, class, and gender to constitute multiple identities for the worker, and how it connected the workspace of the worker with his/her lived space to create a fluid identity for him/her.

None of these works, however, even after innumerable case studies of economic conflict with mill authorities or occasional cases of intra-class or inter-caste skirmishes, could move beyond portraying the worker, even after a century or more of his stay in these townships, as essentially migrants. One reason for that could be that such works have mostly focused on homogeneous working-class neighborhoods inhabited primarily or entirely by the working class who mostly lived in clusters based on regional ties for having migrated from the same village or through the recommendation of the same *sirdar*[5], thus there has hardly been any social communication between such clusters (Chandavarkar 1994, Fernandes 1997). In other words, due to cluster like existence where problems concerning only the inhabitants of the cluster were attempted to be solved through the channels of the *sirdar* and without any strong social communication between the groups, the literature on labour conditions were unable to portray a strong sense of belonging or affinity or a claim to include the ethnic or religious identities on the part of the worker for the township. Within the enclosed homogeneous spaces of the mill lines and with little or no social interaction, the workers remained as migrants who lived in their own closed spaces of t cluster, trying to preserve their identity within that space rather than expanding outside it.

I propose to add a separate dimension to this literature through my case study of the social life of jute mill workers of Serampore, by placing them outside of the homogeneous enclosed spaces of the mill to a heterogeneous neighborhood where the resident workers experienced class, caste, and religious discrimination on the basis of everyday life at the hands of the host society and used their own religious practices as medium to subvert the measures taken by the host society and at the same time laid claim over the public spaces of the township. Unlike the enclosed spaces of the mill quarters, the workers residing at Nanilal Bhattacharyya Street in Serampore (hereafter, NBS) formed a part of the same neighborhood as the host society of middle-class Bengalis and were engaged in multiple social, economic, and land relations with the latter. Being a part of the same social structure, which constituted the identities of the working class through various exclusionary measures, the working class too reproduced such a structure by subverting such measures. I also borrow from Doreen Massey's argument about heterogeneous space-time trajectories to show that the migrant residents of Serampore contested the attempts of the Bengali middle-class to produce a singular and homogeneous upper-caste social and religious trajectory of the town by forming elaborate social networks of their own that spread beyond the spatial limits of Serampore and included members of the same migrant community who lived at Serampore but have now travelled to other spaces/cities and inhabit their own individual space-time trajectories through discourses of nostalgia and attachment, thereby strengthening the ethnic identity of the migrant (Massey 2005).

Bombay. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; De Haan, Arjan. (1994). Unsettled Settlers: Migrant Workers and Industrial Capitalism in India. Hilversum: Verloren Publishers; Fernandes, Leela. (1997). Producing Workers: The Politics of Gender, Class, and Culture in the Calcutta Jute Mills. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[5]Ed.N.: (Variant of sardar) A person of high rank (such as hereditary noble) especially in India, source: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sirdar

Now I shall focus on the techniques and spatial strategies adopted by the Telugu migrant communities at Serampore to transform their religious occasions into public spectacles. Standing in the space between the two long queues of devotees gathered to make offerings to and receive blessings from Tirupathi Balaji, whose large and majestic idol decorated the makeshift pandal in one of the rows of line no. 18 of the India Jute Mill workers' quarters, Devendra Rao, president of the local *Shri Vinayaka Balabhakta Samajam*, remarked pointing towards the queue, "... we are glad that the popularity of Tirupathi puja has increased in Serampore. We consider this as Serampore's own festival and a scope for the Telugu people to make their presence felt."[6] Devendra's statement had a tone of accomplishment at being able to confidently associate Tirupati Puja with Serampore's religious heritage that has generally been credited to Durga Puja,[7] celebrated by the local (middle-class) Bengali population and the historically popular festivities of Jagannath *Rath Yatra* and the *Rash Yatra* of Radhaballav (both incarnations of Lord Vishnu). Traditionally, these festivals have been ethnically dominated by the Bengali communities in Serampore and administrative powers of the latter (*Rath Yatra* and *Rash Yatra*) remain with the upper castes (Ray 1974; Mitra 2013).

By qualifying Tirupathi puja as "Serampore's own festival" Devendra wished to spatially and symbolically expand the religious and cultural characteristics of the carnival or gala from the socio-spatial boundaries of the Telugu community in Serampore to the entire realm of the town. Such gestures also constitute the assertion of their religious, ethnic, and cultural identity in Serampore. His words "Serampore's own festival" were chosen very consciously and carefully and juxtaposed with "scope for the Telugu people to make their presence felt" to hint at how these two factors constitute each other. The everyday life practices and stories, problems and grievances of the migrant mill workers mostly went unrecognized at the local municipal and social level, except for at the local level of constituting neighborhood relations where the resident Bengali communities tend to exclude them by spatially and symbolically delimiting neighborhood boundaries.

The claim "Serampore's own festival" attributes gala or celebration status to the migrants' religious occasions. In contrast to an ignored past, such gesture reproduces in turn the town's socio-religious space by making the puja practices a part of its religious identity. This making or process of becoming should be interpreted as an act of resistance against the cultural and religious dominance of the upper-caste Bengalis by occupying, using, and reproducing the same public space that had previously been the exclusive domain of the latter. Hence, the popularization of previously little known religious practices to reorient Serampore's religious diversity is inextricably linked with the assertion of a religious and ethnic identity that has been mostly and majorly excluded through the creation of exclusive social spaces for the upper-caste middle-class Bengalis of Serampore.

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[6]Line no. 18 is one of the main residential quarters, given by the mill management, for the labourers of the India Jute Mill in Serampore, located at Nanilal Bhattacharyya Street itself. Constructed by the mill management in the early twentieth century, it is located adjacent to the jute mill. It has four separate but interconnected rows (the term 'line' is derived from these rows) where the workers are provided with quarters, where they stay mostly with their families or by themselves. These four rows together constitute "Line no. 18." . The Tirupathi Puja is organized in the common spaces of these rows.

[7]Ed. N: It is a celebration of the goddess Durga's triumph over the buffalo demon Mahisha. Usually, it is a week-long festival that features elaborate temples and stage decorations, scripture recitation, performance arts, revelry, and processions.

Parthasarathy, in his analysis of public and community festivals of migrants from other states in Mumbai, argues that such festivities and their use of public space have given rise to “... conflicts between activists of chauvinist and nativist political parties and “outsiders”,” a term he borrowed from S. Patel (Parthasarathy 25). The category of “outsiders” was produced by the nativists to not only create a homogeneous space for themselves but to expand the domain of such space using violent means against migrants and forceful occupation of public spaces to disallow them from laying a claim upon the city. Parthasarathy argued that in the face of such chauvinist measures and movements to counter “... the very public violence against north Indians in Mumbai,” the intensity and scale of their religious celebrations escalated (Parthasarathy 25). Giving the example of *Chhatt* Puja[8]—celebrated mainly in rural Bihar and Uttar Pradesh—in Mumbai, he portrayed how the observance of religious practices through gradually expansive use of public space can be used as a tool of resistance against nativist movements and at the same time reproduce it in turn with the aim of asserting a religious and ethnic identity.

There is, however, as Parthasarathy mentioned, a class/caste and rural angle to the conflict between nativists and “outsiders” in Mumbai. The nativist movements were mainly aimed at the slum dwelling migrants in Mumbai who were believed to be crowding the city and polluting its environment and cultural ambience, basically thought to be taking over the streets, and not the upper middle-class who had respectable professions and stayed in apartments, keeping mainly to themselves and observing their rituals privately. It established a social and cultural distance and lack of communication between migrants based on class/caste and social status that even religious customs and practices were not able to overcome. Serampore may not have witnessed public violence between migrant workers and upper-caste Bengalis because of increased public display of religious rituals and festivities. There has, however, been considerable resentment among a major section of the latter group for what they interpreted as loss of control over the affairs of Serampore’s public space.

In March 2017, The *Shri Vinayaka Balabhakta Samajam* of the India Jute Mill line no. 18 celebrated their thirty-sixth year of Tirupathi Puja. It also turned out to be the year of Lord Tirupathi Balaji’s ‘marriage,’ also known as ‘*Kalyanam*,’ the biggest ritual of the puja. The ‘*Kalyanam*’ is held in the line every twelve years. It therefore became an occasion for the display of religious ceremony as a spectacle, a show of how significant the puja was for the Telugu communities residing in Serampore, to the other resident communities of the town. Tirupathi Puja of line no. 18 had become by 2017 a well-known religious festival in Serampore and among the Telugu communities residing outside the township. The objectives of the spectacle therefore lay in displaying their ability to conduct the ritual ceremoniously at a place where the Telugus have migrated at different periods in history and in asserting their religious and ethnic identity in the socio-cultural milieu of Serampore, rather than spreading the knowability of the festival.

The pandal in front of line no. 18 was majestic, being four story high and decorated lavishly with various types of handiwork. Parts of NBS and the entire New Gate Street (situated at right angle to NBS) up to the main five-point crossing area called *Bat-tala* where the Grand Trunk Road passes through were decorated with arches made of light depicting various scenes from Hindu mythology. Although such grandness and lavish expenditure are not witnessed every

[8]Ed. N: It is a Hindu festival, dedicated to the Sun god and his wife Usha. It is mostly observed in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Usually, its rituals are observed over a period of four days that include fasting, holy bath, etc.

year, the year of '*Kalyanam*' is a time for the Telugu people of the mill lines to alleviate the standard of their religious festival through various structural and symbolic constructions that influence the religious diversity of Serampore.

One crucial factor in the organizational structure of Tirupathi festival in Serampore is that it had a central core committee, a singular root or organizational source (a part of the *Balbhakta Samajam*) based in a place from where multiple operational branches spread out which are nonetheless strongly linked to the core. The core committee or source comprises of selected inhabitants from line no. 18 and plays an operative role in taking all the decisions regarding the management of different aspects of the festival. It also distributes the various duties of several aspects of the Puja among the multiple volunteers who then carry out the functions accordingly and report back to the organizational core. While the main site of the festival is the private space of the mill lines, where idols are set up and rituals are accomplished in all their elaboration. other things like the distribution of prasad[9], organization of entertainment programs, and decoration of the streets happen outside and is spread to other areas within the locality. Each of these responsibilities is given to specific volunteering groups which move out of the line and carry out their respective operations in a systematic way, and report back to the central committee. The main cause of such a systematic and methodical arrangement and correspondence between the functioning branches and the central core lies in the compactness of the structure of such a core committee that intends to involve Telugu and other resident communities of the mill line and at the same time develop intra and inter-state networks with other Telugu communities to bring them into the domain of the religious festival.

The *Shri Vinayaka Balabhakta Samajam* is formed out of the residents of line no. 18 that includes Telugus as well as other migrant communities of the line. As Devendra Rao, the President of the *Samajam*, mentioned to me, "Tirupathi Puja is not just a religious festival for the Telugus but of the entire line. This puja is of our home and we all stay together, and therefore we all celebrate it together." By referring to the festival as "puja of our home," Devendra attributed a familial character to it. He distinguished their Tirupathi Puja as belonging to the private space of the line, as their own puja with which all inhabitants of the line bore personal attachment. Like the Bengali families organizing their own Durga Puja, they also organized the puja jointly through active participation as family members. The *Balbhakta Samajam,* according to Devendra, was a product of such inter-familial and inter-social relations between the resident communities of the mill line that evolved within its private sphere and condensed the cooperative relation between the migrant communities.

The process of condensation and unification of the migrant families of line no. 18 for the interest of Tirupathi Puja started happening from the inception of the *Samajam* itself. Devendra described the primary driving force behind the united effort of the line residents as "*pachhapatam*" or what he called a total lack of jealousy and self-centeredness on the part of the residents, and in turn the willingness to participate in the organization of the puja. In what ways did such "*pachhapatam*" come into shape, given the way it functions today among the migrant communities? Kesava Rao, one of the earliest founders of the *Balbhakta Samajam* explained the history of its formation. Thirty-six years ago, when the plan to conduct the puja for the first time was laid before the residents of the line, four major heads from four Telugu families—one of them being Kesava Rao himself and the other, A. Y. Poleya, now an octogenarian veteran—took

[9]Ed. N: Food that is taken out for religious offering in Hinduism and is usually consumed by the devotees.

upon their shoulders the responsibility of collecting funds and making all arrangements for the puja. However, problems regarding shortage of funds and lack of manpower arose and consequently the four managers appealed to other resident communities of the line to contribute physically and monetarily towards the puja.

Kesava Rao while describing this event probably realized that his narration gave a sense of willingness on the part of the Telugus to welcome other communities into the fold of the puja only after a shortage of funds and manpower was experienced. As a result, he instantly clarified his position saying, "…a puja on such a large scale was unheard at that time among the migrants and we were initially confused about the whole plan." He further continued, "Our salary was very little and given our socio-economic position, it was almost an audacious attempt by us." But it seems all their apprehension was clarified by the other residents of the line who themselves extended a helping hand and offered to assist Kesava Rao and his group., Kesava Rao said, as if he could still recall every bit of the event, "…the first act of '*pachhapatam*' came from those residents of the line and for that we have been forever grateful. That created a bonding and Tirupathi Puja became as much of the Biharis and Oriyas as of the Telugus."

Why did the other communities offer to help at that time? On this question Devendra intervened, "Everybody in the line realized that Tirupathi Puja could become a platform for the migrants to unite socially and express their culture and religion. Tirupathi Puja could become the voice for other ethnic communities from the line like *Oriyas* and *Biharis* as well." Devendra's words were proof of the fact that the other migrant communities made Tirupathi Puja their mode of religious and cultural expression because it brought in a difference in the socio-religious milieu of Serampore and acted as a platform for the minorities to make a united effort to lay claim to and reproduce the social space of the neighborhood.

Kesava Rao's words articulated a sense of apprehension, fear, and doubt on the part of the Telugu people to initiate a religious program for themselves in a neighborhood space that was socio-culturally dominated by Bengalis. What Kesava considered an "audacious attempt" was the introduction of an alternative religious practice meant primarily (if not exclusively) for the migrant communities. It was a medium for them to assert their religious and ethnic identity, and to produce an alternative socio-religious space through elaborate rituals and other associated secondary activities at a place that had till then been historically dominated by *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*[10] and Durga Puja celebrations in Bengali households. Such an effort necessitated emotional and physical support. The migrant mill workers who had till then been subjected to (and thus being at the receiving end of) exclusionary neighborhood politics in everyday life and the exploitative treatment of mill managers and political parties, found for the first time the scope to step to the forefront, practice their religion at liberty the way they preferred, and in turn reproduce that very public space from which they were constantly excluded, by bringing it into the sphere of puja activities. To perform their rituals within the private sphere of the mill lines not as socially excluded and culturally disconnected singular entities but as part of a neighborhood in open awareness of other residents and to exercise the right to public space, the migrants had to challenge the mechanisms of social exploitation in the neighborhood and construct a social identity by rejecting their own habituation to social exclusion.

[10]Ed. N: It is a religious movement inspired by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534) in North India. "Gaudiya" refers to the Gauda region (present day Bengal/Bangladesh) and "Vaishnavism" is one of the major traditions within Hinduism that worships god Vishnu. Other main traditions are Shaivism and Shaktism.

The *Balbhakta Samajam* was a channel through which a collective identity for the migrant communities of line no. 18 was formed through the shared experiences of socio-cultural exclusion and shared ideas of religious and cultural expression. Its main aim was to strive constantly to be able to integrate socially into the neighborhood by retaining and expressing their ethnic identities, and to make their lived spaces a part of the neighborhood so that they could rightfully demand equal facilities and conditions of living as the resident middle-class Bengalis. For thirty-six years, economic changes and modes of cultural contact caused certain alteration in the density of migrant communities. This affected the presence of many members of the *Samajam* within the line as residents, even though they exist officially as members of the committee. The *Samajam* despite the physical distance created with such members, tried to maintain a constant link with such people. They did this by weaving a narrative of nostalgia and attachment towards the puja and the line and a necessity to keep the collective identity of the migrant residents intact. As a result, through regular visits to those staying in other parts of the township and through phone calls and letters to those staying away, such narratives were articulated as a reminder for the duty towards the arrangements of the puja.

Kesava himself now stays at Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, and despite being sixty-five years old, manages to take a few days off every two years from the school where he teaches to attend the Tirupathi Puja of line no. 18 in Serampore. To put it in his own words, “I had to attend the puja this year because of the ‘*Kalyanam.*’ ‘*Kalyanam*’ takes the puja to a new height altogether and as you can see the puja this time is of a huge budget (reportedly of Rs. 25 lakh). I travelled for almost twenty-four hours at my age just to attend the puja and participate in all its activity.” Kesava Rao felt the urge to participate in the ‘*Kalyanam*’ and the puja as he had been one of the founders and required no persuasion on the part of the *Samajam* apart from a formal letter detailing the puja activities. However, in certain other cases, the *Samajam*, with narratives of nostalgia and memories of sociality of the mill line had to reach out to those residing outside that private space.

The *Samajam* tries to accomplish this in two ways: one, as I have described above, by trying to retain that collective identity of the mill line by reaching out to those who left the line for various reasons and two, by forming intra and inter-state networks with other Telugu communities through common friends and relations. In case of the second, a vital means of strengthening such networks is by appealing to the religious sentiments of Telugu migrants residing in other parts of West Bengal. Another means is to blend such narratives with emotional colors of fellow-feeling, shared ethnicity, and pride at the fact that as ambassadors of their religious and cultural activities, the migrants have acquired a strong foothold in other states. Such narrative structures are common in publicizing the puja through various channels in other states as well.

Madhu, one of the young volunteers for the puja and a resident of the line described the process of reaching out physically to other Telugu communities, “We go as far as Kharagpur to collect donations for the puja. There is a big Telugu community there. We also go to Titagarh, Barrackpore, Kharda, Jagaddal, Gondalpara, and other nearby factory areas to collect donations. We also invite them for the puja and many of them visit us and have *bhog prasad* (holy food) as well.” Madhu’s statement was a perfect example of what I described earlier as multiple branches moving out of the central core committee, each of them (consisting of volunteers) operating according to instructions given by the core committee.

The aim of reaching out thus was not just to acquire donation for the religious ceremony but to strengthen the social and cultural networks that were gradually forming between the spatially separated Telugu communities. Madhu himself confirmed this saying, "Many of these places, we have been visiting for quite a few years now. They know us well by now and take pride in the fact that we have been able to maintain this so successfully for such a long time. And this has led to a bonding of trust and friendship." But why did they provide donations and come from such faraway places to attend the puja at Serampore when they probably could start their own Tirupathi Puja at their respective places? To this question Madhu was quick to point out,

> The Telugu communities of Rampuria Cotton Mill and Bangalaxmi Cotton Mill (both located in the Mahesh region of Serampore) both organize their own Tirupathi Pujas, but they are recent, having sought inspiration from us. But the larger Telugu community based at Mahesh prefer to attend our puja since they have been doing so for a long time and have become well acquainted with the residents of this line.

The fact that Madhu was not exaggerating the terms of their relationship was further accentuated by Sudhakar Rao and Aleti Dharma Rao, both residing at Mahesh, who came to attend the puja on the day of the '*Kalyanam.*' While Sudhakar Rao works as a senior full-time worker in the Wellington Jute Mill at Rishra, Dharma Rao is an officer at the Punjab National Bank, a government owned bank in India, where he has been working for the past thirty-three years. To put it in Sudhakar's own words, "Bangalaxmi and Rampuria cotton mills both organize Tirupathi Puja, but they do not do it as well as it is done here." For Dharma Rao, attending the puja every year at that time in March is more important than playing Holi which coincides with the puja each year. He has been attending the puja at line no. 18 ever since he shifted to Serampore in 1996 with his family from Titagarh after his father retired from a jute mill there. According to him, "The Tirupathi Puja here unites us all. It is a time for us all to come together. We don't play Holi at this time. We enjoy the puja of Lord Balaji. It unifies us all, whether they live here in line no. 18, at Mahesh, or at Titagarh."

How did Dharma come to know about the puja in the first place? Dharma Rao explained that he already knew about the puja before settling at Serampore through other people from Titagarh who had been attending the puja each year. However, he rarely got the opportunity to attend it since his father, a jute mill employee in Titagarh, did not have strong connections with the residents of the line. And since he himself had always been a bank employee, he never previously developed any connection outside of Titagarh, among the Telugu communities working in the jute and cotton mills of Serampore. After having settled at Mahesh, Dharma Rao formed networks through common channels with the members of the *Samajam*, especially with Kesava Rao, and had been attending the puja ever since. Dharma Rao said, "There are common ties through old friendship and familial relations between the communities and that is how the network has gradually spread." Then after a brief pause he said, "Actually, they both look out for each other. Balaji is the god that unites us all."

Dharma's statement highlights the fact that just as the migrant communities of line no. 18 had felt the necessity to unite in common interest of religious and cultural expression and the necessity to assert their identity, they had similarly realized that this process of assimilation had to expand for a larger socio-cultural bonding among the Telugus of Serampore whose benefits would certainly percolate down to a better financial arrangement, better management, and more publicity for the Tirupathi Puja. On the other hand, the Telugu families residing at Mahesh had also been struggling to establish their ethnic identity and equal rights for the use of public space.

For such people, identifying themselves with a religious festival specific to their own ethnicity along with the intended desire to assimilate into their own ethnic community was important since that would also become a platform for their religious expression and cultural production. Thus, the festival of Balaji got precedence over Holi, as the former was religiously and culturally more specific to their interests and intentions. It is also interesting to note the ways in which such intra-state and inter-state networks were formed keeping line no. 18 as the base for operations. Since the lived space of the committee coincided with the space for the festival—which was a strategy for the committee to draw attention towards the presence and position of the working class migrants as part of that space and include it as part of the social spaces of Serampore and not disconnected from it—such networks were extended from the line itself so that it brought back those people to the space of the mill lines during the festival and consequently the spatial attachment to it remained strong.

Such a networking system attempted to create homogeneity out of the varied trajectories of space-time of multiple individuals with different experiences of migration, a homogeneity that was not aimed at effacing the individuality or heterogeneity in the socio-spatial trajectories of the people but in finding a common ground for the propagation of a strong ethnic and cultural identity for the migrant (Massey 2005). Thus, Kesava or Dharma Rao's trajectories of space-time (with different experiences and stories of migration and settlement across time) were different from each other and from that of the residents of line no. 18 whose own trajectories differed from each other as well. However, the network that was formed by connecting and bringing such multiple individuals and groups into the setting of the puja produced a common platform for cultural and religious manifestations in the form of Tirupathi Puja by keeping intact and in fact using the ethnic heterogeneity of the migrants as a unifying factor.

Apart from Telugu Hindus, Line no. 18 also comprises of Oriya, Bihari, and Hindustani Hindus (migrants mainly from districts of Uttar Pradesh). Each community has their own trajectories of space-time that interacted with others everyday. The social spaces of the line are constituted through regular social and cultural exchange among them, thereby transforming them into a collective unit, albeit their ethnic identities are retained in the process. The gala celebration of Tirupathi Puja became, also for these other ethnic identities, a medium to express an alternative mode of religious practice that became representative of the lived and social spaces of the migrants. Thus, just as migrant Telugus from outside the mill line with their own trajectories of space-time responded to an appeal of strengthening their ethnic identity in Serampore through their "own religious festival" and used their own trajectories to spread the social network even further, the resident migrants of the mill line too projected their ethnic diversity by participating in the puja (what Kesava called "*pachhapatam*") and producing a collective socio-spatial and cultural identity for the mill line (Massey 2005).

The intention of the *Samajam* was dual: the preservation and progression of the puja as a private affair of the line on one hand and, drawing as many Telugu communities outside the line as possible to strengthen the social and cultural base of the festival in a space where they had always been socially marginalized. Such actions would therefore gradually lead to pose resistance to marginalization and use the expression of faith as a show of strength. The committee, therefore, did not maintain a strict dichotomy between the 'public' and the 'private' while visitors from other places (designated as the "public," "guests," and/or "public devotees") could cross into the private space of the line at all times during the puja without interruption. The puja also came to be spatially designed in such a way over the years. The use of public roads to set up flamboyant arches made of light as far as two hundred meters away from the actual puja site or the spectacular construction of the puja pandal bore the character traits of opening the puja up for the larger public and creating a symbolic mutuality between the 'public' and the 'private' such that even when people were physically present on the public road they had symbolically entered the space of the puja.

The puja of the line was transformed into a puja for the public with the private space of the line becoming public in the process. In addition to this, alluding to the spatial organization and arrangements of a public religious site, like a temple, specific portions of the public space across the mill lines are occupied to make specific counters for the deposition of footwear before entering the puja space (people are only allowed to enter barefoot), or are transformed into temporary stalls where the residents of the line sell materials for puja to the incoming public and thus make a small income on the days of the puja.

This brings us to the question of inclusivity of the 'public' into the space of the puja as well as part of the administration of the committee. Did the *Balbhakta Samajam* attempt to regulate this processual publicizing of the puja? In fact, who qualified as 'public' and in what ways? Through various actions the *Samajam* drew boundaries regarding how far the 'public' (both as people and space) could traverse into the private space of the line. The construction of such boundaries is carried out on one hand through the regulation of crowd in and out of the puja space, and on the other through the control of the core committee over the role/responsibility to be assigned to people that their networks brought within the domain of the puja.

The responsibility of managing the various affairs of the puja lies strictly with those who reside in the mill line. As Ayush Rao, the Junior Secretary of the *Samajam* noted, "There indeed is a serious lack of manpower among the Telugus of line no. 18 since there are only 15 to 18 Telugu families left here right now. The number of adults who can carry our serious labour for the puja is 25. But we do not take help for such labourious work or for management from people outside the *Samajam.*" Upon being asked why the Telugu communities from Mahesh or Titagarh—where at least a few of them were known to the puja committee—were not asked for help, Ayush labelled them as guests or visitors who upon being invited (or not) were welcome to attend the puja proceedings and eat the prasad or could carry out any tertiary task associated with the puja if any help was sought from them at all. Such communities were not given the liberty to volunteer for the management of the puja or to become a part of the organizing committee. Their identity as guest or member, and their position inside or outside the domain of the puja along with the parameters of such position were determined by the *Samajam*. In the process of such determination, their movement inside the space of the line was regulated by the committee.

What role did the Bengalis play in the proceedings of Tirupathi Puja? The term 'Bengalis' here denotes those who stay in the same neighborhood as the residents of line no. 18 as well as those who live in other parts of the township. Depending on the spatial proximity that they shared with the residents of the line, the knowledge and reaction of the Bengali communities and their involvement with the puja differed. What, however, remained common between those who attended or participated in the puja was the reason behind their participation. Unlike the migrant communities for whom the puja was a medium for social assimilation and cultural expression, almost all the Bengalis claimed to participate "... out of a sense of devotion towards Lord Balaji" and the quick justification that came afterwards for it was that Balaji was another incarnation of Lord Vishnu (the Bengalis usually used the name "Krishna"), one of the supreme gods of the Hindu pantheon. This justification was almost like a clarification on the part of the Bengalis to show that the god they were worshipping was not really alien to their own culture but was rather in line with the religious tradition in Serampore of worshipping various forms of Lord Krishna (like the idols of Radhaballav and Jagannatha).

One such visitor, Sudhir Ranjan Mitra, from Potuapara located to the north of Serampore said that he had been visiting the puja every year since the last seven years. Upon being asked what interested him in the Tirupathi Puja of the Telugu community to participate on a regular basis, he replied with a serious expression on his face, "It is not a puja of the Telugus. It is a puja of Serampore. We are all residents of the same town and we are all Hindus. So how can a Hindu god be different for all of us? Also, Balaji is the incarnation of Krishna. So, you see, we are not worshipping a different god, different from ours." Similar sentiments were echoed by another worshipper named Ashok Chatterjee who came to attend the puja along with his family on the evening of *'Kalyanam.'* While Ashok's mother and wife stood in one queue with the offerings in their hand and Ashok in another, he said, "We regard this as Serampore's puja. It is attended by all communities and without this the puja would not have been successful." Ashok's mother Chaya Devi said, "... the rituals here are observed with purity and devotion. Purity and devotion are the only things that bring me here."

Through Sudhir Ranjan and Ashok's statements two dominate attitudes of the Bengalis of Serampore towards the religious practices of migrants came to the forefront. One, as I have argued above, was a clarification of their own religious position so that they did not cross the social and religious boundaries that were set by practices of class and ethnic superiority. This was practiced through the dissemination of narratives of religious interpretation by alluding to a larger Hindu mythology by which the religious specificity or difference of the Telugu communities were intended to be subsumed. Such a practice was coupled with expressing a feeling of devotion for a god that was not different from their religious choice. 'Devotion' was therefore employed as a political strategy by the Bengalis through which their religious choice was expressed. Two, the process of subsuming the religious specificity of the Telugu communities under a larger "homogeneous" religious tradition of Serampore also intended to deny the latter's right to cultural expression and the assertion of their ethnic identity (Massey 2005). There is no doubt that the migrant communities too wanted to be included as part of Serampore's religious paradigm. However, that should not have come at the cost of shedding their ethnic identity and religious specificity.The fact was that Tirupathi Puja belonged first and foremost to them and that it was a medium to express their religious identity.

For the Bengalis who stayed close to line no. 18 like in the same neighborhood bore similar justifications of purity, devotion, and Balaji as Krishna's incarnation regarding their visit to the puja. However, those who experienced the various proceedings of the puja based on the everyday owing to sharing the same neighborhood space or the same locality could not deny the fact that the puja belonged primarily to the Telugu community. The reason for this was not any deep involvement with the puja or good social relations with the residents of the line but the fact that the Bengalis of the neighborhood were either not keen on knowing much about the festival because they thought that it was celebrated by those belonging to an inferior class, or their experience about the puja was bitter.

The power-relation between the resident working-class migrants and middle-class Bengalis concerning the religious expression and assertion of social and ethnic identities of the former operates at multiple levels. On one hand most Bengalis of the neighborhood attempt to create an upper-caste religio-cultural homogeneity in the neighborhood space by dismissing or ignoring the religious/cultural practices of the Telugu migrants. On the other hand, their acceptance of Tirupathi Puja comes through a process of filtering the religious activities of the migrants to what suited or corresponded with the upper-caste religious tradition of Serampore, so that its inclusion into the religious tradition of the town occurred *after* it received sanction from upper-caste Bengalis.

The actions of the Bengali community, however, to include Tirupathi Puja as part of Serampore's religious tradition, to efface the cultural and ethnic specificity of the festival, or to dismiss such practices altogether were consequences of the effort made by the Telugu community to make an impact on the existing social dynamics between the Bengali and migrant communities. Thus, even though the Bengalis attempted to create a religious homogeneity in the town through discourses that upheld their socio-cultural superiority, the Telugus ensured through elaborate socio-spatial networks and strategies that the Puja served a dual purpose. It first signified and kept intact its spatial root which was the mill line and by doing so highlighted the presence and everyday lives of the migrants and, second, through the spatial expansion of the elements of the Puja (as public spaces were occupied extensively and covered with illustrious light and pandal décor) and that of the social networks of the migrants, it also expanded the knowledge of religious and cultural potential of the Telugus, establishing the presence of the communities in Serampore and strengthening them exponentially.

The Telugu community of NBS stressed on the power of visibility of the spectacle, even in the face of denial or inclusivity by the Bengali society, by reproducing public spaces through multiple practices that signified the active presence of the Telugu society in Serampore and highlighted the importance of their religious identity and practices. Although the Bengali community attempted to negate the religio-cultural specificity of Tirupathi Puja, the strategy of the puja committee to limit the involvement of "outsiders" (that is, people not related to Line no. 18) in the management of puja activities shows the policy of the management to primarily project the puja as a religious practice of the Telugus and then as a religious tradition of Serampore. My research on the Tirupathi Puja suggests that the efforts of the *Balabhakta Samajam* to assert the ethnic and religious identities of the migrants appear to outrun the efforts of the Bengalis to control it.

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The Suicidal and the Perversion of Virtues in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*

Naveen John Panicker

> 'Listen', she said, 'Have you ever felt sick? I mean nauseous, like you knew you were going to throw up?'
> The doctor made a gesture like Well sure.
> 'But that's just in your stomach,' Kate Gompert said, 'it's a horrible feeling but it's just in your stomach…but imagine if you felt that way all over, inside. All through you. Like every cell and every atom or brain-cell or whatever was so nauseous it wanted to throw up, but it couldn't, and you felt that way all the time, and you're sure, you're positive the feeling will never go away, you're going to spend the rest of your natural life feeling like this' (Wallace 74).

David Foster Wallace's magnum opus, *Infinite Jest*, is a profound meditation on the state of late 20th century American society with its aspirations and addictions, and attempts to trace the fault lines that lie at the heart of its 'dream.' It employs a fractured narrative scheme that impersonally and non-linearly stitches together, often without clearly delineated intents or objectives, various dysfunctional points of view and contexts, resembling, in Wallace's words, "…a very pretty pane of glass that had been dropped off the twentieth story of a building" (Caro 57). It inhabits within its pages a multitude of characters who, although far removed from the normative, almost unintelligible or inhuman, are nevertheless profoundly human in all their failings and fractures. Wallace's voice resonates through drug addicts, terrorists, criminals, politicians, psychopaths, fame obsessed teenagers, through the neglected, the unwanted, the underappreciated, the misunderstood, the criminal, the twisted, the depressed, and the suicidal; these are people whose lives and voices, whose histories and narratives, are often left unacknowledged, forgotten. The stylistic complexities and semantic ambiguities within the novel, in keeping with certain of Wallace's notions regarding the nature and function of fiction,[1] are an attempt to unsettle its readers and get them to actively work to derive meaning and sense from the text, to wake them up to "how observant they already are" (Shechner 105).

Infinite Jest is a novel that is deeply concerned with suicide and with the factors that constitute and contribute to suicide ideation; in thinking about death and dying, it attempts to reflect upon life and living. Suicide is an act of dying that implicates human agency; to choose to cause one's death raises questions of morality, ethicality, and rationality which confuse, complicate, determine, and inform assumptions and attitudes entertained (both by the suicidal and non-suicidal) regarding suicide. To ideate suicide is not merely to explicitly think about or plan towards one's suicide but it also involves (repetitive) forms or patterns of behaviour, thought, or action which stem from certain tendencies or (distorted) attitudes about oneself and the world around one (Shneidman 46-47). These attitudes or tendencies of the suicidal individual can cause her to increasingly believe suicide to be the only *viable* solution to the seemingly irresoluble problem of existence. In its concern with the aspect of suicide ideation, *Infinite Jest*

[1]Wallace's take on the promise and function of fiction: "I guess a big part of serious fiction's purpose is to give the reader, who like all of us is sort of marooned in her own skull, to give her imaginative access to other selves. Since an ineluctable part of being a human self is suffering, part of what we humans come to art for is an experience of suffering, necessarily a vicarious experience, more like a sort of generalization of suffering" (McCaffery 21-22).

may be understood to fall under the category of ‘suicide narratives,’ a group of 20th century literary narratives termed and defined as such by Andrew Bennett in *Suicide Century: Literature and Suicide from James Joyce to David Foster Wallace* (2017). Suicide narratives, briefly put, are largely concerned with how suicide is narrativized, represented, and made sense of; what sets (literary) suicide narratives apart from sociological, psychological, or medical literature (which are equally, albeit differently, concerned with explaining and/or making sense of suicide) is the former’s deep concern with imagining and articulating the *experience* of suicide ideation, what it *feels* like (Bennett 4, 20).

Individual experiences of pain and suffering are acknowledged, narrativized, and thereby memorialised and validated, in and through these narratives; the medicalized, criminalized, and/or psychologized (suicidal) individual, reduced to her pathology or chained within her psyche, is allowed the possibility of agency through narrativizing her experiences of being reduced or chained thus. This is exemplified through the character of Kate Gompert in *Infinite Jest*. The reader first meets Kate Gompert lying immobile on a bed inside a psychiatry ward, hospitalized and under ‘suicide watch’ (where she is watched twenty four hours a day until the supervising doctor decides to call the watch off) after her latest suicide attempt; the excerpt at the start of this paper is from a conversation between Kate and her doctor where she is attempting to narrativise, to represent, and make intelligible, both to herself and to her doctor, the horror of her *experience* of clinical depression (Wallace 68-74). Kate Gompert is understood to come closest to being modelled on Wallace himself; her struggles with addiction and self-destructive behaviour, with feelings of disingenuity, with (estimations of) her agency, constantly oscillating between seizing and resigning her agency, her belief that nothing can offer her adequate relief from her suffering, and even the suicide watch she is placed under, mirror Wallace’s life and views, his struggles, and suffering in certain ways (Lipsky 169, 170, 175).

Kate Gompert displays many of the signs often exhibited by the clinically depressed: she does not care much for her personal hygiene, struggles to maintain meaningful relations with people around her, and feels utterly incapable of breaking out of her near constant state of stasis, physical or mental. She feels incapable of reasoned thought or action when caught under the dark cloud of her depression and acts out in impulsive (self-destructive) ways or seeks refuge in the numbing effects of drugs. She is confrontational when questioned, and when finding herself incapable of functioning or expressing herself, of maintaining the mask of normality, she disconnects from the world around her and withdraws within herself. Her fatalistic tendency potentially stemming from her illness and compounded by her experiences of seemingly irremediable pain and suffering, by experiences of apathy, intolerance, and rejection causes her to believe that she cannot be helped. This ‘narcissistic’ tendency to see herself as ‘uniquely’ doomed, to read her life and her experiences as utterly beyond another’s ability to conceptualize or comprehend, causes her to believe that her suffering beyond the limits of her agency, is irremediable; this also causes her to become incapable of trusting another, to often be suspicious of those who convey to her a desire (in this case, by her doctor) to help her get better. (Shneidman 215) There is a general guardedness that characterises her responses to her doctor’s queries; she mostly responds with sarcasm or through certain (annoyed) expressionless movements or gestures, which allow her to speak her mind without having to betray a need to do so, to seek, in some small degree, help from another without having to seem to be asking for it (Jamison 117), seeing as “…sarcasm and jokes were often the bottle in which clinical depressives sent out their most plangent screams for someone to care and help them” (Wallace

71). One can perhaps read into her actions a small degree of resistance to potentially being reduced to her illness, an almost wilful assertion of agency, even or especially at moments when she feels herself to be utterly incapable of it.

Contemporary notions around suicide stem predominantly from psychological, psychoanalytical, sociological, or medical points of view. The manner in which the condition of depression is perceived, represented, or made sense of, determines the attitudes, clinical or otherwise, towards it (and from which stem therapeutic/treatment protocols). Certain attitudes, on the one hand, perceive the condition of depression not as an illness but as a state of mind entirely contingent upon one's attitudes and opinions and upon one's perceptions regarding oneself and the world around one; this manner of a diagnosis points to the suffering individual as the cause and cure of her depression, a cure that may be accomplished through the reformulation or reorientations of some of her attitudes, opinion, notions or values, essentially by changing her way of thinking, responding, and living. (Rowe 12-13) Certain other attitudes, on the other hand, perceive the condition of depression as an illness that exists independently of the suffering individual's attitudes, opinions, responses, or states of mind; this manner of a diagnosis see the individual's perceptions or attitudes stemming from (and darkened by) her illness and not vice-versa (Shneidman 63), and suggest treatment protocols that combine (to varying degrees) medication with certain forms of psychotherapy. One significant roadblock that hinders a better understanding of suicidality or of the condition of depression is the problem of language. Language falls short in making possible an adequate representation of the condition or an adequate articulation of its experience.

William Styron is deeply aware of this problem when he expresses his displeasure at the inadequacy of the terms that are available with which to try and make sense of one's condition, to try and articulate or narrativize it; the term 'depression', in its bland tonality, utterly lacks the expressive power with which to convey or make sense of the horrific reality of the condition of clinical depression, described by one character in *Infinite Jest* as "…total horror. It was all horror everywhere, distilled and given form. It rose in me, out of me…It rose and grew larger and became engulfing and more horrible than I shall ever have the power to convey," and who went on to state that "there was no way death could feel as bad" (Wallace 649-650). The lack of adequate terms for expression causes one to unthinkingly bring together, under the rubric of one standard, bland, inadequate term that standardizes and homogenizes this condition, the various states or experiences of depression (Styron 32). Wallace is therefore at pains to carefully and forcefully mark out distinctions between "anhedonia, or simple melancholy," a disconcerting, deadened state where one loses the ability to feel simple pleasures, where people and things and activities of living "are stripped to their skeletons and reduced to abstract ideas," from clinical depression of the kind Kate Gompert describes which is not simply an absence of a feeling or a loss of the ability to feel but is in itself an active and pervasive feeling, an overwhelming and actively felt sense of sheer terror and abject hopelessness, "…a level of psychic pain wholly incompatible with life as we know it" (692-695).

The condition of clinical depression is a state of near-constant, almost intolerable pain and suffering, pain and suffering that is often invisible or non-existent to those outside the sphere of its experience; the incapacity to sufficiently articulate and express the nature and degree of their pain and suffering, to make it a little less overwhelming by making it a little more intelligible, causes the suffering individual to feel increasingly alienated from herself and from those around her. The failure of language and the breakdown of conventional structures of sense and meaning making makes it nearly impossible for the suffering individual to determine, with any degree of certainty or assurance, the degree of rationality or irrationality of her logic. The reasoning employed by the clinically depressed to justify their decision to commit suicide takes a form that is incompatible with conventional logic, which perceives any act or thought that is not in accordance with its 'universal,' 'life-affirming' normative as inherently irrational, illogical, and harmful. In many cultures where the act of suicide is often perceived to perhaps be the worst possible sin or crime, where the suicidal and the suicides are often denounced as selfish or cowardly, it is inconceivable that conventional wisdom, often characterized by hostility and high-handedness towards the clinically depressed, could ever appreciate the reasoning Kate Gompert gives for attempting suicide; when asked why she continued to hurt herself, she clarifies in this manner: "I don't want *anything* except for the feeling to go away. Part of the feeling is like being willing to do anything to make it go away. Understand that. Anything…It's not wanting to hurt myself, it's wanting to not hurt" (Wallace 77-78).

The manner in which one understands, interprets, and even *experiences* oneself and one's world is determined by one's geographical and temporal positions, by the nature of the social, cultural, and epistemological framework one finds oneself in. The particular knowledge base of a particular time and place determines the particular responses evoked from those embedded within its particular socio-cultural frameworks. It is not possible to see one's notions of oneself, one's sense of a self or of an identity, even one's *experience* of oneself or of the world around one, as immune to one's geographical, temporal, social, cultural, and epistemological context. There is a tendency among many to see suicide as contingent on certain *universal* characteristics of what it means to be human, with its attendant universal (human) needs and desires; this causes one to generalise and universalise certain (narrow) western notions about what constitutes suicide, suicide ideation, and the suicidal subject. The suicidal individual herself formulates her sense of self, her notions of agency, and fashions her subjectivity through these notions. (Marsh 10-11) Ian Marsh cautions against this (reductive) tendency to generalise and universalise certain notions about suicide, and thereby simplify, standardise, and homogenise suicide and the suicidal subject/subjectivity.

Thomas Joiner states that the desire to commit suicide is one that exists alongside the desire to continue living, with the simultaneous existence of these contradictory desires within the individual contributing to a state of ambivalence (Joiner 81). The desire to die is not, as is generally understood, a desire for death itself but is rather a desire to not continue living in the manner one had been living so far, and thereby, to not continue suffering. The state of ambivalence causes the individual to experience a certain loss of control over herself, over her feelings, emotions, thoughts, or state of mind, and it fractures a secure sense of self, causing her to feel increasingly insecure and helpless. An acute sense of discomfort with herself, compounded by an inability to trust her intuitions and judgements, causes the depressed/suicidal individual to abandon 'certainties' and become increasingly suspicious of the world and the people around her. The value of the decision to continue living is determined against the reality of her near constant state of pain and suffering this decision entails; quite often and not incorrectly they believe that to continue living and thereby to continue suffering is simply incompatible with a dignified form of existence. If the nature and magnitude of one's suffering be such that it cuts one off from all that which makes life worthwhile or meaningful, if it be such that it denies one the comfort of stable and meaningful human relationships and negates a sense of self-worth, then one may be justified in finding merit, even a small measure of virtue, in choosing to not continue on. Suffering is often accorded a redemptive potential, but this is suffering of the kind that allows for the possibility of human agency to be directed towards its overcoming. Suffering of the kind the clinically depressed are understood to undergo, suffering of a nature and magnitude that utterly strips the individual of her sense of self and of her agency, is simply dehumanising.

Thomas Joiner theorises that feelings of alienation and burdensomeness are (among) the most crucial elements of severe suicide ideation, and goes on to suggest that these feelings can cause a suicidal individual to sometimes attribute a virtue to, and thereby justify, the decision to commit suicide (91). Joiner, in reflecting on murder-suicides, theorises that murder-suicides occur when the perpetrator misunderstands and misapplies any one, or a combination, of any of the following four virtues: mercy, justice, duty, and glory (Joiner 8). The state of clinical depression causes a near intolerable state of mental and physical discomfort that reduces the individual's life and her world to the most immediate impulse, thought or desire; this manner of living, characterized by impulsivity and self-destructive behaviour, potentially stem from the individual's incapacity to not think of herself as uniquely condemned or to conceive of a possible or viable futurity (Pompili 18). Self-destructive behaviour is believed to offer a small degree of relief for the individual, to lend her agency by channelling her thoughts and activities, however temporarily, towards the realisation of the particular activity decided upon. The increasing tendency towards self-destructive behaviour, despite allowing for a small measure of relief (through enabling a regulation of emotions) and predictability (on account of the familiarity of its processes/mechanisms) in her life, nevertheless pushes the individual closer and closer to actually committing suicide by getting her to become increasingly tolerant to increasingly higher and more lethal levels of pain and injury (Joiner 41, 59). The constant struggle to maintain a semblance of normalcy and continue sustaining their lives in silence creates a deep sense of weariness that darkens their thoughts, actions, feelings, and desires, leading them to wish to simply end it all, to want out: "I (Kate Gompert) didn't want to especially hurt myself. Or like punish. I don't hate myself. I just wanted out. I didn't just want to play anymore is all" (Wallace 72).

One might then, reasonably enough, read such individuals as prone to employing the virtues of mercy and/or justice (mercy towards themselves and towards another through negating their pain and another's burden respectively, and justice in the sense of a certain balancing of the scales of fortune through a wilful assertion of agency against a condition that virtually paralyses it) to make sense of or explain their decision to commit suicide; this tendency is echoed in the reasoning offered by Kay Jamison for her suicide attempt, "I could not stand the pain any longer, could not abide the bone-weary and tiresome person I had become, and felt that I could not continue to be responsible for the turmoil I was inflicting upon my friends and family. In a perverse linking within my mind I thought that…I was doing the only fair thing for the people I cared about; it was also the only sensible thing to do for myself" (115). The use of the word "perverse" to describe her reasoning for her suicide attempt ties in with Joiner's theory regarding the 'perverted' nature of the 'virtue' of suicide. He believes that by attributing a virtue to the reasoning that justifies suicide, the suicidal display not merely misplaced empathy in their perceptions of the needs of others (and in the belief that their absence would make things right or lead to another's betterment) but also a 'defect' in empathy, going on to state that this defect stems from "…a fervour for virtue without restraint, and without the leavening effects of emotional understanding of others' perspectives" (111). Often enough, however, it is not so much a defect of empathy as much as perhaps an incapacity for empathy, trapped as these individuals are within their experiences of intolerable pain and suffering, struggling to keep afloat:

> If a person in physical pain has a hard time attending to anything except that pain, a clinically depressed person cannot even perceive any other person or thing as independent of the universal pain that is digesting her cell by cell. Everything is part of the problem, and there is no solution. It is a hell for one (Wallace 696).

Wallace's insights on the nature of the suffering undergone by the clinically depressed finds its parallel in the suffering undergone by individuals crippled by severe forms of cancer; these individuals often lose their identity, their agency, and sometimes even their friends and family to their illness. The illness is so deeply personalized and interiorized that nothing exists for them apart from their illness, and nothing registers apart from the experience of being severely ill, of seeing themselves, and of being seen, as the 'diseased' (Mukherjee 169). An individual, caught in the throes of the virtually intolerable and inexpressible pain of clinical depression, finds herself in a "trance of supreme discomfort," a state of being where she feels herself incapable, on account of the "ferocious inwardness of the pain," of any manner of rational or coherent thought (Styron 12-15). The clinically depressed, in the (perceived) absence of their agency and their incapacity for self-determination, are therefore often seen (even by themselves) and treated as non-agential beings, incapable of reasoned thought or action. Any reasoning that stems from such a state of being or mind is treated as distorted, and any virtue attributed to the act that stems from this distorted reasoning is deemed perverted (Pompili 16). One must nevertheless caution against a reductive reading of all suicides as inherently irrational or perverted in order to avoid standardizing, and thereby simplifying and/or distorting, the diverse and complex forces that constitute and contribute to suicide ideation.

The act of suicide is understood to be a choice or a decision made by the suicidal individual, albeit (almost always) an irrational one, for 'to choose' suggests intent and the aspect of intent is crucial to differentiating suicide from accidental death. The individual attempting suicide is understood to be in full awareness of the likely consequences of her actions and to have committed to her course of action on account of that awareness. The phrasing, as a choice or a decision, in the conventional senses of the term, is understood to invest the individual with a (fair) degree of agency in making or following through on her decision. The reasoning that informs the intent (and which may translate into the act), however, (and especially in the instance of the clinically depressed) is deemed irrational on account of the magnitude of their suffering which is believed or understood to shut down or distort their capacity for reasoned thought or action. The preventive or therapeutic measures, in their general tendency to subscribe to the 'inherent' irrationality of, or the 'perverted' nature of virtue in, the suicidal individual's reasoning are more or less directed towards dismantling the structures of their logic and exposing its 'flaws' before the individual herself; they are intended, therefore, at enabling her to begin to see her "too-real suicidal thoughts as products of a loss-wracked imagination," to see the option of suicide as merely one among other possibilities and not as "concrete maps of an immutable reality," and thereby reformulate and reorient her agency (Holmes 128).

As stated earlier, the phrasing 'to make the decision to' or 'to choose to', with regards suicide, is understood to invest the individual with a reasonable degree of agency and allows one to see the decision as stemming, not incorrectly, from the 'intent' to not continue living.

Nevertheless, one wonders, especially with regards the clinically depressed, whether such individuals may truly be thought of to have *made* a decision or whether this ought to be seen or understood as a 'decision' in the first place. In a poignant and moving passage from *Infinite Jest*, Wallace attempts to articulate the experience and extent of suffering that clinical depression imposes upon the individual; this level of agony makes it virtually impossible for the suffering individual to distance herself sufficiently in order to be able to reflect upon or move beyond the immediacy of her experience, and this raises questions about the degree to which they are (or truly can be) deemed agential:

> The person in whom *Its* invisible agony reaches a certain unendurable level will kill herself the same way a trapped person will eventually jump from the window of a burning high-rise. Make no mistake about people who leap from burning windows. Their terror of falling from a great height is still just as great as it would be for you or me standing speculatively at the same window…the fear of falling remains a constant. The variable here is the other terror, the fire's flames: when the flames get close enough, falling to death becomes the slightly less of two terrors. It's not desiring the fall; it's terror of the flames. And yet nobody down on the sidewalk, looking up and yelling 'Don't', or 'Hang on!', can understand the jump (696).

Even as one (rightfully) attempts to question and problematise conventional yardsticks for valuations, one must nevertheless always be aware of the contingent nature of these (and of one's responses to these) notions, perceptions, and/or estimations. To 'expose' flaws (of reasoning) is not necessarily to bring to light 'inherent,' 'naturally existing' flaws but rather, in a certain sense, to 'convince' the individual of its existence, to dislocate her from one framework of reasoning and bring her under another, to replace one (manufactured, but seemingly illogical) framework of logic with another (equally manufactured but seemingly logical) one; the nature of these estimations is contingent upon the social, cultural, geographical, temporal, and epistemological nature of the context from where it stems, and such an awareness prevents one from (uncritically) making universalist or absolutist assumptions/interpretations (Marsh 7-8).

The depressed/suicidal individual often finds herself rather incapable of comprehending and/or articulating the nature of her experiences to herself or to another, for she is neither able to reconcile to the available, 'acceptable' interpretive frameworks (on account of finding them inadequate by which to explain or make intelligible the nature of her distress) nor does the limits of language allow her to satisfactorily formulate alternate, more adequate ones. The distress caused by this incapacity to comprehend or articulate is compounded by the responses such individuals are prone to receiving from those around them. They are silenced and their experiences are often articulated for them. These individuals often find themselves trapped within a climate of silence characterised by a general reluctance (sometimes, even hostility) to entertain or engage in serious discussions or debates on issues pertaining to suicide ideation or mental distress/disorders in general (Asher 172). This reluctance to reflect on certain discomfiting questions or issues, the acknowledgement of which could possibly threaten the status quo and potentially fracture the social, cultural, or moral systems that serve as its base, results in the fostering and propagating of a myopic climate of wilful ignorance which distorts and misrepresents such individuals[2].

Wallace's voice, through the character of Kate Gompert, is one among the relative few that are not only profoundly concerned with articulating the experience of being trapped inside the burning room for those who are standing on the sidewalk, looking up, but also with trying to determine and examine the social, cultural, or epistemological conditions that have made it harder to acknowledge, comprehend, or articulate such experiences. To live without the possibility of human dignity is perhaps not a life worth living through and this state of affairs owes as much to the state of one's society as to the fact of a psychological and/or medical condition, and is as much a product of one's perceptions as the factors that form and inform these perceptions. A sympathetic understanding of clinical depression and of suicide lies as much in the manner in which it is formulated and made sense of as in the recognition of the near impossibility of arriving at 'definitive' solutions or finding a 'cure'; therefore to explain away the clinically depressed or the suicidal, to simply and simplistically tuck them away under the category of the essentially irrational or the inherently perverted, without ever attempting to imagine for oneself the "terror of the flames," displays a certain 'defect' in empathy and a 'perversion' of humanity.

[2]The late 20th century, however, saw an increase in the number of books and memoirs that attempted to narrativize individual struggles with depression and suicide ideation; this was during the late 1980s, around when SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) antidepressants were introduced. These narratives were more or less structured around a "drugs-saved-my-life" narrative, and were therefore, rather limited in their scope and/or critique (Cvetkovich 92-93).

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