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*From Knowledge to Wisdom*

# Journal of Literature and Art Studies

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Tel: 1-847-281-9862  
Fax: 1-847-281-9855  
E-mail: [literature.art@davidpublishing.com](mailto:literature.art@davidpublishing.com), [art.literature@yahoo.com](mailto:art.literature@yahoo.com)

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# “The Man Was Dead and so He Had to Kill the Things He Loved”: “Medusation” as Metatheatre in Eugene O’Neill’s Mature Plays

Annalisa Brugnoli

University of Venice, Veneto, Italy

This study is about Eugene O’Neill’s use of “medusation” as an effective metatheatrical device and foremost achievement in his art. Occurring onstage as an unexpected “anagnorisis”, the medusation is a traumatic experience that engenders ritual death. This author argues that the medusation is a quintessentially metatheatrical act, insomuch as here O’Neill carries out a commentary on the function and functioning of theatre, through the consciously fictitious events that unfold on the stage. In the “Introduction”, the author reviews its development in O’Neill’s plays, from the more traditional melodramatic situations of the early works to the subsequent portrayal of a self-defeating pattern calling for psychological violence and symbolic death. In the section called “Medusation”, the author addresses the concept of medusation in order to account for the process whereby O’Neill’s people, annihilated by their sudden glimpses into the other within themselves, undergo major physical and spiritual change. In “Case Studies”, the author analyzes the chief correlatives of medusation: the dead-in-life, the death mask and the dead double. The author’s point in this paper is, thus, to show how extensively and pervasively O’Neill deploys medusation in order to signify a rite of passage that engenders metatheatrical death. Its outcome may either be the perpetuation of an endless spiral of violence and self-defeat, or a premise for rebirth arising from the characters’ assumption of responsibility as to their share of guilt in the evil of the world, together with the renewed human sympathy and understanding that this awareness brings along.

**Keywords:** Eugene O’Neill, medusation, metatheater, theater, American drama

## Introduction

As a blossoming playwright eagers to draw attention to his work, Eugene O’Neill initially abounded on Grand-Guignol and Montecristo-like stage effects. As newspaper reviews report—and as scholarly works such as Raleigh’s 1964 essay, “Eugene O’Neill and the Escape from the Château d’If”, subsequently remarked—both O’Neill’s audience and his critics have often pointed out that the playwright’s taste for melodramatic situations was much more developed than he was ever ready to admit. In Bigsby’s (2006) words, “(n)othing inhibited” (p. 15) Eugene O’Neill’s imagination, not even when it came to lingering on misgeneration, incest, illness and death. Consumptive, suicidal and stillborn characters stalk the stage of O’Neill’s early and middle phase plays, which touch on tuberculosis (*The Web* (1988a), *Beyond the Horizon* (1988a) and *The Straw* (1988a)), cannibalism

(*Thirst* (1988a)), abortion (*Abortion* (1988a)), shell shock (*Shell Shock* (1988a), *The Sniper* (1988a)), and madness (*Ile* (1988a)). *Before Breakfast* (1988a), the “thoroughly Strindbergian” (as cited in Törnquist, 1969, p. 71) O’Neill monologue, focuses on a sexual battle that ends up with the suicide of the male protagonist. *Bound East for Cardiff* (1988a), the Conradian play that earned O’Neill the limelight, deals with an injured sailor, who is portrayed in his agony and death.

Not even after becoming a successful playwright did O’Neill’s bent for delving in the pain-ridden side of humanity abate. On the contrary, in a famous 1925 letter to Arthur Hobson Quinn, the playwright declares that the “glorious, self destructive struggle” of “seemingly the most ignoble, debased lives (...) is the only subject worth writing about” as well as the essence of “the Greek dream in tragedy (...) the noblest ever” (Bogard & Bryer, 1988, p. 195). Accordingly, violence under this Greek ideal, if less explicit, becomes ostensibly subtler—and more morbid, in the plays of the so-called middle phase, as the nightmares of miscegeneration (*All God’s Chillun Got Wings* (1988b)), infanticide (*Desire Under the Elms* (1988b)) and incest (*Desire, Dynamo* (1988b) and *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1988b)) loom over the successful plays of the 1920s and the 1930s, triggering murders, suicides and abuse.

Nevertheless, a significant development in O’Neill’s vision of the world, hence, in his portrayal of it, was already on the way. As Bigsby (2006) put it, “(t)he church of (O’Neill’s) drama was constantly being reconsecrated to different faiths, faiths which he served with total commitment, only to abandon them for others” (p. 15). As he had already turned from his initial commitment to Conrad and Strindberg to his subsequent classical tastes, from naturalism to “supernaturalism”, and from realism to expressionism, and back, in his maturity O’Neill resolved to change his attitude towards violence and spectacular pain by relegating them offstage, a theatrical device he had already used in early plays, such as *Abortion* (1988a), *The Dreamy Kid* (1988a), *Before Breakfast* (1988a), and *Desire Under the Elms* (1988b), and that progressively came to stand as a sign of a personal and artistic development.

The author believes that this late attitude of O’Neill’s reaches its full ripeness in *The Iceman Cometh* (1988c). Here, Hickey kills his wife before the play begins and in order to put an end to her pipe dreams, i.e., to “save” her. Likewise, Parrit’s suicide takes place offstage, and to the other characters’ general indifference. Moreover, Parrit’s death is in itself an act of love, meant to atone for his betrayal of his mother. Above all, the violence displayed in *The Iceman Cometh* (1988c) goes far beyond physical suffering, having rather to do with the psychological assaults that Hickey perpetrates upon the inmates of Hope’s bar, with the ambivalence of his messianic purposes, and with the unreleased aggression that breaks out as soon as the salesman has enacted his plan. On account of this, Hickey stands out as the main symbolical figure of *The Iceman Cometh* (1988c), and as a living incarnation of the Iceman in the title, who puts together ambivalence and death, the two main issues of the whole play; “LARRY—(...) for Death was the Iceman Hickey called to his home” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 667).

Ambivalent are, indeed, Hickey’s “bughouse preacher” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 702) poises, and so are also his relationship with Evelyn, Parrit’s attitude towards his mother, as well as Larry’s “grandstand philosopher bunk” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 629). The pipe-dreams leitmotiv is itself utterly ambivalent too, and puzzling. For in *The Iceman Cometh* (1988c) ambivalence is inevitably connected to death, or rather to the inner death that makes characters want to kill the things they love, and from which no character in the play is spared.

This very issue of the characters’ symbolic death as a trigger for their suppressed violence and unreleased aggression is to be found in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1988c), too. Here, as in *The Iceman Cometh* (1988c), it is the men’s incapability to cope with the Eternal Feminine, namely with what Walter Davis (1994) called the metaphysical “mother” (p. 30), that conjures Jim Tyrone’s impending feelings of incest and sexual abuse in Josie’s presence. Just like Jamie’s character in *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (1988c), Jim is but another living incarnation of the protagonist of Wilde’s *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Here, in O’Neill’s reading, not only is inner death seen as a consequence of someone’s self-inflicted punishment, which comes before and apart from the world’s judgment upon it, but a close connection is also envisioned between the characters’ symbolic death and the physical changes this brings about. Correspondingly, in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1988c), if at his first appearance Jim “(l)ooks like a dead man walking slow behind his own coffin” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 874), as the play reaches its climax: he comes to achieve “the drained, exhausted peace of death” in sleep, his face looking “pale and haggard in the moonlight” (p. 933), an unmistakable correlative of the dead body he will soon become.

But it is, of course, *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (1988c) that is pervaded, more than any other O’Neill’s play, by the double-bind that the characters’ metatheatrical death brings along. Incapable of escaping from the deranged bonds of their dysfunctional family, all the members of the Tyrone family keep dislocating the aggression that runs through them into verbal assaults, immediately followed by hasty apologies. All dead, they have to kill the things they love. Accordingly, ghosts proliferate throughout the play, starting from baby Eugene and the empty spaces symbolically left for him (the wicker couch away from the four chairs, the reading lamp against the four-sockets chandelier), all the way to O’Neill’s own Walpurgisnacht, in Act Four, when the dead come forth and appear for what they really are. As for Mary, in Edmund’s words, she is “a ghost haunting the past” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 811). Edmund too depicts himself as “a stranger (...) who must always be a little in love with death!” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 812). Jamie is, again, the reincarnation of Wilde’s dead-in-life, whose “dead part (...) doesn’t want to be the only corpse around the house” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 821). As O’Neill’s biographic and artistic trajectory reaches its climax, Edmund, the playwright’s artistic double, is able to speak out about how evil and the dead-in-life leitmotiv interconnect, as he points out that life itself is but “the three Gorgons in one. You look in their faces and turn into stone. Or it’s Pan. You see him and you die—that is, inside you—and have to go on living as a ghost” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 796).

Thus, in *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (1988c), O’Neill becomes aware that inner death and the ghosts it engenders are one and the same, as both come to be explicitly connected to the effect of Medusa’s stare. As the examples mentioned above, at this point physical injury, spectacular pain and abuse no longer stand in the foreground of his plays, which, on the contrary, have come to be populated by characters whose “self-destructive struggle” has taken place inwardly, and whose appearance as chalky death masks is but a signifier of the inner death that ensues from it. As in Wilde’s *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, in O’Neill’s mature plays characters are dead on the inside, for they have to kill the thing they love. Or rather, they are already morally dead, read guilty, and so they have to kill the thing they love. Indeed, in O’Neill’s view, which he has Jamie disclose in *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, “Wilde (...) has the dope twisted. The man was dead and so he had to kill the thing he loved. That is what it ought to be” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 821). Interestingly, this is a markedly subjective interpretation of the poem from the playwright’s part, for in Wilde (1998) there is virtually no clue that the prisoner’s wistfulness



depends on his sense of guilt and not, rather, on the fact that “(t)hat fellows (sic) got to swing” (p. 2). Yet, it is O’Neill’s concern to draw a comparison between his characters and Wilde’s prisoner on account of their death-wish originated from guilt. What results here is multilayered metatheater: A fictitious man (Wilde’s (1998)) is compared to fictional characters (O’Neill’s (1988c)) who meditate on being dead inside, hence, figuratively. Lost in the maze of their double-binds and love-hate relationships, O’Neill’s people come, thus, to replace physical aggression with psychological violence, which they inevitably perpetrate “out of love”. As a consequence, the mood that pervades works such as *The Iceman Cometh* (1988c), *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (1988c), and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1988c) is not altogether dissimilar from plays like *Trifles* (2006) and *The Verge* (2006) by Susan Glaspell, where the purposely spare use of explicit violence onstage only succeeds in conjuring it all the more powerfully and conspicuously.

### Medusation

Scholars Clair (1989) and Dubois (1994) would call the petrifying epiphany O’Neill discovered in his late plays a “medusation”, a term they coined with reference to Vernant’s seminal essay “Death in the Eyes: Gorgo, Figure of the Other” (as cited in Zeitlin, 1991). Vernant (1991), a mythologist, discussed Medusa’s eerie power to turn into stone those who meet her stare, in the context of his overall discourse on the ways the Greek world used to portray otherness in terms of possible vs. impossible negotiation. According to Vernant, Medusa’s mask and its deadly effect would stand for the irreconcilable other, namely for “the terrifying horror of what which is absolutely other, unspeakable, unthinkable—pure chaos” (as cited in Zeitlin, 1991, p. 196). As Vernant reminded us, Medusa’s decapitated head hung at the entrance of the Land of the Shadows. Together with Cerberus, its function was precisely to keep apart the two worlds that must not come together.

In order to cross the threshold, one would have had to confront the face of terror, and beneath its gaze, to have been transformed oneself into the image of Gorgo, into that which, in fact, the dead already are: heads, empty heads, robbed of their strength and menos, (...) comparable to a man’s shadow or his reflection in a mirror. (as cited in Zeitlin, 1991, p. 121)

In Vernant’s formulation, in the instant of the medusation one is faced with someone’s post-mortem double self. “The face of Gorgo is the Other, your double. It is the Strange, responding to your face like an image in the mirror” (as cited in Zeitlin, 1991, p. 138). As the two become as one, the price of this merging is death.

A relevant example of medusation and its phenomenology appears in a famous 1950 poem by Cesare Pavese, “Verrà la morte, e avrà i tuoi occhi”. Written 35 years before Vernant’s essay, but anticipating the latter even in its title, Pavese’s poem provides an outstanding example of medusation in a literary text by deploying its main correlatives, namely, petrifying vision, mirror effects and the death double.

“Verrà la morte e avrà i tuoi occhi”  
Verrà la morte e avrà i tuoi occhi.  
questa morte che ci accompagna  
dal mattino alla sera, insonne,  
sorda, come un vecchio rimorso  
o un vizio assurdo. I tuoi occhi  
saranno una vana parola,  
un grido taciuto, un silenzio.

“Death Will Come and Will Have Your Eyes”  
Death will come and will have your eyes—  
this death that accompanies us  
from morning till evening, unsleeping,  
deaf, like an old remorse  
or an absurd vice. Your eyes  
will be a useless word,  
a suppressed cry, a silence.

<p>Così li vedi ogni mattina quando su te sola ti pieghi nello specchio. O cara speranza, quel giorno sapremo anche noi che sei la vita e sei il nulla. Per tutti la morte ha uno sguardo. Verrà la morte e avrà i tuoi occhi. Sarà come smettere un vizio, come vedere nello specchio riemergere un viso morto, come ascoltare un labbro chiuso. Scenderemo nel gorgo muti. (Pavese, 1998, p. 136)</p>	<p>That’s what you see each morning when alone with yourself you lean toward the mirror. O precious hope, that day we too will know that you are life and you are nothingness. Death has a look for everyone. Death will come and will have your eyes. It will be like renouncing a vice, like seeing a dead face reappear in the mirror, like listening to a lip that’s shut. We’ll go down into the maelstrom mute. —translated by Brock (2008).</p>
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### Case Studies

Of course, the medusation and its objective correlatives are to be found everywhere in O’Neill, as well, starting from very early examples, to the enhanced self-consciousness of the late plays. There, the petrifying moments when characters are symbolically killed by their meeting with “the Other, the Double Self, the Stranger” invariably merge with the leitmotiv of the dead-in-life, thereby turning the medusation into the main signifier of O’Neill’s developing rendering of violence from spectacular pain to inner death.

The first overt reference to medusation can be found in O’Neill’s 1920s experimental plays *The Emperor Jones* (1988a) and *The Hairy Ape* (1988b). In the former, the black protagonist’s glimpse into the irreconcilable Other within himself unfolds as a series of mirror reflections that culminate in his insanity and death. When it comes to *The Hairy Ape* (1988b), there Yank’s ill-fated evolution is touched off by his encounter with his double negative: the ultra-refined, feeble, white heiress Mildred Douglas. While the stoker sweats, shovels and swears, “pounding on his chest, gorilla like”, “(h)e sees Mildred, like a white apparition in the full light from the open furnaces doors. He glares into her eyes, turned into stone” (O’Neill, 1988b, p. 137).

As the instances above attest, vision stands out as a main premise of medusation. Nietzsche, O’Neill’s “literary idol” (as cited in Diggins, 2007, p. IX) had also hinted at this in *The Birth of Tragedy* (2007) when he writes about “the painfully broken gaze of the Dionysian man” (p. 37) who has “had a real glimpse into the essence of things” and is no longer capable to act; “knowledge kills action, for action requires a state of being in which we are covered with the veil of illusion” (p. 36). Incapable of action are also O’Neill’s medusated characters, whose immobility causes them to turn into what Törnquist (1969) called “the masklike faces in *Electra* (1988b)” (p. 110). Interestingly, in the introduction to his essay, Vernant also concerns himself with those figures of otherness “who are represented by a simple mask or whose cults contain masks” (as cited in Zeitlin, 1991, p. 195).

The masked or masklike face appears, thus, as the first and foremost consequence of medusation. And so does also its direct antecedent, the Mephistophelean mask, another powerful trope that engrossed O’Neill all throughout his early and middle phases, so that, arguably, his famous “Memoranda on Mask” is but an effort to develop such element: “For is not the whole of Goethe’s truth for our time just that Mephistopheles and Faust are one and the same—are Faust?” (as cited in Cargill, Fain, & Fisher, 1961, p. 118).

O’Neill’s (1961) concern in the “Memoranda on Masks” is, declaredly, to advocate an even more extensive use of masks as a means through which the theatre will be restored:

to its highest and sole significant function as a Temple where the religion of a poetical interpretation and symbolical celebration of life is communicated to human beings, starved in spirit by their souls stifling daily struggle to exist as masks among the masks of living! (pp. 121-122)

And yet, if one considers the O’Neill plays where masks are actually deployed, it can well be argued that these fulfill a much more specific function. In *The Great God Brown* (1988b), for instance, Dion Anthony’s mask “is a fixed forcing on his own face—dark, spiritual, poetic, passionately supersensitive, helplessly unprotected in its childlike, religious faith in life—into the expression of a mocking, reckless, defiant, gayly scoffing and sensual young Pan” (O’Neill, 1988b, p. 475).

As the play unfolds, Dion’s mask becomes even more terrible, “(a)ll of its Pan quality (...) changed into a diabolical Mephistophelean cruelty and irony” (O’Neill, 1988b, p. 498), which discloses its function as Dion’s post-mortem, i.e., medusated, double. Another O’Neill mask play, *Days Without End* (1988c), portrays two opposites and equal competitors, the one being the medusated alter-ego of the other. John’s “handsome” and “conventional” figure is, indeed, uncannily mimicked by his double loving, whose appearance and clothes are, in fact, “in every detail exactly the same”, were it not for “an equally strange dissimilarity”: “For Loving’s face is a mask whose features reproduce exactly the features of John’s face—the death mask of a John who has died with a sneer of scornful mockery on his lips” (O’Neill, 1988c, p. 113).

As O’Neill’s Mephistophelean mask is discovered to be Medusa’s mask, the doubles that this brings along are inevitably bound to be medusated doubles. As a matter of fact, O’Neill lifelong belief in the “duality in the soul of the individual” (as cited in Barlow, 1985, p. 85) led him to crowd his plays with mirror images long after he had put aside the experimental device of the mask. Even in his only comedy, *Ah Wilderness!* (1988c), the highly idealized character of Nat Miller finds his medusated double in Sid Davis, so that the perfect match between Nat and his wife Essie is uncannily mimicked by the impossible love between Sid and Lily, Nat’s sister. In *More Stately Mansions* (1988c), Sara Melody is ostensibly a mirror-image of Deborah Hartford, as Simon is of his elder son Ethan. Moreover, both Deborah’s and Simon’s personalities are split. In *The Iceman Cometh* (1988c), Larry Slade can well be viewed as an alter-ego of Hickey, as Evelyn is of Rosa Parrit. In *Hugie*, the night clerk performs the role of Hugie’s substitute. Again, in *A Moon or the Misbegotten* (1988c), Jim wavers between mock and desperation, loving and abusing behaviors, rage and searing guilt, as Josie clearly becomes his forgiving mother for one night. When it comes to *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (1988c), all characters have doubles there, whose correlatives are Wilde’s dead-in-life for Jamie, the dead sibling for Edmund, and the contrast between light and darkness for James. Interestingly, in her book *Final Acts*, Judith Barlow (1985) provided evidence as to the fact that, in the first drafts of *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (1988c), O’Neill planned to create an almost schizophrenic Mary—hence, similar to Ella in *All God’s Chillun’ Got Wings* (1988b)—whose “peculiar duality of characters” caused her to pass from girlish naiveté to:

another opposite self that suddenly breaks through, a hard, bitter, cynical, and aging woman who reminds one of her elder son; a woman who can taunt with a biting (??) cruelty, as if suddenly possessed by an alien demon of revenge. (as cited in Barlow, 1985, p. 85)

As Floyd (1981) pointed out in *Eugene O’Neill at Work: Newly Released Ideas for Plays*, O’Neill was so obsessed by doubles, both in terms of deadly alter egos and of medusated split personalities, that he planned to scatter them also in plays he eventually left uncompleted, such as “Jim and Self”, and the lengthy “The Last Conquest”, a “fantastic pageant dealing with the recurrence of an ancient duality in a possible realistic future”, appropriately set in “The Hall of Black Mirrors in the Savior’s Palace on a night in the Future” (p. 328), and ending with “the parable of the Siamese Twins, illustrating ‘the duality of man-the opposites-nature of the opposites’” (p. 326).

### Conclusions

According to Robert Heilman (1968), the passage from melodrama to tragedy is accomplished at the moment when the feeling of pity, namely of self-pity, that arises from the perception of the evil in the outer world comes to be replaced by the awareness of some sort of self-division within someone’s own self. In other words, it is the discovery of the Other within oneself that overcomes the conventional idea of violence as a merely suffered occurrence and originates tragedy in Heilman’s (1968) view, and medusation according to Vernant (1991). This is precisely what happens in O’Neill’s mature masterpieces, engendering the change of attitude that differentiates them from his early melodramatic plays. O’Neill’s characters’ gaze becomes then “painfully broken” due to the awareness that they are both victims and tormentors, as none of them is spared from his or her personal form of medusation. This author believes that behind such discovery of the dead double, portrayed in O’Neill through the correlative of Wilde’s *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1998), lies an underlying issue of self-responsibility, arising whenever the painful experience of the otherness of the world is replaced by the sudden intuition that the Stranger in Medusa’s eye is nothing but a mirror reflection. However ostensibly never fully resolved, this constitutes in the author’s opinion the peak of O’Neill’s artistic career, as well as his final and foremost achievement.

One must, indeed, experience ritual death in order to be born anew to the awareness that Manheim (1982) brilliantly called O’Neill’s “new language of kinship”, developed “in tears and blood”, through which the playwright could finally feel all the “deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones” (p. 714), as well as for the rest of mankind plagued by self-inflicted violence and pain.

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# Charles Dickens: Eye-Witness to Victorian Britain

Peter Rhys Lewis

The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

Charles Dickens rose to fame as a novelist because he described society in early Victorian Britain both accurately and evocatively. That skill came about through his work as a journalist, and his many first-hand experiences of events. He continued throughout his life to report on major incidents and newsworthy items, and was able to use those reports as the factual basis of his novels. His experiences of the railways were especially important, and he made great use of them in his novels such as *Dombey and Son*. Later experiences included his own involvement in a railway disaster, at Staplehurst in 1865, a major trauma which led him to include the accident at the end of *Our Mutual Friend*, and led him to write a timely ghost story, *The Signalman*. No doubt he would have used more such reports had he lived to fulfill his ambitions.

*Keywords:* Charles Dickens, railways, accident, disaster

## Introduction

The eye-witness performs a crucial role in the courts, and we ignore his/her evidence past events at our peril. Charles Dickens was not just a famous novelist but also an eye-witness of social conditions and politics when industry grew at an unprecedented speed during the Victorian period. Many of his childhood experiences were later recalled in his novels, especially *David Copperfield* (1849/1850), but also *Hard Times* (1854) and *Little Dorrit* (1855/1857). The growth of the railways was one of the most distinctive features during his formative years as a young journalist in the 1830s, and he made extensive use of the first lines to be created, especially the London-Birmingham (1838) and Grand Junction (1837) lines which linked Manchester and London in the first major trunk line in the country.

The railways first prominently feature the *Dombey and Son* (1846/1848), especially as a dramatic account of the devastation brought to Camberling Town (Camden Town) by construction of the London and Birmingham Railway in the 1830s. Dickens was then living in the neighbourhood, and so must have seen the works himself:

The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking, propped by great beams of wood. Here, a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep unnatural hill; there, confused treasures of iron soaked and rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere; thoroughfares that were wholly impassable; Babel towers of chimneys, wanting half their height; temporary wooden houses and enclosures, in the most unlikely situations; carcasses of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing. There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly

mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in the water, and unintelligible as any dream. Hot springs and fiery eruptions, the usual attendants upon earthquakes, lent their contributions of confusion to the scene. Boiling water hissed and heaved within dilapidated walls; whence, also, the glare and roar of flames came issuing forth; and mounds of ashes blocked up rights of way, and wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood.

In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress, and, from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement. (Dickens, 1898, p. 40)

The shock to the inhabitants is well illustrated by Bourne and Britten (1839) in his famous book *The London-Birmingham Railway* (see Figure 1), though it was to become a familiar scene in other parts of London as well as other towns and cities.



Figure 1. Works at Camden for the London and Birmingham Railway, 1836.

The same novel describes in vivid detail the fate of Carker:

He heard a shout—another—saw the face change from its vindictive passion to a faint sickness and terror—felt the earth tremble—knew in a moment that the rush was come—uttered a shriek—looked round—saw the red eyes, bleared and dim, in the daylight, close upon him—was beaten down, caught up, and whirled away upon a jagged mill, that spun him round and round, and struck him limb from limb, and licked his stream of life up with its fiery heat, and cast his mutilated fragments in the air. (Dickens, 1898, p. 482)

His death beneath a locomotive (see Figure 2) seemed to hark back to the death of Huskisson at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1830, when the statesman was struck down by Rocket as he attempted to talk to Wellington when his train had halted.

There were many terrible disasters during his lifetime, not least the loss of the Royal Charter off Anglesey in a hurricane-force storm in October, 1859. The ship was a hybrid steam—and sail—powered vessel, modern for its time, but could not make the port of Liverpool on the final stage of its long journey from Australia. Over 400



passengers and crew perished when the ship was driven onto the rocks, mainly not by drowning, but by being crushed and battered by the waves. Dickens (1886) wrote a memorable and moving account of the tragedy for *The Uncommercial Traveller*, having visited for himself the site of the disaster. His interest was stimulated not just by his journalist's instincts but by the loss of several relatives in the tragedy (see Figure 3).



Figure 2. Carker's death under a train.



Figure 3. Wreck of the Royal Charter, October 1859.



He wrote about the developing railways and the way they changed society with especial interest after the Staplehurst accident of June 1865, because he was a lucky survivor, and was deeply traumatised by the event. The accident occurred to the boat train on which he was travelling from Folkstone after a stay at his villa in Boulogne with Nellie Ternan and her mother. All three were in the front of first-class carriage just behind a guard's van, itself behind the tender and locomotive. In those days before continuous automatic brakes, many precautions were taken to have extra wagons which could absorb impacts should collisions or failures of wheels and axles occur on moving trains.

The accident happened near Staplehurst village in Kent when a gang of workmen were mending a low bridge over the river Beult. They were replacing rotten timbers which supported the track, and had almost finished the job, having only to restore the last two rails. Having consulted the timetable, they thought they had enough time to finish the job, but the timetable was misread, and the train arrived at speed on the incomplete section of the railway. The locomotive fell from the ends of the rails onto the timber baulks, and ran safely off the end of the bridge. But the small fall of the heavy loco and tender was enough to fracture the cast iron girders supporting the track, and the following carriages were derailed into the stream below. Luckily, the guards van just held on to the tender, and the carriage behind was left suspended between the bridge and the stream, jammed against the guards van and one of the prostrate carriages (see Figure 4).



*Figure 4. The wreck of the boat train at Staplehurst, June 9, 1865.*

Dickens and his two friends were very lucky to have not been killed, like ten of their fellow passengers in the carriages behind. He clambered out from one of the windows, and gave this account of his experiences (Dickens, 1865):

I was in the only carriage that did not go over into the stream. It was caught upon the turn by some of the ruin of the bridge, and hung suspended and balanced in an apparently impossible manner. Two ladies were my fellow passengers; an old one, and a young one. This is exactly what passed: you may judge from it the precise length of the suspense. Suddenly we were off the rail and beating the ground as the car of a half emptied balloon might. The old lady cried out "My God!" and the young one screamed.

I caught hold of them both (the old lady sat opposite, and the young one on my left) and said: "We can't help ourselves, but we can be quiet and composed. Pray don't cry out". The old lady immediately answered, "Thank you. Rely upon me. Upon my soul, I will be quiet". The young lady said in a frantic way, "Let us join hands and die friends". We were then all tilted down together in a corner of the carriage, and stopped. I said to them thereupon: "You may be sure nothing worse can happen. Our danger must be over. Will you remain here without stirring, while I get out of the window?" They both answered quite collectedly, "Yes", and I got out without the least notion of what had happened.

Fortunately, I got out with great caution and stood upon the step. Looking down, I saw the bridge gone and nothing below me but the line of the rail. Some people in the two other compartments were madly trying to plunge out of the window, and had no idea there was an open swampy field 15 feet down below them and nothing else! The two guards (one with his face cut) were running up and down on the down side of the bridge (which was not torn up) quite wildly. I called out to them "Look at me. Do stop an instant and look at me, and tell me whether you don't know me". One of them answered, "We know you very well, Mr Dickens". "Then", I said, "my good fellow for God's sake give me your key, and send one of those labourers here, and I'll empty this carriage."

We did it quite safely, by means of a plank or two and when it was done I saw all the rest of the train except the two baggage cars down in the stream. I got into the carriage again for my brandy flask, took off my travelling hat for a basin, climbed down the brickwork, and filled my hat with water. Suddenly I came upon a staggering man covered with blood (I think he must have been flung clean out of his carriage) with such a frightful cut across the skull that I couldn't bear to look at him. I poured some water over his face, and gave him some to drink, and gave him some brandy, and laid him down on the grass, and he said, "I am gone", and died afterwards. (p. 56)

The help Dickens gave to injured and dying victims was famously illustrated in the popular press (see Figure 5), but he did not appear at the inquest for fear of the scandal that might ensue when his companions became known. At the last minute, he forgot that he had left his manuscript in the carriage and clambered back to retrieve it, memorably recording the incident as an endpiece in *Our Mutual Friend* (Dickens, 1865):

On Friday the Ninth of June in the present year, Mr and Mrs Boffin (in their manuscript dress of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Lammle at breakfast) were on the South-Eastern Railway with me, in a terribly destructive accident. When I had done what I could to help others, I climbed back into my carriage—nearly turned over a viaduct, and caught aslant upon the turn—to extricate the worthy couple. They were much soiled, but otherwise unhurt. ... I remember with devout thankfulness that I can never be much nearer parting company with my readers for ever than I was then, until there shall be written against my life, the two words with which I have this day closed this book:—THE END.

It is clear from his statement (in a letter to his friend Mitton) that the train had derailed because the cast iron girders had broken under the train, so what might have been a minor accident turned into a major tragedy. The investigation by the inspectorate is very brief given the severity of the accident, and skirts the problem of the girder fractures. However, new research in the archives shows that the trough girders (see Figure 6) used in this bridge were frequently faulty, the example below being taken from another inspectorate's report from 1850,

when several such girders were found to be below strength owing to internal blow-holes<sup>1</sup>.



Figure 5. Dickens aiding a dying woman.

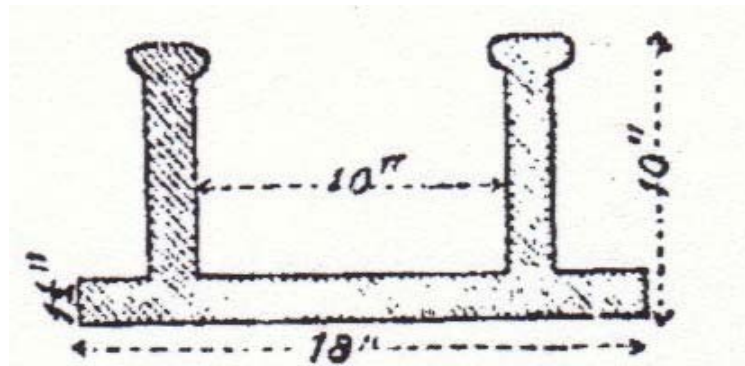


Figure 6. Cast iron trough girder.

The timber baulks were laid in the trough and the rails fastened to them. But the trough was open to the air and naturally collected water, leading eventually to decay and rot, despite treatment with tar. This is the reason why they were being replaced at the time of the accident.

The railways had made great use of cast iron girders from the very first days because they were easy to make and cheap compared to more robust alternatives. But they presented hidden dangers which were to haunt the rail network for many years. Some bridges collapsed within a few months of construction, such as the new bridge over the river Dee at Chester (Lewis, 2007) (see Figure 7), and another new bridge in Lincolnshire<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 8).

The Dee bridge collapse killed five passengers and led to a Royal Commission, such was the concern about the problem, and over 60 bridges had to be removed or modified. But failures continued to occur till the end of the century, including that at Staplehurst. The final straw came not from a disaster but from a fracture which occurred under a first-class commuter train from Brighton to London. Although only one passenger was injured when the

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Papers, Railway inspectorate's reports, 1850.

<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary Papers, Railway inspectorate's reports, 1850.



bridge broke, the public outcry forced Parliament to ban the use of the material and up to 6,000 bridges like that at Staplehurst were demolished and replaced (Lewis, 2006).

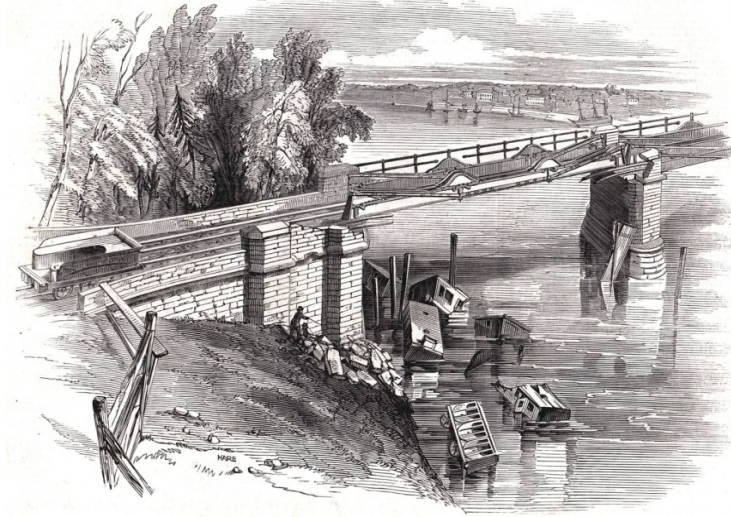


Figure 7. Collapse of the Dee bridge, May 24, 1847.

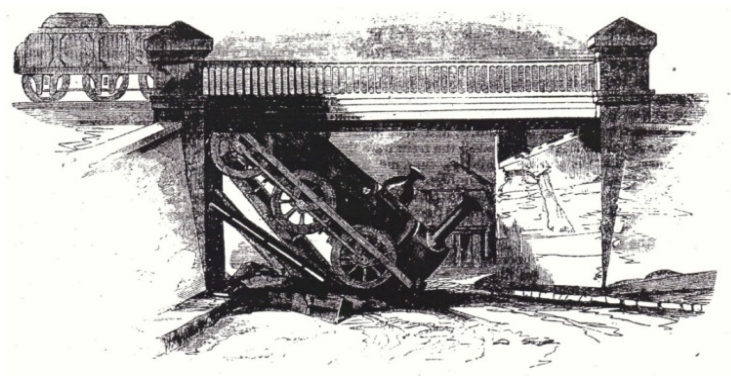


Figure 8. Gainsborough bridge failure, April 30, 1850.

The accident clearly affected Dickens until he died in 1870, exactly five years to the date after the crash. He remained very nervous about travelling by train, but it also affected his literary output. But he wrote one of his best ghost stories, *The Signalman*, part of the *Mugby Junction* stories for the Christmas Edition of *All The Year Round* in 1866 based on his own experiences of the railways (Dickens, 1897) (see Figure 9).

The story revolves around the eponymous railwayman who is haunted by strange sounds made by the telegraph and the visitations of a spectre by the mouth of the tunnel he guards. Two such visits were followed by accidents, one of which involved a train collision within the tunnel, killing and maiming many. In the other, a young woman died in mysterious circumstances on a train. The first accident may be based on the terrible Clayton tunnel disaster of August 25, 1861<sup>3</sup>, when a collision occurred between a standing train held up in the tunnel and an excursion train which drove in at speed. Twenty three passengers were killed and 171 injured, making it the worst rail disaster to that date. The cause was traced to mistakes by the signalmen at either end of

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary Papers, Railway inspectorate's reports (1861).

the tunnel (see Figure 10). The disaster will have been familiar to the readers of *Mugby Junction* (1867), having occurred just five years before. Tunnels were especially hazardous in his time, despite the many precautions taken to prevent accidents. The final appearance of the spectre heralds his own demise, when he is run down by a fast train emerging from the tunnel, which Dickens holds back until the very end of the story. The piece will have resonated with his many readers given the very high accident rates on the railways in the 1860s and 1870s.



*The Signal-man.*

Figure 9. The signalman discusses his problem with the stranger.



Figure 10. North end of the Clayton tunnel on the Brighton line to London.

Ironically, he made greater use of the railway network after the accident than before, largely for delivering his many readings around the country. During those travels, he had further lucky escapes, such as the train stoppage caused by a burning carriage at Rugby station in March 1866, where he had a famous comic encounter with the proprietress in the refreshment room (see Figure 11). It reinforced all of his poor experiences of railway buffet rooms when he refused the sugar bowl until payment had been made.



Figure 11. The refreshment room at Mugby (or Rugby).

He was caught in a snow-bound carriage of the Irish Mail at Bangor, North Wales, on March 17, 1867, no doubt suffering the severe cold as they were marooned for several hours before rescue. His Christmas turkey was burnt in a railway carriage in December 1868—another comic episode which reflects poorly on the state of rolling stock on the railways. More seriously, while travelling between Belfast and Dublin in January 1869, the metal drive wheel on the locomotive suddenly failed and a large chunk hit his carriage and caused consternation. The tyre had broken and the passengers threw themselves to the floor expecting the worst. Fortunately, the flying fragment bounced off the roof, but left them all in a state of shock. Dolby's (1885) recollection of the event is the only one extant, there being no official report or even a newspaper account of the incident.

We forget how uncomfortable and sometimes risky it was when travelling long distances by railway, but Dickens and his biographers have preserved the evidence intact for us to appreciate today. We owe him a huge debt for his eye-witness evidence and his commentaries on all of those tragedies; he will be remembered not just for his great novels but for that testimony of tragedies, which still unfortunately recur today. The decade after he

died was the worst ever for accidents on the network, and culminated in the Tay bridge disaster of 1879 when the cast iron columns supporting the High Girders section in the middle of the bridge collapsed in a storm, killing all those on board the train crossing the bridge that night. Cast iron was slowly replaced by steel, a much tougher material, but many defective bridges and buildings remained and were not rebuilt for a number of years, despite the many warnings of sub-standard construction.

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# Sojourners in Time: Revisiting Thornton Wilder's *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*

Kenneth Brian Sanders

Kean University, New Jersey, United States

Thornton Wilder's works are often characterized as transcending time. *Our Town* (1938) remains a widely produced piece of dramatic literature nearly 75 years after winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1938. However, many of Wilder's one-act plays are less well-known and subsequently are less often produced. *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931) predates *Our Town* (1938) and yet is written in a similar style, utilizes the stage manager motif, and reflects upon issues of life and death found in *Our Town* (1938), *The Bridges of San Luis Rey* (1927) and many other of Wilder's works. "Sojourners in Time" reflects upon the time period and place in Wilder's one-acts within the context of a contemporary journey in order to determine what, if any, aspects of this piece translate to current times.

*Keywords:* Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*, *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*

## Introduction

The name Thornton Wilder evokes strong memories within the author, taking him on a journey across time and space to a nine-year-old boy gripping tightly to dog-eared pages of a paperback, enraptured by the lives and deaths of a handful of people on a bridge in Peru long long time ago. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927) remains one of Thornton Wilder's favorite books, the memory of the lives lived and lost remains etched in his heart. Over the years he has been involved in many productions of *Our Town* (1938), *The Matchmaker* (1954) and it is musical spin off *Hello, Dolly!*. The author has always been enthralled at how Wilder's work transcends time and space, touching theatre patrons' common humanity regardless of the context or time period of the piece. When teaching in Taiwan, the author was asked to direct a piece from the American cannon and he automatically thought of *Our Town* (1938) because of its remarkable transcendent nature. However, the author was asked to consider another play, because *Our Town* (1938) was the most produced American play in that country.

In 2002, when the author was moving to New Jersey ahead of his family, he crossed another bridge, driving into Camden, on up to Trenton, through New Brunswick, Elizabeth and Newark on his way to a new job in Jersey City. The author began to reflect upon a play he had performed in many years ago, when a skinny teenager, as he realized he was travelling the road taken in the Thornton Wilder's one-act, *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931). He travelled those roads in reverse from the script as he drove up US Highway 1 into New Brunswick and on into Elizabeth, the author saw a very different New Jersey than the one experienced and described in the play by the Kirby

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Kenneth Brian Sanders, associate provost/associate vice president for Academic Affairs, associate professor of Theater, Kean University.



family: Ma, Pa (Elmer), and their children, Arthur and Caroline, as they bounce along in their Chevrolet. He grew increasingly saddened knowing that the world Wilder captured so simply in *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931) was no more, and wondered if the play possessed the same transcendent qualities as some of Wilder's other works. This paper takes a moment to examine the world's past and present to see if and where they coincide.

### Historical Context

Written in 1931 as a contemporary piece, *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931) shows a day in the life of a family travelling from Newark to Camden to see their eldest daughter. Their journey from Newark to Elizabeth, New Brunswick, Laurenceville, Trenton and Camden, was likely taken down the Old Post Road, US Highway 1 to Trenton, and then old US Highway 3 on to Camden, modern Highway 130. The journey was only 85 miles, a commute for many in the 21st century, but in 1931, the trip was over a half-day's experience, as the play began just after lunch and ended shortly after the children's "first star I have seen tonight" wish. It is hard for a modern audience to imagine a trip averaging under 20 miles an hour unless we are travelling to the shore in a particularly crowded Friday summer afternoon. Upon leaving urban Newark, with goodbyes aplenty from a cacophony of neighbors close enough to shake a stick at, the Kirbys remark how quickly they reach the countryside with its clean air and unfamiliar billboards. They are free in the open countryside. Town welcome signs come and go, but it is the vast openness of New Jersey's farmland that the family relishes in and celebrates.

### The Sojourners

"This is clearly Ma's story", Wilder said so in his notes. A title he considered was *The Portrait of a Lady*. She is the Everywoman to Elmer, her husband and Everyman. Though Elmer takes the wheel, it is Ma who is clearly in the driver's seat, steering the lives of her family, arranging last minute details before the trip, managing the conversations along the way, doling out discipline, and providing sustenance. The family stops in Elizabeth as a funeral passes, and Elmer gets out of the car, and removes his hat in reverence for the lost life. Ma very quietly and briefly reveals not only her peace with her own death, but the death of her eldest child as well. The family pays reverence, and then Ma moves them on their way. But Ma is more than a family matriarch reminding others to mind their manners, cover their heads, supervise the baking of a chicken or approve of ham and eggs for the menfolk's breakfast, she has a clear role as both nurturer and leader, as the spiritual foundation of the family, the steward of their souls. She is the shepherd of her family. It is no accident that her "given name" is never revealed.

The play was made into a film in 1937. This very clearly American story was oddly enough made into a film by the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) and is listed by the IMDB (Internet Movie Data Base), as a comedy. This play is neither comedy nor tragedy. Wilder's notes warn of stressing the comedic elements too strongly, resulting in an ineffective farce, and also warn the director and actors to avoid making Ma too preachy and solemn. He (1931) stated that "humor, strength, and humanity constitute the unifying element throughout" (Preface). To the author, the play evokes that renaissance notion of a pastoral—an idyllic view of the countryside and a simple life away from life's realities. Yet, the realities of Ma's life lie beneath the surface and become apparent in snippets as a stark contrast to their idyllic journey: She has lost a son to war, lost a granddaughter to childbirth nearly at the cost of her daughter's life, and is raising two children during the darkest economic time in modern history—the Great Depression. The entire purpose of the trip is to visit the daughter after the loss of her child, but this is

revealed only at the end of the play. Earlier discussions of reason for the trip reference her daughter's "recent illness", not a death. This pastoral notion is reinforced at the end of the play, when she finally addresses her emotions, she seeks refuge in a old hymn, the "Nine and Ninety" (1868), a song of lost sheep returning to the fold:

There were ninety and nine that safely lay,  
In the shelter of the fold;  
But one was out on the hills away,  
Far off from the gates of gold.  
Away on the mountains wild and bare;  
Away from the tender Shepherd's care. (Clephane, 1868)

Her losses and heartaches are constants in her life as she keeps her family, her flock, safely in her embrace.

The freedom of the open road and the wonders of the world before them, empower young Arthur to challenge his mother's faith—and fail. Ma's forgiveness for Arthur's blasphemy is not immediate, though her ire is. Only Arthur's penance earns forgiveness, as Ma reinforces a basic concept of her faith. Ma's life in faith is a constant whether in the crowded world of Newark or the open fields of the journey. She constantly refers to her eldest daughter, Beulah, as her "married daughter", a clear redundancy in the Hebraic meaning of Beulah as bride and a firm reference to the promised land reminiscent of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Promise* (1678) or in another traditional hymn:

O Beulah land, sweet Beulah land!  
As on thy highest mount I stand,  
I look away across the sea,  
Where mansions are prepared for me,  
And view the shining glory shore,  
My heaven, my home forever more.

Beulah is the promised land at the end of the journey. Bunyan's subtitle for *Pilgrim's promise*, "from this world to that which is to come", also evokes a life after the journey. Bunyan's main character, Christian, is another Everyman who journeys and struggles, seeking deliverance from the hell of his existence. Ma's strength in facing adversity is her faith, as was Christian's, yet she seeks not deliverance but completion. She sees the days at the end of her life as those days, when after the traffic has stopped to let her pass, that she rejoins those she has lost in her life, just like in her closing hymn "Nine and Ninety":

Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way,  
That mark out the mountain's track?"  
"They were shed for one who had gone astray,  
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."  
"Rejoice! I have found My sheep!"

The journey is made at the barest of stages with a stage manager as narrator. These experiments in minimalist staging and an interactive narrator would define Wilder's one-act in the years leading up to *Our Town* (1938). Our stage manager on the journey is both commentator and participant, filling many roles along the way. Perhaps more important is the stage manager's reaction to what transpires on the journey, leading us to the place Wilder wants us to be in during the emotional journey of the piece. He wants us to not just watch the family travel, but to sojourn with them. The last significant interaction the stage manager has with the family is as a gas station attendant, checking out the safety of the car, providing fuel to finish the journey, water, direction, and humanity. They part in an awkward moment when he reveals to Ma that he is Catholic, not Protestant. For the only time in the piece, Ma is nearly

speechless, the underlying religious conflict too much for her to bear. He bridges the religious divide graciously, and the family continues on their way. From that point forward in the play, the stage manager is solely an observer.

### Contemporary Context

Much has changed along the Old Post Road over the past 80 years. The leisurely paced half day jaunt has been replaced by a high-speed/low-speed stress-filled journey of unknown duration in a culture when time seems more valued and yet less treasured. The prophetic nature of *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931) is very clear in the directions to Beulah's home referencing the two oil tanks, and in the gas station attendant's reference to the sale of his parent's farm and the subsequent factory built in its fertile soils. The loss of open green space is an ongoing struggle in New Jersey as we seek refuge from our cosmopolitan enclaves and urban sprawl. Today, so many of the factories built in the middle of 20th century lay silent, standing as rotting corpses on their own journey to Beulah land and the promise of mansions by the sea. Oil refineries and storage tanks define the landscape around Elizabeth and Camden; and for many visitors to New Jersey that vista defines the state. The concept of New Jersey, as the Garden State is humorous to many, for they have never seen her in her heyday as an agricultural state nor do they see her cranberry bogs or eggplant fields. The modern perspective of "Jerseylicious" is that of self-absorbed salon queens in Green Brook rather than bounties of fresh produce filling shops and stands across the region. Religious conflict manifests itself in many terms, and far too often as non-Muslim/Muslim chasm.

In addition to images of closed factories and oil tanks spawned from a discussion of a happy journey from Newark to Camden, our media-driven pop culture evokes images of Tony Soprano, Snookie and now Nucky Thompson in our vision of the world of New Jersey. Gas station attendants remain a fixture in New Jersey, but more as a testament to the fear of litigation and job preservation rather than as a commitment to customer and human care. Ma will not allow Arthur to travel without his hat for the sake of preventing him from looking like a "hoodlum", yet it is often the hoodlums who wear hats today with stickers and tags attached, reminiscent of Minnie Pearl's iconic price-tag-bearing hat. What once was tacky is now desirable. And traffic does not stop for funerals anymore, hats of the men held over hearts in reverence and reflection. We are too busy doing the things in our life to think about life and respect a life lived.

### Conclusions

Despite the changes of time and culture, what remains steadfast is the journey, the one each of us takes in our own Everyman/Everywoman way, facing life's joys more so than its hardships. In *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931), Wilder shows us that it is the faces we meet, the friends and loved ones we embrace, that define our existence more than the time period in which we live or the struggles and disappointments of life. It is perhaps the very changes that have occurred during the past 80 years in *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931) that cause us to pause, reflect and assess our lives, and yes, even laugh a little along the way.

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# A Woman Alone: Engendering the “Island of Consciousness” in Coetzee’s *Foe* and Bowles’ *The Sheltering Sky*

Robert William Switzer

The American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt

The theme of the cast-away has inspired numerous literary works. This paper develops a philosophical reading of two important examples, Coetzee’s *Foe* (1987) and Bowles’ *The Sheltering Sky* (1951), in terms of themes such as isolation, silence and truth. But who authors, or authorizes “truth”? As Merleau-Ponty (1970) saw, the ego cogito of phenomenology symbolizes the quest for “global truth” where “what is evident for him” is or could be for all, for he “speaks for everyone”. These two works, however, challenge the standard that “he speaks”, and she does not: that women “as such”, as it would seem, have always already been spoken for. Instead, the focus here is on “the self” not as neutral ground but as always engendered, in every sense of that word—always emergent as well as creative, always acculturated, situated, embodied, sexed or de-sexed—always speaking, or remaining stubbornly silent, and always refusing, like truth itself, to be “pinned down”.

*Keywords:* gender, alterity, silencing, post-colonial

## Introduction

In the ideal of beginning anew there is something that precedes the beginning itself, that takes it up to deepen it and delay it in the passage of time. The desert island is the material of this something immemorial, this something most profound. (Deleuze, 2004, p. 14)

The trope “island of consciousness” has been richly explored in literature; the basic story of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) has been retold often—including overtly philosophical novels like Michel Tournier’s *Friday* (1967), concerning which much has been written by the likes of Deleuze, Gasché and Lingis, among others. The “desert island” myth seems to offer an irresistible opportunity to explore the “natural man” divested of social influences, restrictions and supports. Indeed, one of the key influences on Defoe was *Hayy Ibn Yaqzân*, a 12th century classic of Islamic philosophy that recounts the story of a boy raised by animals in an island wholly devoid of other humans—at least until he is joined, at age 50, by Absal, who has come from “the other island”, in search of solitude and spiritual rebirth; he becomes Hayy’s student, though only after teaching him to speak.

The issues of speech and silence are particularly salient in these works. Alexander Selkirk, another key source for Defoe’s book, survived five years marooned alone in an island—and emerged profoundly unable to talk following his rescue in 1709. And in Hayy, Absal encounters a visionary mystic whose silence results not

from any pious vow, but from utter innocence of human language. In the desert of North Africa, where the isolated oases stand like islands in an ocean of sand, Bowles's characters do not so much embrace silence as descend or dissolve into it. And in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1994), Friday's silence is hidden beneath a childish loquaciousness, but it emerges nonetheless, perhaps best in Robinson's blunt account of their first meeting: "First I made him know his name should be Friday... [then I] taught him to say master" (p. 149). Friday's own tongue is never heard or revealed. In Coetzee's retelling of the tale, this is made literal: Friday speaks not a word, and we are told—though it is never confirmed—that his tongue has been cut out, perhaps by Robinson himself.

Art can be global precisely in its specificities. These novels of Coetzee and Bowles also address, more narrowly, globalization: they capture Westerners confronting the colonized Other, and the project of colonization itself, in its nascent period (the 17th century world of "Cruso" and his "wife", Susan Barton, in Coetzee's text) and its senescence (late-1940s North Africa, in Bowles'). As such, they invite post-colonial analysis as suggested by Gayatri Spivak's well-known question, posed in the terminology of Gramsci: Can the subaltern speak? Inevitably and rightly, these issues are part of the present paper. But there is another dimension—one could say, another sort of colonization—operative in these texts as well.

The ego cogito of phenomenology symbolizes, as Merleau-Ponty (1970) saw, the quest for "global truth" in which the phenomenologist articulates universally and apodictically valid evidence, for he "speaks for everyone" (p. 174).<sup>1</sup> He speaks: consciousness engendered. He speaks—and she does not; women "as such" have always already been spoken for. What was her own has been appropriated—and in truth, the event of appropriation of woman, of truth (for, as Nietzsche asked, "Supposing truth is a woman—what then?") is very much the issue at the heart of these two novels. A man alone is self-sufficient, an adventurer; even "cast away" in a desert island, or in a desert, he can become more essentially what he is, more virtuous, more singular, more manly. "A woman alone", however, is something very different. Why is this? And why, in both books, is her story lost—overwritten by the professional writer, "Foe", or swallowed in silence, dissolved into the netherworlds of the Algerian "Kasbah"?

Truth and power are no universal "constants", but dispersed within and across social and discursive structures and mechanisms. Truth is finite, localized, and always withdraws into the veil of the unspeakable, opening to the boundlessness which art takes as its ever-surpassing horizon—the enigma of being and signification, of new beginnings.

### Island of Consciousness

Both these books, Coetzee's *Foe* and Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*, set off from new beginnings, and then proceed to push them, to radicalize them. They are philosophical novels that challenge philosophy itself, at its limits.

*Foe* begins with Susan Barton, unable to row further, slipping without a splash from a small boat into the sea—only to find herself washing up on the shore of an island inhabited by Cruso (here spelled in a sort of

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<sup>1</sup> In the later Husserl, as well as in the path pursued by Heidegger, in many ways, and explicitly in the thought of Merleau-Ponty, there is a movement beyond such timeless "globalism" and the ideal of a view from nowhere, to an embrace of the finitude and localization of truth—to intertwining, the mutual inherence of self/world that Husserl called "Ineinander", the complicity in truth's (un)veiling that no longer can lay claim to universal ascendance and ascent, but which subverts the very language and categories of metaphysical thought.

Derridean mark of differentiation, without the silent "e") and his man Friday, who is mute. *The Sheltering Sky* begins with Kit, her husband Port and their friend Tunner disembarking from a freighter in the port of Algiers, setting off on "travels", without specific time-frame or itinerary, into the uncompromising terrain of North Africa. We are not told what moves these affluent young Americans to undertake their travels, but as we learn more about them and particularly Port and Kit and their marriage, we begin to suspect it is a variety of existential despair. In *Foe*, too, there is a depth of despair that is only slowly uncovered and never commented on: why else but from suicidal motives would someone give up a boat with oars and consign themselves to the sea? We do, in time, learn that the small boat is from a ship whose crew has mutinied; the ship's captain, who had been Susan's lover (she only later lets slip), was placed in the boat with her, dead, a spike through her eye. We also are told, and can well imagine, how badly the crew had "used" her before casting her away in this small craft with the corpse.

By casting herself away from this little boat, Susan has found refuge and a new life with Cruso and Friday. Port, similarly, has cast himself onto the African shore, primarily as a kind of collector, it seems, of experiences of transcendent intensity; this includes their first night in country, and an encounter with an Arab prostitute, Mahrnia, whose efforts to steal his wallet, thwarted by him, almost cost him his life. Tunner is a tourist, accompanying them, more or less for a laugh. But Kit is there because Port is there, and because what their marriage needs is not a diversion, but a radical re-envisioning if it is to be salvaged. What transpires is instead a shipwreck: caught between Port's indifference and Tunner's trophy-hunting advances, Kit succumbs to the latter; Port, sensing but not knowing what has happened, heads off alone with Kit into ever more remote desert oases, even as he begins to develop typhoid fever.

Despite the breakdown in their marriage—they have become sexually and emotionally estranged—all concerned accept implicitly that Kit has been spoken for, that as his wife she is properly Port's, that his rights remain exclusive even if unexercised (and that the same standards in no way apply to him). Twice she is "unfaithful" with Tunner: First when she turns down faster transport with Port by car to accompany Tunner by train, out of strange loyalty to a man she neither trusts nor particularly likes; the second, more searingly, when Tunner at last catches up with them in Sba with Port's stolen passport; the very night, it transpires, that Port dies, alone, abandoned. Confronting this ultimate failure of fidelity, she manages to evade both Tunner and the French commander, Captain Broussard, and becomes what the latter had already decided she was: not a wife, not a proper woman, but an adventuress. The last part of the book is her tale of metaphorical shipwreck, self-abandonment and sensual abandon—for it is not long before, once again, she is taken by a man, a Bedouin trader, and spoken for.

In Coetzee's *Foe*, the sexual has become textual, displaced by the word; the novel re-imagines Cruso and Friday, but above all the telling of their tales, and it is here that the infidelities and violations principally lie. This Cruso keeps no diary, builds little and invents less, never seeking rescue and not living to write his "true story", dying of fever aboard the ship that carries him back to Britain. Instead, we know of him at all only because of a female castaway on Cruso's island: it is she who brings the story to the world, by way of the writer, Foe (in fact, the original family name of Daniel Defoe). But her own story is never told; she survives at best only as a veiled shadow of the Robinson we know. The clear suggestion of the novel, however, is that in truth she is his substance,

and he the shadow—an empty page, awaiting words and the telling of a tale. There are no goats on this island, only small apes killed for their skins, and this Cruso in no way husbands the land; his sole activity, beyond simple survival, is to clear and level terraces for the planting of crops he cannot undertake for want of seed. This Cruso is taciturn and seemingly empty; he and his terraces are alike in being blank pages, waiting for some other to fill in the lines, to write the text. Susan Barton is such a writer, and she carries the tale to Foe, but the fruits that emerge in the end bear Cruso's name, not hers—indeed, as a woman alone, she can play no proper part, and is written out altogether from the tale, by authority of the phalocentric pen.

The name, forgotten or erased, of this "Female Castaway", as the stillborn book with Foe was to have been called, is Susan Barton, you'll recall. As she tells her story repeatedly, including to Cruso, who says virtually nothing of his own, we learn that in fact her father's name was "properly Berton, but, as happens, it became corrupted in the mouths of strangers" (Coetzee, 1987, p. 10). What lurks, hidden, in the mouths of strangers, but their tongues—so often incomprehensible to us, so prone to corrupting proper and sovereign meanings? Can we comprehend these foreign tongues, understand their babblings, find a kinship here—and on whose terms? And if the pen, as we have seen, not only inscribes but can also cut, might not the alien tongue itself be excised, might not the silencing of the always-already spoken for not cut to the very root? The tale we are told—though it is an unspeakable crime, and never quite certified in words, out loud and in plain view—is that Friday is the victim of just such an excision of pen-penis-tongue, just such an unmaning.

### **The Eloquence of an Unbearable Silence**

The philosophical trope of the desert island story was to allow for the articulation of apodictic and universal features of human subjectivity both genetically and structurally, to uncover the essential man while eliminating or minimizing social and linguistic distortions or corruptions. How could such violence—the violation and imprisonment of women, the mutilation of a young African by his slave-owner—lurk in the dark fissures of such a story?

At one point, Susan says to Foe:

In the letters you did not read, I told you of my conviction that, if the story seems stupid, that is only because it so doggedly holds its silence. The shadow whose lack you feel is there: it is the loss of Friday's tongue... Many stories can be told of Friday's tongue, but the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute. The true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday. (Coetzee, 1987, p. 115)

Despite the various efforts that are made, involving music, drawing, writing, it is to no avail. If Friday communicates, it makes no sense to those who would record and report it; he cannot, or will not, be the native informant.

In his *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl (1960) enquired after the identity of the "ego who can rightly ask" properly "'transcendental' questions", and asked:

As a natural man, can I rightly ask them? As a natural man, can I ask seriously and transcendently how I get outside my island of consciousness and how what presents itself to my consciousness as a subjective evidence-process can acquire objective significance? (p. 83)

Husserl's answer, of course, is no; in fact he is rather disparaging in this account of traditional epistemology's efforts to bring an isolated "I" into truthful contact with an "external" reality. For Husserl (1960), the idea of an "outside" to consciousness is precisely nonsense (p. 84); "the phenomenology of what constitutes me is all of phenomenology", wrote by Husserl (p. 68), newly announcing his thought as transcendental idealism; he then turns to his famous account of the alter-ego, in Meditation Five, to steer around the "reef" of solipsism. But in rejecting the epistemological efforts of the natural man, in the passage just cited, it is not the man that troubles Husserl but his naturalness. Which of course for us raises the question: can Husserl manage—indeed, is it possible for phenomenology "as such"—to break free of the emplacement of the self as male, European, socially privileged; from a gendered cultural solipsism, in short?

Here one could turn, for perspective, to Spivak's somewhat hyperbolic reading of Kant's Critique of Judgment. Spivak first quotes Kant (1951), who wrote:

Grass is needful for the ox, which again is needful for man as a means of existence; but then we do not see why it is necessary that men should exist (a question which is not so easy to answer if we cast our thoughts by chance on the New Hollanders or the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego). (p. 225)

Spivak then comments, in part:

[I]f in Kant's world the New Hollander (the Australian Aborigine) or the man from Tierra del Fuego could have been endowed with speech (turned into the subject of speech), he might well have maintained that this innocent but unavoidable and, indeed, crucial example [...] uses a peculiar thinking of what man is "to put him out of It". We find here the axiomatics of imperialism as a natural argument to indicate the limits of the cognition of (cultural) man. The point is, however, that the New Hollander or the man from Tierra del Fuego cannot be the subject of speech or judgment in the world of the "Critique". The subject as such in Kant is geopolitically differentiated.

Husserl now:

Objects with "spiritual" predicates... refer us to [...] other subjects and their actively constituting intentionality. Thus it is in the case of all cultural Objects (books, tools, etc.) which moreover carry with them at the same time the experiential sense of there-ness-for-everyone (that is, everyone belonging to the corresponding cultural community, such as the European [...]). (p. 92)

Later Husserl wrote:

Everyone, as a matter of a priori necessity, lives in the same Nature, which, with the necessary communalization of his life and the lives of others, he has fashioned into a [...] world having human significances, even if it belongs to an extremely low cultural level. ... Each man understands first of all [...] his concrete surrounding world or his culture; and he does so precisely as a man who belongs to the community fashioning it historically. A deeper understanding, one that opens up the horizon of the past [...] is essentially possible to all members of that community, with a certain originality possible to them alone and barred to anyone from another community who enters into relation with theirs. At first such an individual necessarily understands men of the alien world as generically men... (p. 133)

From there, one builds up understanding from there, layer by layer. But what if the genre or gender is different, what if he is a she, or a non-person constituted as object, as slave, or otherwise robbed of a tongue, the sanction, the right to (their) own words...?

As Simone de Beauvoir (1971) has written:



The essential starting point of the self, understood as white, European, male: the situation of woman is that she [...] finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other. They propose to stabilize her as object [...] her transcendence is to be overshadowed [...] and here in fact overwritten, as we've seen by another ego which is essential and sovereign. (p. xxix)

The issue in brief, is a Eurocentric bias, and an insufficient grasp of the radical alterity of the other—and universalizing reason which silences and excludes women and the culturally or "racially" other, vs. the realization of situatedness, limitation and cultural specificity.

*Robinson Crusoe* has become, in the world's imagination, the story of a man alone—with Friday. In fact, in Defoe's novel, it is only after Robinson has endured 26 years of solitude that Friday appears: "Saved" from the cannibals, he places Robinson's foot upon his head in abject subjugation. *Foe*, as overtly a retelling of the tale, fittingly presents us, for that bulk of the book which takes place on that "other" island, Britain, with the story of a woman alone—yet not alone: alone with Friday. Far from subjugating him, her goal is to set him free—to be free of him! Yet, this she fails to do, beyond the formal gesture of a document, duly certified with Susan's forgery of Cruso's signature, which hangs around Friday's neck announcing his freedom and which, we see repeatedly, in fact signifies nothing. Kit's story, in the last part of *The Sheltering Sky* after Port's death of fever, is also of a woman alone who is in fact rarely alone; she "takes up with" or "lets herself fall among" the "others" she most fears (here one thinks especially of her abject horror during her "misadventures" on the fourth class car of the train when she needs time away from Tunner and his champagne; as much as the latter, it is her feeling of abandonment in that crowded train carriage that leads to her abandon in acquiescing to Tunner's sexual advances later that night). These are of course not cannibals—but the "other" of her Eurocentrism: the North Africans, the Moors, the desert Bedouin whose caravan she "joins". Although by no means so plainly signaled, it is Kit, this time, who subjugates herself—sexually, as property, ultimately as wife—to her Friday, the wealthy trader Belqassim. And yet, in *Foe*, one of the key elements is the realization that Susan, although nominally his master (if only as Mrs. Cruso and Robinson's sole heir), remains strangely "subject" to Friday, freighted and "owned" by this "property" of which she cannot disburden herself.

*The Sheltering Sky*, particularly Kit's story, is a disturbing tale of collapse and dissolution; the strong hint is there, as Kit disappears from the woman from the American Embassy who would deliver her back into Tunner's helpful hands, that her escape is into the *Kasbah*, into a world of drug addiction and prostitution. And Susan Barton's fate, also, remains very uncertain (though literary fame, clearly, was not in the cards). The risks and perils facing a woman alone, in brief, are by no means minimized in these tales. Nonetheless, both works celebrate positive moments of breakthrough. They share another striking commonality as well: Both of these women "alone with Friday" (that is, both Susan and Kit, in their different ways), have entered a strangely mute world in which suddenly everything is "other", radically transfigured in a realm beyond western discursivity.

The blue dome of the sky shelters us, Bowles seems to suggest, as a thin veil of illusion that hides the eternal night beyond. But Port, in the insights and delusions of his fever, and Kit, through the "shipwreck" she suffers after Port's death, both embrace an existential clarity and immediacy, beyond language and conceptual thinking. Kit feels, for example, that "Life was suddenly there, she was in it, not looking through the window at it"; she has

found again what she knew to be there, "just behind things", and resolved to remain in it no matter what the effort: "the joy of being" (Bowles, 1951, pp. 220-221).

*Foe* presents a rather different picture, concluding as it does with a brief, lyrical and challenging passage in which an unnamed narrator (perhaps Coetzee himself?) dives down into a shipwreck—one assumes the very one over which Friday had scattered flower petals during their time on the island. Though it is the present day, the narrator finds the preserved though bloated bodies of Susan and her captain (the Portuguese captain? Cruso? Foe? Or are they one and the same, somehow?) and in his corner, Friday. The Narrator asks, "what is this ship?" and we then read "But this is not a place of words. Each syllable, as it comes out, is caught and filled with water and diffused. This is a place where bodies are their own signs. It is the home of Friday" (Coetzee, 1987, p. 157).

Earlier in his *Cartesian Meditations* (1960), Husserl discussed the interesting case of habitualities, determinations of character and resolve, stable acquisitions that help constitute the world. What is important to recognize, however, is that the habitualities we engender as constitutive of ego-identity (including on the most reduced and transcendental imaginable level, abstracted from specific content, if one were to grant Husserl this possibility), are not simple positive resolutions of the self, but linguistically mediated and constructed; we narrate our lives, in brief, and weave a fabric of history and personality and decision that has, very much, the structure of a story or text. The issue is the implication, always already, of language and embodiment into the "pure" realm of eidetic structures, into any and all phenomenological descriptions. Clearly, this requires a new beginning and a new direction—not back to pure a priori possibilities, but forward, rather, out of the factual situation in which one—for lack of a better word—finds oneself.

Perhaps the best illustration of this in these books is Susan's quest for her lost daughter. In the view of the present writer, this daughter is purely a fiction, a fabrication and a lie. But it is not merely bad faith on Susan's part; it is rather a means she has found for functioning as a woman alone in the wild world of colonies and seafarers—and writers; it is the sheltering veil that protects the self-hood it helps constitute. In this struggle to take up and maintain the threads of her own life-narratives, even at the cost of some fidelity to truth, Susan empowers herself; in defiance of those who would control the discourse, she begins to speak (for) herself.

This returns us to the unbearable absence of Friday, an absence "in" him or of him that is truly unspeakable, an absence beyond witnessing. Friday is not representative. He has been deprived, we are told, of the ability to represent himself, to speak, to signify for himself and as himself. He is an "infant", "infans", literally the non-speaker, outside of language. This is not only his burden, however, it is also his strength, his resistance, his protest. He refuses to enter into the world of signs, he refuses to take up his assigned place in a sphere or web of meanings pre-delineated by those who are his captors, his would-be masters; he refuses to be caught in this web, and in this—for all his seeming subservience—he refuses to be enslaved. Whatever his scars, he holds his tongue, or its absence, even beyond the grave. His body is its own sign.

### Conclusions

The ramifications for phenomenological exploration in all this are many, but among the most important is a link to the "discovery" of alterity as proposed by Husserl in the *Cartesian Meditations*. The problem here is not

merely uncovering something genuinely other within the sphere of non-alien experience or, as he says “my peculiar own-ness”; it is that of the “analogue” between “myself” as sense-constituting ego and this other, this alter-ego (Husserl, 1960, p. 94). What is the ground of the analogy here, does it not invoke a privileged access and indeed “ownership” of the normal, the standard, the certified; can there not be a otherness so radical that there is no commonality, no recognition of the “other me”, no consumption into the self-same?

To borrow a phrase from Alphonso Lingis, perhaps what we need to move towards, to embrace, is a community of those who have nothing in common (Lingis, 1994).

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## Uzbek “Makoms” in the 21st Century

Elnora Mamadjanova

State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Meaning of the concept of “makom” is hard to define with some frames and borders. Thus, German researcher Yu. Elzner provided more than 20 meanings of this word translated from Arabic. Music experts have decided in favor of the definition of word makom as “mode and genre”. Establishment of makom as a genre had taken place approximately from 12th to 18th centuries. However, evolution of a mode system, had occurred much earlier. Makom art of Uzbekistan is a heritage, which had been formed over the long period. However, it has not yet reached its completion, it still keeps living and being filled with a new emotional mood, new image contents. Swift development of computer technology and communication means creates opportunities both for researchers and for performers to improve the phenomenon of the makom arts. Organization of various contests and festivals in Uzbekistan, makom performers’ participation in foreign forums represents great incentives for showing the western interest in this arts and its integration into the global music science.

*Keywords:* makom, genre, cycles, 21st century development

### History

The meaning of the concept of “makom” is hard to define with frames and borders. It represents a whole world, a philosophy, an image of musical and poetic thinking of the nation. Most music experts have decided in favor of the definition of word “makom” as “mode and genre”. The establishment of “makom” as a genre took place approximately from the 12th to 18th centuries. However, the evolution of a modal system, which constitutes the principles of the “makom” genre, had occurred much earlier.

Reasons for the forming of makom systems in the East appeared in the 9th and 10th centuries, when the exact sciences were born. Eastern scientists always pointed out the connection of music, mathematic, philosophy, and medicine. One feature of the genre of makom is that the skill of mastering its secrets passed in a historically developed tradition of “teacher (ustoz)-pupil (shogird) within the walls of the so-called ‘medrese-school’”. For 10 to 15 years, specially chosen male shogird would not leave the walls of medrese so as to study singing and to learn the whole makom cycle by heart. Subsequently pupils could train other talented people later.

### Key Makom Cycles

There are three main cycles in Uzbekistan: The Bukhara cycle (“Shashmakom”—Six makoms), the Khorezm cycle (“Olti yarim makom”—Six and a half makoms), and the Ferghana-Tashkent cycle (“Chormakom”—Four makoms). But there are also different new kinds of makoms in Uzbekistan, such Tashkent

makoms and Dutar makoms.

The reason for the appearance of these cycles was the historical formation of three royal (khanship) territories, which established several local styles in Uzbek culture. These variations influenced folklore, genres of professional music in oral tradition, and peculiarities of musical performances.

### **The Bukhara Shashmakom**

The Shashmakom is a cycle of six makoms: Buzruk, Rost, Navo, Dugoh, Segoh and Irak. This cycle is also called “Six Sarakhbor”. There were two types of cycle performance—one was strict with all rules observance, known as secular (it was performed in the Emir’s palace); and in which some parts of the makoms were permitted to be performed with free interpretation (for example, at a wedding performance). The name of makom is the name of a defined tune system, whose structure submitted to certain contents.

**Form.** Each of the six makoms is divided into instrumental and vocal parts, which could be performed separately and in different versions. However, if the vocal part could have an instrumental arrangement, the instrumental part is much more difficult to interpret by voice. The instrumental part is called Mushkilot (“heavy” from Arabic), and the vocal part is called “Nasr” (“victory”).

The lyrics of the shashmakom come from ancient folk poetry and classical oriental poetry by such authors as Khafiz, Bedil, Navoiy and Jami. The main musical instruments of makoms are the tanbur and doira. Makom cycles also include usuls, rhythmical fill-ins beaten on the doira or the nagora-drum. Usuls are very important for making makom cycles sound as an integral dynamic piece.

**Mushkilot.** In this section, the instrumental development is tied with particular content. We can hear rapid cheerful melodies or dance rhythms. The instrumentals unfold with a gradual developing of definite intonation connected with a rhythmic formula, which repeats through one part (the usul). The semantic contents of makoms are usually tied with presentation of complex subjects, often tragic and dramatic. Besides love themes, there are also themes of social protest and historical events.

There are the following parts in the Mushkilot: Tasnif (“arranged”), Tardji (“repeat”), Gardun (“circle”), Peshrav (“looking forward”), Muhammad (“quintuple”), Sakil (“heavy”). They named after definite usuls.

The main casting units in Mushkilot are the Hona (“room”) and Bozguy (“repeating”). The Hona is like the poetical beyt. The Hona is a little section of an instrumental part, which develops and renews the main tune and widens the range. There are 5-20 Hona in one part. Bozguy is like a refrain in European genres, which is repeated without changes after the Hona. That is the reason why Uzbek makoms have less improvisation than the Azerbaydjan mugams.

**Nasr.** The cycle form was very popular in oriental literature (such as *The Tales of 1001 Nights*, or the Hamsa Cycle). So, the structure of the vocal part of a makom is like a cycle of different narrations—songs, submitted to a certain mode. As a rule, most of them are from oriental classical poetry or folk poetry, touching on unhappy love or social protest themes.

The vocal part considerably exceeds the instrumental part in length and number of sections. The structure is more complicated. Parts and sections of the Nasr are divided by their functions to the main and derivative (tarona). Both of them form microcycles—shube. The shube are divided into two groups. Their main difference is the lack of derivative parts in the second group of shube (tarona). Instead of derivative parts, there are little connective sections—Talqincha, Qashqarcha and Sakiynoma.

However, the structure of each shube submits to one scheme and divides into next sections: the daromad, the main tune; then the thematic grain, mienhat; then the repetition of the daromad on one or two octaves higher; then the dunasr—a further widening of the musical landscape with a repetition of the previous section in higher register; then the auje—the culmination zone, in which the singer reaches to the highest register. The last section—furovard, is where the main tune returns to the first register.

### **The Khorezm Cycle X—“Olti Yarim Makom”**

This six and a half makom cycle has a long history of development. During the 328 years of Khorezmic royalty, there were 49 khans. Three of them, Mukhammad Rahimkhon, Said Mukhammadkhon and Mukhammad Rakhimkhon (Feruz), made valuable contributions to developing this cycle. They were connoisseurs of music, as well as good performers.

At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, Khorezmi classical music, like Bukharan, had two types—strict performance (in khan’s palace) and free performance for a different public. There is no vocal part in makom Irok, but an instrumental part appeared in makom Pyandjgoh, consisting of eight sections-pieces and was a version of instrumental part of makom Rost.

The Shashmakom and the Khorezm Cycle have differences and similarities. Differences are apparent in the following makoms—in the Khorezm cycle, Rost is first, Buzruk is second (in Shashmakom Buzruk is first, Rost is second); they also differ in using different usuls and tempos.

In the Horezm cycle the instrumental part is Manzum and the vocal is Mansur.

Similarities are in the principles of structure and scale of separate sections, as in the whole part and also in sound row, similarity of tune formation, and melodic line.

### **The Fergana-Tashkent Cycle—“Chormakom”**

The Fergana-Tashkent Cycle—“Chormakom” formed later than “Shashmakom” and “Olti Yarim makom”. But some musicologists insist on the appearance of many traditions of makom art in main parts of this cycle earlier than in other cycles. However, at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, there appeared such notions as “Tashkent makoms”, “Turkestan makoms” and “Fergana makoms”.

After the forming of the Kokand Royalty, at the end of 18th century, this region began isolating culture and forming its own traditions, including musical and poetic. So, music-poetic culture was mostly developed in time of the government of Mukhammad Umarchon and his son Mukhammad Alikhon (first half of 19th century). This family dynasty—Umarchon, his wife poetess Nodira and son Alikhon—have given the world incomparable poetic lines.

There are four makoms in “Chormakom”—“Bayot”, “Dugoh Husayniy”, “Chorgoh” and “Gul’er-Shahnoz”. In distinction from the “Shashmakom” and the “Olti yarim makom”, this cycle has not strict following of parts, sections and pieces. Also there is no clear division into vocal and instrumental parts, but there are separate instrumental parts as “Ajam”, “Nasrulloi”, “Munojot”, and “Miskin” and vocal—“Bayot”, “Dugoh Husayni”, “Gir’ya”, “Kucha bogi”, and “Ushshok”. They are not joined into one big cycle, instead it is like micro-cycles. The Chormakom has own features, such as dividing parts into main and derivative. As in the “Shashmakom”, the first parts carry out the main role. They are larger because of long exposition, developing, culmination and descent. As a result, they are more complete.

The distinction of “Chormakom” is seen in such signs as the combination of different folk singing

genres—alla, ashula, yalla and the professional oral tradition genre katta ashula, and role of rhythmic form—usul.

Every Uzbek makom cycle, which has been formed since ancient time, has remained distinctive, as well as having participated in continuous interaction with each other. So we cannot reject the similar signs of these cycles. Let the author turn now to talk about the contemporary condition of Uzbek makoms.

In the 20th century, as a consequence of the formation, a new political system changes began in some makom traditions, in cycles as well as the appearance of a new writing formation. So, the famous Uzbek musician Unus Radjabi brought some new modifications to performing the Shashmakom and submitted it to the stylistic rules of Fergano-Tashkent cycle. He changed the poetic texts into the Uzbek language (most texts of “Shashmakom” had been in the Tadjik language). Also Radjabi offered a new model of “Tashkent Shashmakom” and radio-makoms, which he had recorded on tape-recorder and demonstrated on radio and TV (television) without modification. One of the most joyful events of the modernity was the opening in 1972 of the oriental music department on the basis of the Tashkent State Conservatory.

Now traditional music is studied under special programs in all regional musical educational institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan. It is taught adequately by experts who have received education on faculty of eastern music. Realizing the necessity of studying the modern condition of traditional music, taking into account positive interest in the Shashmakom by the general public, and also with the purpose of revealing perspective to young instrumentalists and singers, since 1983 (every four years) it has been carried out by Republican, Zone and international reviews—competitions of young makom performers, now becoming traditional. It is remarkable that in different competitions, alongside with solo performances of singers and instrumentalists, ensembles of makom performers have successfully taken part.

At the present stage in the field of our Republic, more than 15 makom ensembles give concerts, having a high professional performing level. Ensembles from cities as Bukhara, Tashkent, Urgench, Samarkand, Margilan, Fergana, Andizhan, Kokand, Namangan are among them.

Last year in Tashkent, a new book was presented: *The Khorezm Tanbur Notation* (2009) written by the famous Uzbek musicologist Matyakubov. This book is a collection of khorezm makoms’ writing type and a phenomenal source of Central Asia musical culture. *Khorezm Tanbur Notation* was founded at the end of 19th century and its sources were from Bukhara. It took many years to decipher this notation with the assistance of many specialists, musicians and organizations.

### **The Status of Uzbek Makoms**

The Makom arts of Uzbekistan is a heritage, which had been formed over the long period. However, it has not yet reached its completion; it still keeps living and being filled with a new emotional mood and image contents. However, it will live and develop only in case we feel it finely and find new opportunities for a creative performer-listener interaction. If in the time of the domination of light music, we will be indifferent to this treasure of our culture, soon we will have to turn over pages in ancient books in order to find information about the phenomena of makom.

The swift development of computer technology and communications creates opportunities both for researchers and for performers to improve the phenomenon of the makom arts. The organization of various contests and festivals in Uzbekistan, makom performers’ participation in foreign forums represent great incentives

for showing the western interest in this arts and its integration into the global music science. However, there is one global problem, which has a negative impact not only on existence of Uzbek makoms, but also on all genres of unwritten and professional works of many nations of the world. The intermediation of telecommunications does not always have a favorable impact. In the phenomenon of the makom arts, the performer-listener interface is violated. During live performance, it is the very listener who gives that impulse, which tunes the performer in one or another mode, and by his/her reaction extends or shortens the performance. When a listener listens to performance of makom sections using recordings (audio or video), we do not get the process of live contact; it is just a unilateral reaction to the process of building a certain model, which would be realized, and obtained emotion represents just a half of that, which could be achieved during live performance. All makom cycles have been written down in musical notation. Traditional forms of training of its execution have gradually begun to disappear. There have been irreversible processes not only in its execution, but also in perception.

Makom has been preserved amongst the peoples of the East with its sole and main functional meaning. In the 20th and 21st centuries, a tradition of musical therapy, which had been known from the earliest times, experienced its revival. Particularly, this practice is used in certain institutions in Uzbekistan.

Unfortunately, the obvious essence of makom performance is violated upon using of visual and audio records. Another contradiction is demonstrated in the use of note material for a traditional unwritten art during the learning process. While in the past, this tradition had been passed aurally through generations, the modern means of training develops the syndrome of the performers passive following the studied material, and deprives them from the desire to improvise and improve this art.

The appearance of audio and record video has also changed a genre, having broken its “live” nature, and also having limited the development of abilities in the expression of original feelings and emotions by performers. During the last 40 years, the executors of makom have studied in conservatories together with students getting an academic education. Instead of 10 to 15 years, this study occupies from five to seven, and the quality and skill degree suffers because of this.

But there are also positive developments. Since Uzbekistan got independence there has been a big opportunity to develop makom arts. We can mention different new ensembles, annual concerts and conferences devoted to makom arts, which occur in Uzbekistan, as well as in other countries. So, “Shashmakom” is a very famous ensemble in the USA. In 2002, Makom Art (Shashmakom) was recognized as a “world masterpiece” and taken under guard by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

### **Conclusions**

In the 21st century, all Uzbek musical art is more promptly integrated into world processes and is more actively declaring itself at various forums and festivals. Executors of various levels, both traditional and academic music, take part in the international competitions and become winners.

We are not aware what the computers’ power over all spheres of life will result in. One may predict that there will be a certain process of alignment and consolidation of our centuries old rich traditions; however, as they say, everything is in our hands. Every nation has own folk and professional traditional heritage. We should organize not only conferences but also festivals of traditional music and folklore, where only live performance should dominate.



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# Civilization and Art: Lifeworld in the Variety of Visual Experience

Constantinos Maritsas  
Sofia University, Sofia, Bulgaria

The paper examines the assignment of the visual experience in the context of interrelation between civilization and art. Civilization is defined as “the survival of the weak”. It is stressed that this definition can be applied to man, animal and every living being. Lie as “someone else’s truth” and art as “the process of the creation of ‘copies of the copies of nature’” are considered to be the weak man’s tools for survival. The author argues that purpose of erotic scenes and scenes of hunting (death and violence) both in the past and in the present is the excitation at the woman of desire to reproduction.

*Keywords:* civilization, art, lie, violence, lifeworld, visual experience

## Introduction

There have been no common-recognized definitions of civilization and art thus far. There has also been no consistent theory connecting these two definitions. All definitions of civilization and art we have are anthropocentric: civilization and human activity are identified in them, or art and human activity are identified in them too. So we have a vicious circle: civilization→man and man→civilization! The author will try to offer the definitions which are not anthropocentric. If we wish to define civilization and art and understand the communication between them, it is necessary to track a historical way of human evolution from nature to civilization. The author will try to trace it on the material of human visual experience.

The author’s concept is largely influenced by Darwin’s principle of “natural selection”, which always operates and everywhere, if we only determine its criteria and scope. Darwin wrote, “I have given this principle, under which each slightest change is retained in case it is useful, the term ‘natural selection’ in order to emphasize its connection with human possibilities, with the possibility of choice” (Darwin, 1997, p. 86). In the author’s conception, he proceeds from the statement, which is narrow to ones of Morris, Lorenz and Gelen, that there is no fundamental difference between human and animal. Man, due to the peculiarities of his brain, was the first who moved from nature to civilization, replacing the criteria of natural selection by civilizational criteria. This prompted men to create a new visual reality, imitating nature for women with the purpose of reproduction.

## **Basic Definitions**

### **Civilization**

Only man himself, as is common regarded, thanks to his brain, has abolished the coercive intraspecific competition and consciously terminated the process of natural selection. Having abolished the coercive struggle, man has created a society of similar organisms—human society. But man has to find a substitute for the coercive intraspecific competition, in which male individuals have been selected by women.

Since his appearance, man is the weakest and the most helpless living creature in our planet, but he has the largest brain. However, there are also many animals that are “biologically weak”: rabbits, frogs, lambs and goats. None of them has created a civilization! And man has survived, creating one! How did he do it? The author would like to stress two important steps on the way toward civilization: (1) replacement of the coercive intraspecific competition with non-violent fights; and (2) replacement of the coercive struggle for survival with a non-violent one.

So the author proposes definition of civilization which he treats as non-anthropocentric: “Civilization is the survival of the weak”. This definition can be applied to man, animal and every living being.

### **Language and Lie**

The author would like to stress the idea which he supposes to be important for further consideration of the paper’s subject.

Darwin’s theory of the survival of the fittest (natural selection) could well be interpreted as the survival of the weak. The strong man does not need language to tell stories about his strengths. His deeds speak for themselves. The weak man, who has nothing to show in public, needs to pretend that the strong man’s deeds are his: language as lying is the weak man’s tool for survival. The first human lie was: “I killed the bear”, said by a weak man in order to embezzle the heroism of the strong man. In other words, “the lie” of the weak man is “the truth” of the strong one. So we have the definition of lie: “Lie is the someone else’s truth”.

Lie is a tool for survival not only for weak man, but also for weak animal. Darwin gave the striking cases of imitation among the insects and birds which have been described by Wallace and Trimen. But we have none with the larger quadrupeds. He wrote:

The much greater frequency of imitation with insects than with other animals, is probably the consequence of their small size; insects cannot defend themselves, excepting indeed the kinds furnished with a sting, and I have never heard of an instance of such kinds mocking other insects, though they are mocked; insects cannot easily escape by flight from the larger animals which prey on them; therefore, speaking metaphorically, they are reduced, like most weak creatures, to trickery and dissimulation. (Darwin, 1997, p. 567)

American ethologists Rowell, Ellner and Reeve (2006) showed that lie and dishonesty are widespread among the animals. They gave the next example:

In green tree frogs “*Rana clamitans*” some small males exaggerate their quality by lowering their acoustic pitch to resemble that of larger males (Bee et al., 2000). False alarm signals may be given to divert rivals from food sources or mating opportunities, as in the shrikes “*Lanio versicolor*” and “*Thamnomanes schistogynus*”. Deception has been observed in all primate groups, and differences in deception rate among primate species correlate with neocortex size, suggesting that benefits from deception may have been a driver of neocortex expansion. (Rowell, Ellner, & Reeve, 2006, p. 181)

## Art

Woman could not directly observe how the process of natural selection went. Taking into account that she always tries to pick the winner or the strong man, the natural question arises: how can a weak man make a woman choose him? To have a better chance of being selected by a woman for reproduction, the weak man created art. Using the stories of sex and violence, he created works of art, thus attracting the attention of women. Art became weak man's another tool for survival.

This explanation differs from the commonly accepted one, according to which the hunter created images on the walls of the caves, performing a magical rite for a successful hunt. But as professor Laneris rightly observed:

His attitude does not only hurt the people of the Paleolithic, but also the Pygmies, and Bushmen, who would definitely fall into a rage if they read that in very ancient times the hunter, when hungry, entered the nearest cave and quickly drew a mortally wounded buffalo, being absolutely confident that the point of his spear would soon be stuck into a dead buffalo. (as cited in Leroi-Gourhan, 1993, p. 25)

The purpose of erotic scenes and scenes of hunting (death and violence) was the excitation at the woman of desire to reproduction.

So, the author develops the well-known Taine's (1998) notion to the next: "Art is the process of the creation of 'copies of the copies of nature', made by males to be chosen by females for reproduction" (p. 20). In this case, the author uses "male" (not "man") and "female" (not "woman") intentionally for obtaining non-anthropocentric definition. The necessity of art induced appearance of male's fantasy.

Through art, the "weak" male tried to attract the female to copulate with her. So to be personal, the "artwork" had to bear a "signature". The female would recognize the male by the project and pick him. Signatures such as the ones of Van Gogh, Picasso and Dali are sought after in our time (see Figure 1).

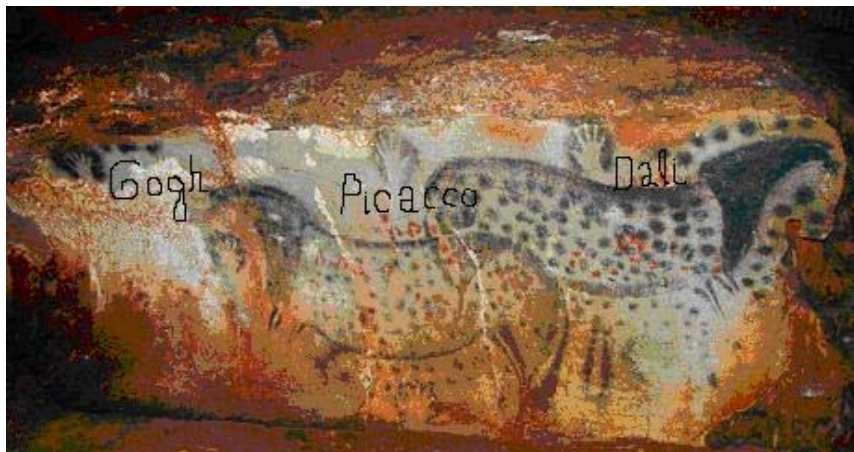


Figure 1. "Signatures" of the Stone Age artists ("Van Gogh", "Picasso" and "Dali")—imprints of their palms.

The primitive male, however, did not possess a recognizable signature. That was the reason why he created an art such as cave-painting in inaccessible places, which only he knew (see Figure 2). Thereby, he tried to enchant the female there (in his love nest). If he had painted at the cave entrance, the female would not have recognized the artist and that meant the goal of art would not have been achieved. Nowadays, males also decorate their bedrooms, but not the entrances of their homes.



*Figure 2.* Often the painters worked in the depths of the cave where darkness reigned.

Concerning the paintings in the caves, Dr. Jacob Bronowski wrote: “The only thing we can say seeing the faces of the animals on the walls of the caves is that it is a magic performance” (Bronowski, 1987, p. 42). Without explaining what he meant by “magic”, he concluded: “The most important painting of the caves is the imprint of a hand. And the stamp says: This is my sign. I am the Man!” (Bronowski, 1987, p. 44) (see Figure 3).



*Figure 3.* Imprints of palms.

If Dr. Jacob Bronowski was exempt from the vague sense of magic, he would correctly read the imprint of the hand: “This is my sign. I am the weak man. I’m looking for a woman”.

### **An Example of Magura Cave**

Let us consider one interesting example—the Magura cave painting. The Magura, one of the largest caves in Bulgaria, is in the northwest of the country about 180 km from Sofia. The total length of the galleries, discovered up to now, exceeds 2,000 m (see Figure 4).

The cave consists of one main gallery, pointing southeast-northwest and three side branches. The cave-halls are enormous in size. Each one of them is over 200 m long, more than 50 m wide and over 20 m high. The pearls of the cave are the unique paintings in stone, done in bat guano. They are multi-layered and come from different epochs: the Epupaleolith, the Neolith, the Eneolith and the beginning of the Early Bronze Age. The painting in the



Magura cave represents dancing females, dancing and hunting males, males in disguise, a large variety of animals, suns, stars, instruments of labor, plants, etc.. Erotic scenes and violence have always accompanied humans. They are two ways of stimulating the desire for reproduction from ancient times till present day (see Figure 5).

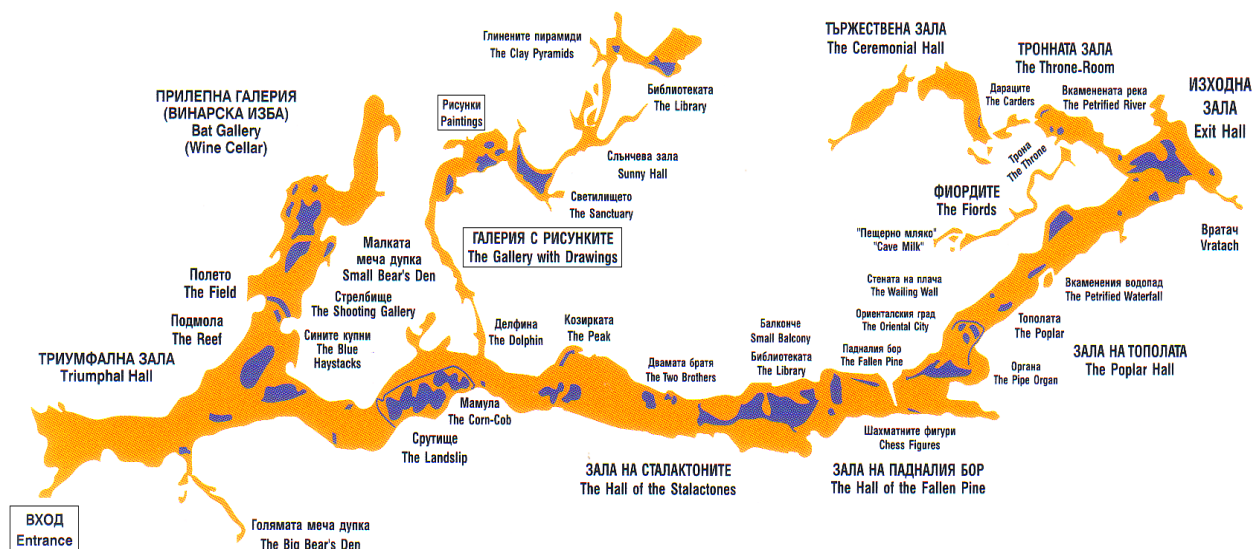
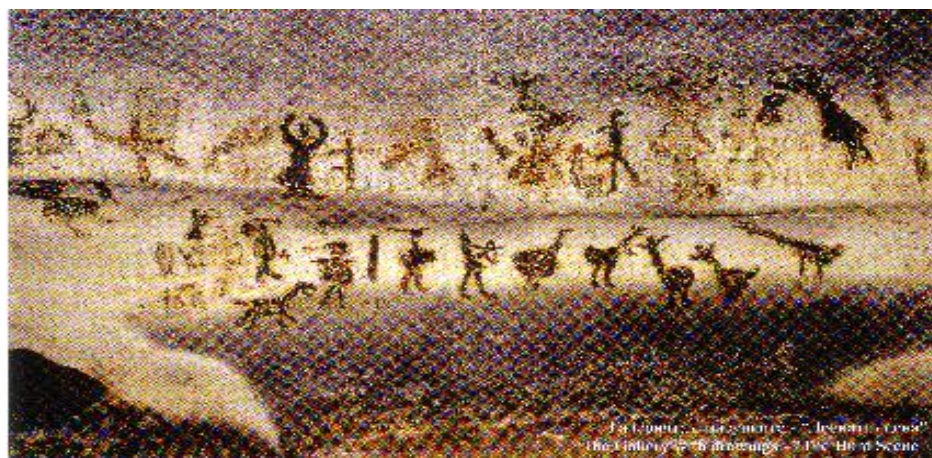


Figure 4. Plan of Magura cave.



a



b



C

Figure 5. *a*: The fragment of cave painting; *b* and *c*: are Details of painting.

As shown in the plan (see Figure 5a), the pictures are in the second branch of the cave, an inaccessible and isolated part. And their theme is sex and hunting. Both these facts confirm the author's interpretation: Through art, the weak male tried to attract the female so that he could copulate with her.

### **A Few Other Examples From the Past and Present**

Many examples, illustrating the author's concept, can be also seen in ancient petroglyphs. To cite but one example—the rock carvings on Kanozero Lake (see Figure 6).



*Figure 6.* Twenty figures are to be found on a rock in the western part of Stone Island: Four anthropomorphic, two zoomorphic, cetaceans, ornithomorph, six boats, three cup-shaped deepenings and three ambiguous figures. There is a love scene on the slope of the rock: two anthropomorphic figures, their legs touching and their heads in opposite directions. One is depicted with a vulva and breasts, the other with a long phallus directed to the vulva and testicles (available at <http://kae.rekvizit.ru/kan/>).

Animals, fish and people come together as participants in the scenes.

Yet, another example is the stone sculpture of Gobekli-Tepe (Peters & Schmidt, 2004, p. 204) (see Figure 7a). This plot is reproduced in the ancient (the Late Neolithic period, 5,500-5,000 B.C.) terracotta figurine of a naked man, found in Cyprus (an exhibit item of Pieridis Museum (Larnaca, Cyprus) (see Figure 7b). Subsequently, these images changed and improved, but their content remains the former: erotica and violence (see Figure 7c and 7d).

In our time, as Karl Jettmar, a German ethnographer noticed, the drawing and deleting of animals' graphic images play the big role in Kalash(a) (indigenous people of Hindu Kush) religious ceremonies. So during a winter holiday, the room for dances is decorated with zoography. Certain rules are thus observed: Both women and men can participate in painting of pets, but only men (hunters) have the right to paint wild animals. A wild goat, which is as a rule depicted in the biggest drawing, is "killed" by hunters in process of "ritual hunting". They fling stones at the goat or shoot a bow, singing thus erotic songs (see Figure 8).

Besides, during some of ceremonies, the song erotic competitions can be combined with the commemoration of died children. "Sometimes the person with especially underlined genitals is depicted on a wall" (Jettmar, 1986, pp. 394-395).

So the purpose of art is to present its creator rather than the object created by him. There were also found other ways for the weak man to solve the problem of existence in civilization—the family, homosexuality, etc.



(Maritsas, 2007).



a



b



c Museum Amphipoli, Hellas  
Small hermaic stele (5th c. B.C.)



d (Available at

[http://www.sikyon.com/Athens/Classic/images/ermes\\_prax.jpg](http://www.sikyon.com/Athens/Classic/images/ermes_prax.jpg))



e. The famous hero of modern cinema and the rising hero...



Figure 7. Erotica and violence in the art.



Figure 8. Men's and animals' figures on the walls of houses in Jestak (Jettmar, 1986, p. 402).

As the author has already said, the purpose of erotic scenes and scenes of hunting (death and violence) was the excitation at the woman of desire to reproduction. A lot of examples can be given from the history of art of different countries. Rock paintings of different periods (Paleolithic and Neolithic) represent hunters, animals and male genitals in a state of erection.

The themes of sex and violence, expressing the purpose of art, have been presented in it throughout human

history. It is equally possible to speak about their vivid expression, as in ancient Greek tragedy (Aeschylus “Medea”, Sophocles “Oedipus the Tyrant”, “Iphigenia in Tauris”, etc.); comedy (Aristophanes “Lysistrata”, “Women in Parliament”, etc.) and in contemporary cinematography. Many similar examples, as Edelberg (1972, pp. 62-70) showed, we can find in literature. In the Roman empire, the purpose of gladiatorial fights was to give to spectators the scene of violence and to show a pain and blood, instead of killing the won.

So the contemplation of death creates the desire for reproduction. That is the reason why society has always given and still gives controlled doses of violence to its members, encouraging reproduction and avoiding unnecessary (blind) ones, violence (e.g., terrorism in our days).

This case is interesting one of Darwin’s (1997) surveillances over the animals:

He who will explain in a definite manner why, for instance, an elephant or a fox will not breed under confinement in its native country, whilst the domestic pig or dog will breed freely under the most diversified conditions, will at the same time be able to give a definite answer to the question why two distinct species, when crossed, as well as their hybrid offspring, are generally rendered more or less sterile, whilst two domesticated varieties when crossed and their mongrel offspring are perfectly fertile. (p. 563)

Despite of the crisis and deep depression after Beslan tragedy, the birth rate has increased there (according to official sources of North Ossetia-Alania, available at <http://www.region15.net.ru/news/main/2006/08/31/18-38/>). In Beslan, 412 children were born in 2004, 525 children were born in 2005, and for seven months in 2006—already 375 children. Thirteen women-mothers were among the hostages on September 1, 2004. It is said a surge in the birth rate in Beslan was perhaps some women’s way of coping (available at [http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=14326&Itemid=69](http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14326&Itemid=69)).

Terrorism is one of the products of civilization. To grapple it, it is necessary to understand the aggression nature. And controlled doses of “visual violence” having been given to people can help to overcome the real aggression and induce the desire for reproduction.

This fact (its first side) has been noticed already by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (1997) on the material of the Greek tragedy. He defined tragedy as “the imitation of an action that is serious and also as having magnitude, complete in itself” (Aristotle, 1997, p. 10). He continued:

Tragedy is a form of drama exciting the emotions of pity and fear. Its action should be single and complete, presenting a reversal of fortune, involving persons renowned and of superior attainments, and it should be written in poetry embellished with every kind of artistic expression. (Aristotle, 1997, p. 22)

Aristotle presented “incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to interpret its ‘catharsis’ of such emotions” (by “catharsis”, Aristotle means a purging or sweeping away of the pity and fear aroused by the tragic action).

There is no unity among contemporary psychologists according to “visual violence” effect on the spectators. The majority of them believe that such viewing induces aggression. But some of them, the adherents of so-called “catharsis hypothesis” (Kaplan & Singer, 1976), suggested that demonstration of the scenes of violence, sport and play afford opportunities to discharge natural impulses, such as aggression.

This is what Agatha Christie said as early as in 1970, but no one cared to listen:

Do you know, I don’t like the name Vietnam at all. It is so confusing—North Vietnam and South Vietnam, Vietcong and Viet—something, and everyone wants to fight and no one wants to stop. They don’t agree to go to Paris or any other

place, sit at some round table and talk sensibly. Really, darling, don't you think—I've been thinking this over and I feel it could be a very good solution—can't they build many football stadiums where everyone can go and fight without such deadly weapons. Not with that disgusting burning napalm. You understand, don't you? Just hitting each other, boxing, things like that. It will be a pleasure for them, it will be a pleasure for everyone and besides the viewers can be charged a fee. Really, I don't think we know how to give people what they want. (Christie, 1992, p. 61)

### Subway as Contemporary Cave

Bulgarian writer Varsanovtzev (2003) noticed:

I would like to draw your attention to a completely different layer of meaning—that of an artistic vision, in the context of which the underground systems of both Moscow and New York today are associated with something dangerous and unpredictable. In most stories, exploited by mass culture and the cinema, it is a scene of murders and accidents. It is the place of fatal encounters of either intelligence officers from opposing agencies or lovers about to separate for ever (see Figure 9). (pp. 39-40)



Figure 9.a: The Moscow metro; b: The Magura cave.

In connection with the mentioned above, the author would like to pay attention to an example from the contemporary daily life.

The new Moscow metro station named after Fyodor Dostoevsky should be opened in June 2010. The station was decorated with marble mosaics of scenes from Dostoevsky's most famous novels, including *Crime and Punishment* (*Преступление и наказание*), *Demons* (*Бесы*), *The Idiot* (*Идиот*) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Братья Карамазовы*). The scenes include images of suicide and murder. The pictures quickly caused a sensation which is illustrated by some titles of articles: "Notes from the Underground: Dostoevsky-themed Subway Station Feared to Become a Suicide Landmark" (available at <http://www.dangerousminds.net/>), "Moscow's Dostoevsky Station Could Be 'Suicide Mecca'" (available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>), "The Addition of Dostoevsky on Moscow Subway Leads to Concerns of Suicide" (available at <http://www.juxtapoz.com>).

The decoration of the station has been called "too depressing" and "gloomy" and the station itself as "mecca for suicides". It has drawn the objections from psychologists and journalists, who warned that the deathly images and their "negative energy" "could prompt depressed commuters to kill themselves" (see Figure 10).

"There will be suicides more often. I can't rule out people will commit murders or attacks", Mikhail

Vinogradov, a prominent psychologist said. He and other experts warned that people who wanted to end their lives by throwing themselves under a train could well choose the new station in future. But Natalia Semyonova, another clinical psychologist in Moscow, defended the artist and the author, whose books she uses in lectures and to treat patients. “We try to jump into these books and try to understand once more the motives of human behavior, the motives of human suffering, how to overcome, how to find a sense of life, and so on”, she says. Using powerful literature to help overcome challenges in one’s own life, she says, is very “Russian”.

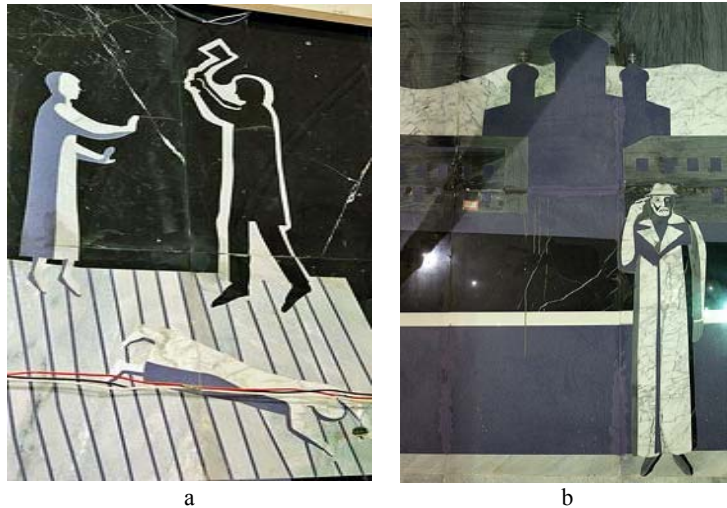


Figure 10.a: The main character in the novel *Crime and Punishment*, Rodion Raskolnikov, murders an elderly pawnbroker and her sister with an axe; b: A suicide-obsessed character in Dostoevsky’s novel *The Demons*, Kirillov, holding a pistol to his temple.

Ivan Nikolayev, the artist of the murals, has been asked repeatedly whether the mural of Raskolnikov from *Crime and Punishment*, in particular, was over the top. His answer comes in the form of another question: “If someone handed you Dostoevsky’s own manuscript, would you just go cross out this scene from the novel?”. And he added: “What did you want? Scenes of dancing? Dostoevsky doesn’t have them” (available at <http://www.izvestia.ru/moscow/article3141796/>).

In old time a man tried to entice a woman to a cave, that she could see the violence and erotic scenes represented on a wall of dark gallery. Dostoevsky metro galleries gave to contemporary men the possibility to make something similar... (see Figure 11).

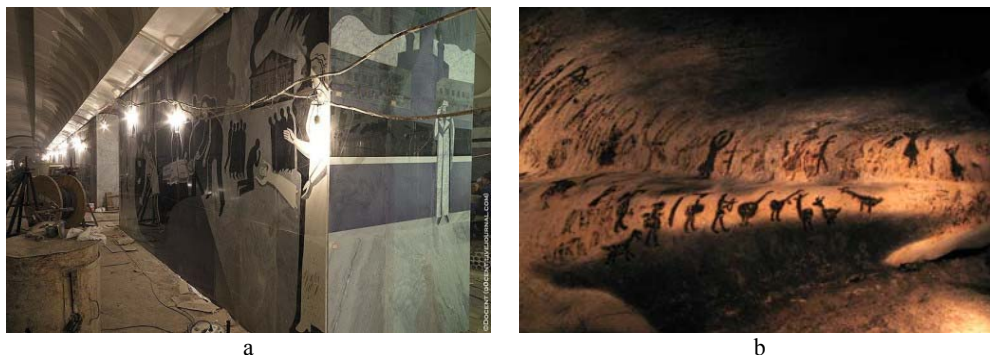


Figure 11. Subway as contemporary cave. Notes. A is the Dostoevsky metro station. B is the Magura cave.

## Conclusions

Greek writer Kosti Papagiorgi makes an analogy, which the author finds interesting and important in this context. A revolution centuries long was necessary so that primitive man's offer, consisting of signs, gestures, shouting and showing when he was hungry was transformed into the offer of civilized man, who politely asked for food, using rhythm, syntax, grammar, etc.. However, primitive man, who only tried in every way to express that he wanted to eat (and did not find a practical solution), usually simply died of hunger. But the author thinks that both primitive and civilized men, using their own peculiar language, did not try to request food, but a woman for reproduction. Each of them reached his goal by his own means: primitive man—by signs, gestures and shouting, and civilized man—by rhythm, syntax, grammar and pronunciation. If primitive man portrayed his heroic deeds against the megalith, imitating the actions of a hunter or an animal, the modern man tries to attract a woman's attention and be selected by her with the help of clever speech, gifts and the ability to create beauty.

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# The Image and Text Relationship in TANG Yin's Scroll of Poetry and Painting

YE La-mei

Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China

This paper seeks to examine the image and text relationship in TANG Yin's scroll of poetry and painting from three aspects: The first aspect focuses upon the schema type of its image and text relationship in physical form; the second aspect, explores the text's/poetry's functions of anchorage and relay while appreciating those images/paintings; the third aspect, traces the semiosis process of image, exploring how image and text as cultural products in the epistemological world mediates with the phenomenological world.

*Keywords:* image and text relationship, TANG Yin's scroll of poetry and painting, the semiosis process

## Introduction

The first aspect takes semiotician Leo H. Hoek's (1945, the year of birth) types of intersemiotic relationship as a starting point, to illuminate the uniqueness of the physical form of Chinese scroll of poetry and painting. This attempt tends to diversify the types of schema between the image and text in Hoek's intersemiotic study.

The second aspect, taking its cue from Roland Barthes' analysis of the image and text relationship in "The Rhetoric of Image" seeks to testify the two functions—anchorage and relay of the text with regard to the twofold iconic images within TANG Yin's paintings. Finding the author's way into Barthes' analysis of the functions of a text, here the author adds one more function: The aesthetic function or the visual effect achieved by the poetry in the painting scroll. This added function is a fruitful result from the present comparative approach—the way of anchoring the Chinese scroll of poetry and painting within the western intersemiotic discourse.

The third aspect derives its vision from an attempt to answer Barthes' questions on how images take on meanings. According to Barthes, painting and drawing have a style; the author further contends that TANG Yin's paintings take on meanings through their style. A survey of TANG Yin's painting style reveals that the techniques applied in and poetics operated behind his painting speak much of the image and text relationship with the physical world.

The driving force underlying the techniques and the style of the paintings is an ideology that can reveal the intricate relationship between the mimetic arts and the physical world. In order to familiarize the western readers with the Chinese situation, the author will bring in some philosophical notions of western poetics, for instance, the deconstructionist Paul de Man's distinction of experience and the representation of experience; Walter Benjamin's propositions on symbol and allegory, to make luminous relationship between the epistemological and



phenomenological world uncovered through the analysis of TANG Yin's paintings.

As a backdrop to the present study, the author's next section deals with the historical contexts that contribute to the genesis of the scroll of poetry and painting in China.

## **The Genesis of the Chinese Scroll of Poetry and Painting**

### **Its Origin and Development**

The scroll of poetry and painting is a mixed type of artistic presentation that proves the all-around talents of ancient Chinese literates. This kind of artistic form took its prototype in the works produced by the famous poet painters like SU Shi (1037-1102), and MI Fei (1051-1107) in Song Dynasty (960-1279). The earliest to be discovered is SU Shi's "Inscriptions Upon WANG Ding-guo's Collection of Misty River and Piling Mountains". This artistic form first appeared in Song Dynasty, budding in Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), and flowering in Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The ancient Chinese literati, who had all-around talents in painting, calligraphy, writing poetry, etc., liked to inscribe a poem on the scroll painting that they just completed. Behind this artistic taste is the aesthetic value of brushwork and inking, the emphasis on the beauty of line that enabled poetry to step into the frame of a painting.

Inscribing poetry on the painting, to the Chinese literati, requires years of concentrated training and practicing in writing characters with brushes, which is the possible way to make an expertise in calligraphy. Calligraphy is a special art that shares some common grounds with Chinese painting in the aspect of its use of brushwork and inking. Both of these two arts aspire the Chinese aesthetic emphasis upon the art of line. That is the reason why calligraphy within the painting instead of ruining the picture, actually added credits to the picture.

The aesthetician LI (1988) observed: "Although by adding calligraphy they have encroached upon the painting, they have also added to its meaning and elegance" (p. 227). He continued to point out: "Brushwork and inking were seen not only as having formal and structural beauty, but also as communicating a painter's spirit or emotional concerns" (p. 225). Therefore, the brushwork and inking of a piece of calligraphic work applied to inscribing the poetry, corresponding with the painting not only in the physical form but also in the transmission of spirit.

Thus, brushwork and inking became the converging border for the textual poem and the painting to exist side by side. It is on this border that the scroll of poetry and painting established its ground for a further and lasting development.

### **TANG Yin's Scroll of Poetry and Painting**

TANG Yin (1470-1523), as an all-around poet in Ming Dynasty, together with SHEN Zhou and WEN Zheng-ming, is grouped among the leading landscapists in Wu School. The school is characterized by its orderliness and subtlety in landscape painting.

Different from the other two leading figures in this school, as a landscapist, TANG Yin is also excelled in painting maids of honors. The conception of landscape painting in his age shifted from "presence of self" in Yuan Dynasty to an ideological or vernacular trend in Ming Dynasty. Yuan Dynasty's conception of "presence of self" cherishes not only the depiction of the harmony between nature and men, but also the infusing of men's spirit within the painting. The ideological or vernacular trend in Ming Dynasty reflects the literati's concern with worldly life through depicting everyday subjects; the style was characterized by free, uninhibited brushwork, fine lines and delicate figures (LI, 1988, p. 249). This conception transition in painting is concomitant with the



torrents of romanticism<sup>1</sup> in literature in Ming Dynasty.

TANG Yin, as a famous poet, is regarded as a representative of romanticism in literature in his age. He was active around the city of Suzhou, which is on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. He was a happy and dashing man of talent, who traveled in mountains and sang of moonlight and flowers.

As a scholar and man of letters without an official post, TANG Yin was free and easy, showing little restraint in conduct, thinking and feelings. He had ties with people from many social strata and freely expressed his outlook about the world. His ideal in art was the seeking of spirit, rhythm and vitality with brush and ink (LI, 1988, p. 249)

Inferred from the above observation of LI Zhe-hou, TANG Yin's painting and writing actually conforms to each other in an aspiration of emancipation and freedom featured of his age.

### **Schema Type of the Scroll of Poetry and Painting**

Similar to the Chinese counterpart, the western culture also holds a bunch of poet painters like Theocritus, Virgil, Tasso, Spenser and Milton. But those early western painter poets never incorporated this two sister arts—poem and picture, within one frame of work. Till the turn of 20th century, some modern western poets like Guillaume Apollinaire in France and E. E. Cummings in America inspired by the Chinese iconic poetry, started to produce calligrammes and visual poetry, whose schema types of image and text are quite different from that of the Chinese scroll of poetry and painting.

The French semiotician Hoek tried to draw a chart for the different types of image and text relationships in the semiotic world. His schematic classifications of image and text relationship include, for instance, the juxtaposition relation in emblem, illustration and titre; the combination relationship in affiche, bande dessinée and publicite; the fusion relationship in typographie, calligramme and visual poetry. A general survey revealed that the Chinese scroll of poetry and painting could not fit in any type of the schema. The image and text within the scroll of poetry and painting is not as separated and independent to each other as the juxtaposition relationship in an emblem or as combined as a publicite. It is not like a fusion relationship in a syncretique discourse, because its poetry encroaches upon the picture. This encroaching relationship between image and text tends to diversify the types of intersemiotic relationships in Hoek's study.

The author hopes the following scroll of poetry and painting will enable readers to understand the unique relationship between its image and text in physical form.

### **Functions of the Text**

According to Barthes (1979, p. 45), in order to prevent the meanings of images from proliferating, almost every culture has created devices to repress the projective power of image, among which linguistic system is one of the most commonly applied. With regard to the image, the linguistic text plays two roles: One is anchorage; the other is relay.

Taking the present study on Chinese scroll of poetry and painting into consideration, the author would add another function: the aesthetic value or visual effect of the text that coincides with the image.

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<sup>1</sup> Romanticism of Ming Dynasty in literature refers to the modern voice that demanded freedom to express oneself and describe everyday life and demanded reform of literary style, and thematic emancipation as well (LI, 1988, p. 245).

In what follows, the author will examine the anchorage, relay and visual effect of the poetry in relation to the painting respectively.

### **Anchorage and Relay**

Barthes has introduced two different kinds of anchorage functions of the text: One is the text's denomination of those icons, which is an anchorage of all the possible meanings of the objects through recourse to nomenclature. Another type is the anchorage of a symbolic icon; this type of icon not only resembles the physical object but also takes on a conceptual idea within a specific culture. In this case, the meaning of the symbol totally depends on the interpretations either from the text or the readers themselves. However, if the readers come from a different culture, they tend to ignore the symbolic aspect of that icon. Thus, their understanding might have stopped at a much superficial and literal level.

Figure 1 is a scroll poetry and painting produced by TANG Yin. The author will translate his poem within the painting into the following lines:

Among the green water and the red bridge are the almond flowers  
In the several thatchings stays the fisherman  
Don't refuse the flower beholder, my host  
I won't owe your drink because I have with me talent.

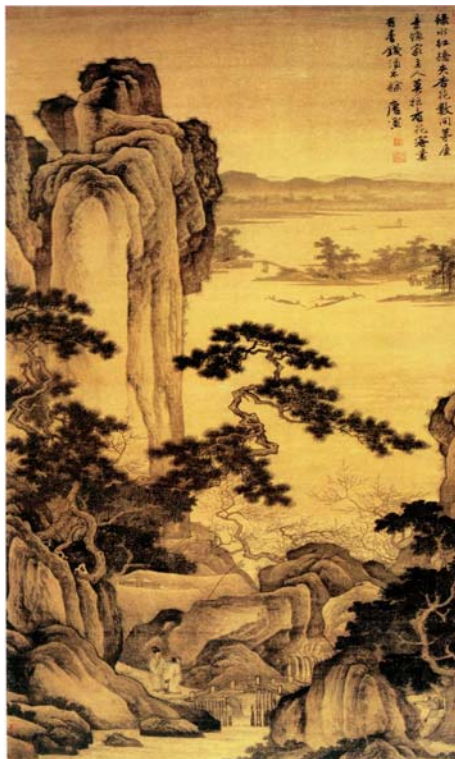


Figure 1. 曲湖山上图 (Winding lake at mountain top).

The first two lines are a general description of the scene that has been presented in the picture, which function as a nomenclature anchorage of the meanings of those icons, for instance, the bridge, the lake, the almond flowers, the thatching and two figures within the painting.

However, within the painting, there is the prominent image of pine tree that captivates the viewers' attention

because of its central position and the heavy inking that applied to it. The pine tree is symbolic in Chinese culture. The pine trees, together with bamboo and plum blossom, are called “Man of Honor in Wintry Days”.

Because the heavy snow cannot destruct them, they become the symbols of rectitude, incorruptibility and the ever freshness in life. The Chinese literates like to employ these three objects to represent their nobleness. Here, pine tree is a symbolic icon that necessitates a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

The last line of the poetry serves to relay the ideology of the poem. In the line, the two words “Qing Qian”, if literally translated, would be “green money” in English. But the phrase actually refers to one’s talent. The speaker of this poem wants to say that though he is a penniless literate, he has the talent in painting and writing. Instead of paying the fisherman money, he will paint for the drink he owes. His poverty can never dwarf his nobleness. In order to strengthen this idea, the painter painted the pine tree, a symbolic icon to resonate with the poet’s aspiration.

The following is another example from TANG Yin’s painting scroll poetry applied here to examine the anchorage and relay functions of the linguistic text. The scroll painting is entitled as “Reminiscence in Xi Zhou”, a work produced when TANG was 50 years old, who was heavily ailed after so many hardships like losing his parents, his son and wife within a few consecutive years, losing his official career at a young age and stricken of poverty in his old age, etc.. The Chinese version is as follows:

醉舞狂歌五十年，花中行乐月中眠。  
漫劳海内传名字，谁信腰间没酒钱。  
书本自惭称学者，众人疑道是神仙。  
些须做得工夫处，不损胸前一片天。

The author will translate the poem as follows: “Infatuated in dance and singing, I have spent fifty years amidst flowers and moonlight. Reputed as I am within the four seas, who can believe I have no money for a drink. Ashamed that I am not an erudite literati, my friends call me a carefree immortal”.

In painting, the author devotes considerable time, to keep a glimpse of the nature before her eyes.

The first line is a reminiscent of how the poet spent his past 50 years in an unrestrained way. As presented in the painting, the thatching among the trees and flowers accords to the depiction of the first line. We can also see, there are two figures talking in the thatching. The last three lines relay the content of his talk with his friend: how he felt ashamed as he lost his interest in reading Chinese traditional classics and orthodox teachings; how he is satisfied with his devoting most of his time in traveling and painting the natural scenes; and why nature is where he absorbed his artistic nutrition and gained a relief for his sufferings in life. Therefore, the poetry plays a function of relay with regard to the painting.

However, with the symbolic icons within the painting, the poet-painter has much more to tell us.

One symbolic icon is the bamboo painted beside the stone on the left of the painting. The bamboo, as is mentioned in the preceding sections, symbolizes for the incorruptibility of an honored man. And with its physical feature of an empty inside, it has another emphasis on the modesty of an honored man. Being modest is an important ethic in Chinese culture. To be modest is the way to be able to listen to and to learn from the other people. TANG Yin is a genius painter who is capable of learning from other schools’ paintings. His first teacher SHEN Zhou, as a representative of Wu School, gained its inspiration from the style of Yuan Dynasty landscape

painting, and was featured as uninhibited in brushwork and inking. His second teacher ZHOU Chen, as a leading figure of the Southern Song academic painting in Ming Dynasty, pursued refined lines in painting and was attentive to transforming the subjective ideas into painting the physical resemblance of the landscape. Inherited the essence of these two schools of painting, TANG Yin established his unique style that avoided his two teachers inadequacy and surpassed them all in painting. At his prime years of selling scroll painting, he was able to build a Peach Blossom Villa for himself to stay and entertain his friends. With renowned fulfillments both in painting and poetry, TANG Yin still observed to the principle of being modest. The bamboo taking up a small corner aspires the modest breast of the Chinese literati.



图 24 西洲话旧轴  
纸本 水墨 纵 110.7 厘米 横 52.3 厘米  
明正德十四年作 台北故宫博物院藏

Figure 2. 西洲话旧轴 (Old tale in Xi Zhou).

Another symbolic icon is the image of Bajiao (Chinese banana) behind the bamboo. Bajiao is a tropical plant. When painted within this scroll, it induces a geographical contradiction to the place Xi Zhou where TANG Yin recalled his past 50 years. As the author mentioned before, the title of the scroll painting is “Reminiscence in Xi Zhou”. Xi Zhou is a location north to the Yangtze River. It is impossible for Bajiao to grow in Xi Zhou. In this way, the image of Bajiao takes on a symbolic meaning other than a simple physical resemblance of Bajiao.

An intertextual study reveals, that before TANG Yin, a famous poet and painter WANG Wei in Tang Dynasty had painted a scroll titled as “Bajiao in the Snow” (*Xue Zhong Bajiao*). His “Bajiao in the Snow” aroused much enthusiastic discussions since its production. Some critics like Shen Kuo from the Song Dynasty argued it is just a result of WANG Wei’s emphasis on the spiritual aspect of the painting instead of the physical resemblance, further evidence could be sought within WANG’s other paintings, in which he painted peach

blossoms, almond blossoms and lotus all together with scanty attention towards the seasons. Another critic ZHAO Dian-cheng in Qing Dynasty commented that Bajiao is figural for the weak and hallow body of a human being in Buddhism. He continued to observe that WANG Wei actually applied the image of Bajiao to allude to his conversion to Buddhism in his later years after his witness of the political struggle (like An Lushan's rebel against the court) in the imperial court. "Bajiao in the Snow" is also a depiction of his determination to follow the Buddhism doctrine in spite of his weak and ailing body. WANG Wei indeed lived like a secular monk who dieted as a vegetarian and remained unmarried for more than 30 years after his wife diseased.

In TANG Yin's painting, Bajiao attracts our attention for it is contradictory to the location of Xi Zhou. And in this way, it takes on a symbolic meaning. But what is the idea it symbolizes for? TANG Yin also resorted to Chan Teachings in his late years in life. The poem written at his deathbed clearly showed his inclination to this doctrine. In the poem titled "Departure", he presented a Buddhist view: Death is no different from life. It is just like saying farewell after a get-together. At the age of 50, TANG Yin had experienced and suffered a lot. Bajiao symbolizes for both his turn to Chan Teachings in pursuit of a peaceful mind and his aging, ailing body. The image of Bajiao enriches our reading of his poetry. The text narrates more than the picture can speak; the picture connotes more than the poem can directly say.

The following scroll painting deals with the song girl LI Duan-duan who just settled at Shan He Fang, a typical place in feudal China since Tang Dynasty for official scholars, poets and literates to entertain themselves through composing music and poetry for the song girls to dance and sing. Song girls were sold to the Fang (Lane in English) by their poor families and relatives, who could not afford to keep them. It usually elevated a song girl's rank if the song girl possessed enough knowledge in poetry and music apart from her beauty. In this way, she was in a position to understand those official scholars and correspond with them. When LI Duan-duan settled at Shan He Fang, a well-known poet CUI Hao (the male figure in the middle of the painting) also paid a visit to her. To his disappointment, he discovered LI Duan-duan, instead of being a white peony, is dark skinned. Then he wrote a poem to satire LI Duan-duan. The poem depicts that LI's nose is as dark as the chimney; her ears look like a pair of iron pan. As the poem spread over Yangzhou city so quickly, the customers of Shan He Fang never asked for her company. She was distressed and paid a visit to the poet CUI Hao, which is the scene presented in the scroll (see Figure 3). She came to CUI's house to plead the poet to retrieve his poem. Moved by LI's braveness and sympathetic for LI's fate, CUI wrote another poetry in praise of LI as a white peony. From then on, LI gradually gained more customers.

The Chinese version of TANG Yin's poetry goes like this: "善和坊里李端端，信是能行白牡丹。谁信扬州金满市，胭脂价到属穷酸".

The picture is a depiction of LI Duan-duan's visit to the poet CUI Hao, while TANG Yin's poetry is rather a comment on this anecdote. The author's translation for TANG's poem is as follows:

LI Duan-duan of the Shan He Lane,  
is claimed to be a walking white peony.  
Who can believe in Yangzhou, a city of gold,  
a beauty's worth<sup>2</sup> is at the hands of the poor literati.

<sup>2</sup> Here, the author puts the literal translation of YanZi (in Chinese) "the price of the kermes" into a semantic translation "a beauty's worth".



图 38 李端端落籍图轴  
纸本 设色 纵 122.8 厘米 横 57.3 厘米  
南京博物院藏

Figure 3. 李端端落籍图轴 (The settledown of LI Duan-duan).

Without the backdrop knowledge of the anecdote, the beholders will not understand the relationship between the poetry and the painting, because at the superficial level, the text does not accord to the image.

In this scroll painting, it is the text that exerts its projective power that reflects the masculinity and femininity relationship in a feudal society of Ming Dynasty. According to Confucius teachings, the female is subject to the male all her life. As a daughter, she is to follow her father's orders. If she lost her father, then she has to act upon other male relatives' orders. If she was married, she will follow her husband's order. If she loses her husband, she will follow her son's order. If she had no son, she will be praised if she followed her husband's death by committing suicide. The feudal society of Ming Dynasty was definitely patriarchal. Women were turned into objects by the patriarchal world.

As a song girl, LI Duan-duan takes an even lower position in society. In pleasing the man's world who ever has money to pay, she turns herself into a plaything. As she failed to meet the expectation from the patriarchal world as to being a white peony, she became the butt of irony of the poet CUI Hao. The projective power of the phrase "white peony" inside the poem upon LI and outside upon the patriarchal world are both great. LI wanted to be and claimed to be a white peony, which epitomized the patriarchal society's evaluation standards on women. As a song girl, she tried very hard to live up to that standard. That CUI's poem denied that LI is a white peony, which unexpectedly drives away LI Duan-duan's customers, also reflects the tremendous projective power of white peony upon the patriarchal society. The way the feudal society evaluates a woman was so strongly held in men's brain. Otherwise, the customers would not have fled away from LI only because of an ironic poem.

Another phrase "the price of the kermes" (kermes, in Chinese, "胭脂") not only totally turned the women

into object but also turned them into goods within men's bargaining. In this phrase, TANG Yin uses "kermes" to refer to the song girl. "Kermes" projects to the image of the feminine world. It is something for sheer pleasure to look at, but without practical use. This epitomized image of women reveals that women's role in society is quite limited: a mother, a wife, a song girl and nothing more than that. When the word "price" is applied, the singsong girl is definitely turned into a commodity.

Although LI stays in a very inferior position to the poet CUI Hao, she could pluck up her courage to plead the poet to retrieve his poem, which also illustrates that women started to gain the consciousness to speak out what they wanted.

The above analysis shows that the text connoted more meaning than the picture can say. Some ideologically loaded words exert great projective power upon the image inside the text and the society outside the text.

### **Visual Effects of Poetry in the Scroll Painting**

As the author has mentioned in her discussion on the genesis of Chinese scroll of poetry and painting, it is the converging border of brushwork and inking both in the painting and the textual form of the poetry that provides a ground for the further development of the scroll of poetry and painting. Since the textual form of the poetry is in itself an artistic work of calligraphy, it is no wonder to enhance the visual effect of the painting itself. What is more, different techniques applied in inscribing the poem actually transmit different spirits into the calligraphic work, which is another way for painters to express their thinking and emotions.

Line had been a principal aesthetic element in Chinese visual arts since the earliest appearance of primitive pottery designs. In Ming Dynasty, the traditional Chinese emphasis on the art of line was developed into a rather mature stage. In TANG Yin's time, with its emphasis upon brushwork and inking, the age has witnessed another creative development in Chinese painting.

TANG's painting is renowned for its free, uninhibited brushwork and fine lines that transmits his desire for emancipation from the feudal teachings of LI and YI. Brushwork and inking were seen not only as having formal and structural beauty, but also as communicating a painter's spirit or emotional concerns. Painter's conscientious effort exerted in their brushwork and inking, is more of a pure aesthetic interest and ideal, than an emphasis on formal beauty.

Compared to his landscape painting, TANG Yin consciously applied a different style of brushwork and inking in painting lady-in-waiting, maids of honors and song girls. The painting presented in Figure 4 is a historical depiction of the lady-in-waiting in Ruler Meng's palace in present Sichuan province in the period of Five Dynasty (907-960). The poem inscribed on the painting adopts a more refined style, the chancery script instead of the draft script he adopted in the landscape paintings. The adoption of this chancery script matches well with the style of the delicate women figures in painting.

TANG never refrained himself from paying visits to the song girl's lane. His attitude towards those women, song girls or official ladies in the court, is mixed with sympathy and fondness. So maids under his delineation are all small waist and slender in figure, which represents his or other men's desire for women. TANG consciously used the color style of Tang and Song Dynasty, which could be traced back to masters like ZHANG Xuan, ZHOU Fang and ZHOU Wen-ju who presented beauties as: willow browed, phoenix eyed and cherry mouthed. Based on his predecessor's contributions, TANG developed his own style of painting beauties—his famous "Three White



Method". The dominant resemblance in brushwork and inking between the two ladies that we can see from the front is their white foreheads, white nose tips and white jaws. That method has become the brand of TANG's beauties.



图 22 孟蜀宫妓图轴  
绢本 设色 纵 124.7 厘米 横 63.8 厘米 明嘉靖二年作 上海博物馆藏

Figure 4. 孟蜀宫妓图轴 (Courtesan in palace Mengshu).

In feudal China, beauties were despised as ill omens. The public display of a fondness of women was not allowed. However, TANG Yin was not constrained by those social taboos and painted as he pleased to. He was more of a man of honor than those hypocrites and corrupted officials who always preached the orthodox teachings of LI and YI. In the present painting, TANG Yin not only displayed the beauty of those ladies in the palace through a different style of brushwork and inking, but also showed his sympathy towards them through his poem. In this way, his brushwork and inking carried on his spirit and desire for emancipation.

The visual effect of TANG Yin's poetry cooperates in another way to strengthen the relationship between his text and image. This point discovered through the analysis of Chinese scroll of poetry and painting, enriches Barthes' explorations of the image and text relationship.

### Semiosis Process of Image: An Inquiry of the Relationship Between the Semiotic and the Phenomenological World

Out of a concern with the illusive quality of image in projecting a definite meaning, Barthes (1979, p. 32) raised three major questions in his exploration of the meanings of an image. Those three questions as he considered are thorough and helpful to the study of the meanings of images. Questions regarding how an image contains meaning that have been proposed by Barthes for a spectral analysis are as follows: How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends, what is there beyond?

In order to make the present study more concentrated and related with the way image-text mediates with the

physical world in TANG Yin's scroll of poetry and painting, the author will only focus on the first question.

### **How Does Meaning Get Into the Image?**

Painting is a sister art of all mimetic arts. According to Barthes (1979, p. 44), a painting has a style, either conforming to the period poetics or varied from it. The style of a painting contains lots of meaning.

TANG Yin's painting manifests both the emancipation spirit of his contemporary style and variations in techniques. His variations come from his inheritance of both the academic style of southern Song Dynasty and the uninhibited style of brushwork and inking in Yuan Dynasty. TANG Yin learned painting with two masters of his time: One is ZHOU Chen, an expertise in the academic painting of Southern Song Dynasty, refined and subtle are the characteristics of this style; the other is SHEN Zhou, who advanced the trend of uninhibited brushwork and inking of Yuan Dynasty. As a genius painter, TANG Yin grasped the techniques from both sides and avoided each school's shortcomings and developed his own unique style in painting. He is a friend on both sides, but he is not easily grouped within either of the two sides. His style conveys important messages both in aesthetics and ideology.

As the author has pointed out in the introduction, this section as a tracing of the semiosis process of image is interwoven with an inquiry of the image and text relationship with the phenomenological world. A revealing of the poetics or ideology operating behind the painting and an examination of the techniques applied in painting serve to answer this inquiry. However, the author's focus upon the techniques and poetics in painting seems to ignore the function of text, which is half of the image-text mediation with the outside world. As the previous study revealed that the text's function of anchorage and relay, actually enables the text to work in the same direction of the image in its way of mediation with the outside world. In TANG Yin's scroll of poetry and painting, the text even promotes the same aesthetic purpose in painting.

In what follows, the first part, while examining how painting detains meaning through the applied techniques, discloses the underlying philosophical consideration of the image-text relationship with the phenomenological world; the second part, while exposing the shift of period poetics from romanticism to individualism, from harmony to disharmony, asserts its correspondence with the conceptual mutation within Benjamin's observations on symbol and allegory. To relate the Chinese understanding of philosophical categories with the western counterpart is to make Chinese artistic work easier to be accessed to its western audience, and meanwhile, to make the study diversified.

### **How Does Image and Text as Epistemological Products Mediates With the Phenomenological World as Manifested Through TANG Yin's Painting Techniques?**

Before going to TANG Yin's painting techniques, the author would like to trace back to Confucius time his sayings about poetry in his *Analects*:

How come you, little ones, do not study the *Poetry*? The *Poetry* may help to inspire, to observe, to keep company, and to express grievances. It may be used in the service of one's father at home and in the service of one's lord abroad. (CAI, 2001, p. 47)

As it is reflected in Confucius' sayings, poetry has long been regarded as vehicles of expressions. It aids to serve men's purposes.

The nature of language is more explicitly expressed in Chan teachings in China. It is said: The finger pointing to the moon, but the moon is not at the finger; language pointing to the truth, but the truth does not exist

in language (CAI, 2001, p. 47). If one only persists in reading the lines literally, he/she will never get the truth because the lines are not truth themselves.

These two examples showed that the Chinese ancients, much earlier than TANG Yin's time had sensed the distance between truth and the representation of truth through language. The kind of concern over truth and language is quite close to the later landscape painters' concern over physical resemblance in painting and reality.

In the following study of TANG Yin's painting techniques, the author hopes to uncover how the Chinese literates posited the image-text in relation with truth and reality. Based upon the technique study in painting, the author will compare the western poetics' overriding concern with truth and language, experience and the representation of experience to the Chinese literati's understanding of the relationship between truth and the mimetic arts of poetry and painting.

### Imaginative Realism

"Imaginative realism" is not a unique style of TANG Yin; rather it is an inheritance from his predecessor landscapists in southern Song and Yuan Dynasty. It is still a sub-current against the royal verism of the southern Song academic school who did paintings for the emperors and pursued a luxurious style, and tried to achieve exactitude in physical resemblance. The aspiration of "imaginative realism" no longer took physical resemblance as a standard for the evaluation of a painting. They walked out of the constraint of royal verism. By definition, "imaginative realism" is a kind of realistic portrayal of images evoked by a scene or object when the general idea is grasped and the artist infuses his feelings into his work (LI, 1988, p. 216).

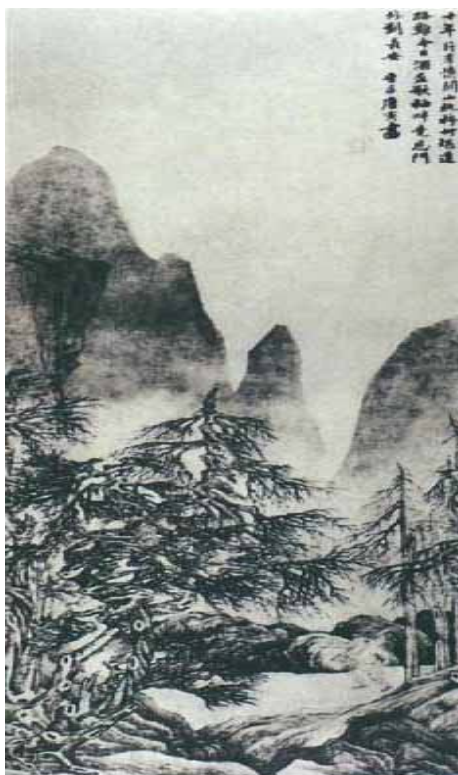


图 27 行旅图轴  
原平等阁藏

Figure 5. 行旅图轴 (Image of a traveller).

In other words, “imaginative realism” is an attempt to capture the essence or the spiritual aspect of the physical world. It is the outside world that the landscapists was taken by heart and later transformed into his work together with his own feelings. “Imaginative realism” is a spiritual presentation of both the physical world and the artist’s world other than an exact physical resemblance of the outside world.

The physical world is painted as a *mise en scene*, with an intention to create the atmosphere in which the artist painted his work and wrote his poetry. When the artist infuses his own feelings and thinking into this painting, then the painting becomes charged with meaning.

“Imaginative realism” is one way for TANG Yin’s painting to detain meaning. Figure 5 is a painting depicting the hardships a traveler has undergone. The traveler is an obscure figure in the painting. The surroundings, which we cannot tell where this scene comes from, are actually out of the painter’s mind. It is an accumulated knowledge of the mountains, plants and rivers gained from the painter’s own traveling. The scene is more of a transformation out of the painter’s visual mind’s eye other than an instantaneous work completed beside a specific mountain. TANG Yin needed to make a living on his painting and poetry. He traveled a lot before he went bankruptcy. It was impossible for him to travel to a mountain every time before he painted a picture. Here, we see the aesthetic of “imaginative realism” at work in TANG Yin’s poem.



图14 春游女几山轴  
绢本 设色 纵122厘米 横65厘米 上海博物馆藏

Figure 6. 春游女几山轴 (Spring tour in Mount Nvji).

### A Many-Pointed Perspective

The presentation of the scene from a many-pointed perspective within TANG Yin’s painting reflects an aesthetic taste in Chinese painting. This aesthetic taste can find its origin in GUO Xi’s remarks: “Some hills and streams are for passing through, some are to be viewed, some are to tour and enjoy, some to live in. The last two are to be preferred over the others” (as cited in LI, 1988, p. 216). In pursuit of such an aesthetic value, the

landscapists started from Song Dynasty deployed a many-pointed perspective to present the scene in a painting. It is not meant to be viewed from just one angle. It could be seen equally well from a distance or at close range.

So the many-pointed perspective adopted in painting was quite prevalent in landscapists' works. It became a special style in ancient Chinese painting. This style is also dominant in TANG Yin's painting. Take Figure 6 as an example: The small huts presented in minute details can only be viewed at close range; the pavilion in the mid range of the painting is far away from those huts but can be viewed equally well as if the beholder has shifted his/her position from the huts closer to the pavilion; and the top mountain is a view available only from a high above position; the mountains and the lakes far away should be viewed at a distance. Within one painting, views presented actually are focalized from quite different perspectives. This in another respect manifests that the landscapists are trying to free themselves from the ruling of physical resemblance.

The techniques of "imaginative realism" and "many-pointed perspective" prevalent since Song Dynasty, applied by TANG Yin (which is not exclusive to him) reflecting a receding tide of the pursuit of physical resemblance in painting, are quite revealing of the Chinese landscapists' way of regarding image and text as rhetoric to express their own mood other than the realistic representation of the outside world. These aspirations in aesthetics and poetics in a way match with the deconstructionists' philosophical understanding of image and language.

In his opening essay "Semiology and Rhetoric" in *Allegories of Reading* (1979), deconstructionist Paul de Man proposed that experience is different from the representation of experience. Since image and language are both semiotics, the code system of signification within the epistemological world, there are always gaps between the epistemological world represented through the signification systems, and the phenomenological world itself. There is distance between truth in the phenomenological world and the linguistic and imagistic representation of the conceived reality.

Chinese landscapists' direct employment of "imaginative realism" and "many-pointed perspective" in painting tells of a profound insight of the semiotic relationship with the physical world, which can be brought into light with a reference to Paul de Man's distinction between the epistemological and the phenomenological world. The quit of physical resemblance in painting marks an understanding of the difference between the truth in phenomenological world and the representation of that truth either through language and image.

Concurrently, with the application of these techniques in painting is the poetic shift from romanticism to individualism, from harmony to disharmony both in painting and literature (LI, 1988, p. 223).

The following part attempts to analyze this poetic shift and uncover the significance of this shift in the light of Benjamin's propositions on symbol and allegory.

### **From Harmony to Disharmony: The Mediation of Image-Text With the Phenomenological World From Symbolic to Allegorical**

The significance of the poetics driven behind TANG Yin's scroll of poetry and painting, that is, a shift from romanticism to individualism, from the understanding of painting and poetry as a harmonizing process to fragmentation and incompleteness, will become more legible if related with Walter Benjamin's propositions on the relationship between symbol and allegory.

In his *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1963), Benjamin elevated the position of allegory over symbol, arguing that allegory with its fragmentation and disruption comes closer to the transient truth than the deified

symbol. Symbol becomes affected within its attempt to transcend its gaps between truths. Allegory is the truth within symbol, but it is excluded by symbol because it is regarded as “the other” within symbol.

In his *Configurations of Comparative Poetics* (2001), CAI Zong-Qi pointed out that the Chinese poetics has a tradition of understanding literature as a harmonizing process. Underlying this understanding is the rich resources, thinking of ancient Chinese philosophies: Laozi, Zhuangzi and Chan Buddhism, advocating oneness of self and nature, and teaching that people could free themselves of worldly cares and obtain emancipation of their souls by seeking the truth or enlightenment in nature. It claimed that the lasting world of nature, with its hills and water, was superior to the transient glories of the world of man; that conforming to nature was better than seeking artificial creations. To the Chinese literati, this oneness can only be symbolically achieved through literature and painting. This oneness is transcendental of the reality and thus far from the truth.

Far in Tang and Song Dynasties, when Buddhism already flourished in China, Chinese literates were well under the influence of this doctrine apart from Zhuangzi and Laozi. When Chan Teachings, the kind of transformation of Buddhism in China took shape, its aspirations directly entered into painters' and poets' artistic world. There are Chan poems written by the famous poet SU Dong-po in Song Dynasty, and Chan Studio of Painting established by Dong Qichang in Ming Dynasty. TANG Yin, a victim of the feudal system, also resorted to Chan to seek balance between his spiritual world and his rough life.

In TANG Yin's painting, the harmony between the natural world and the solitary figure is the major effect to be achieved through almost all his works.

The painting of Figure 7 was completed after his escape from the official residence of Ruler Ning in Nanchang, where he was called to service and later discovered that Ruler Ning prepared to subvert the emperor. TANG Yin had only a narrow escape for the subsequent news revealed that the riot was pacified bloodily. TANG Yin's painting depicts the mountains and lakes among the sunset, among which a solitary figure sitting in the pavilion, meditates. Nature and the human figure form a harmonious picture. Only the heavy downward inking applied to paint the leaves seems to disrupt the harmony, but corresponds with the escaper's low mood: exhausted by and disappointed with the official career.

Nature and Chan Teachings are spiritual homes for Chinese literates to turn to whenever they are disappointed by the struggles of human world. TANG's painting shows that: On the one hand, he was seeking for a harmonized world through nature and Chan teachings; on the other hand, his world was filled with disorders that were far from harmony. In this painting, disharmony exists within harmony like allegory exists within symbol. Disharmony is “the other” within harmony just like allegory is within symbol. Harmony is a little bit far from the truth of disharmony just like symbol is a little bit far from the transient truth of allegory. Therefore, the heavy downward inking applied to paint the leaves makes TANG Yin's picture allegorical.

TANG Yin's painting (see Figure 7), which breaks the harmony of the created mise en scene, is telling of a poetic shift from the transcendental, symbolic way of representation to a more allegorical way of representation. The juxtaposition of the harmony between human and nature, and the breaking up of this harmony with a few strokes of brushwork and inking says much of the elevation from a naïve poetic to a mature one in Chinese landscape painting. In this aspect of the present study, Walter Benjamin's elucidation on allegory and symbol in his *The Origin of German Tragic* (1963) is quite instrumental. And we can draw from the above analysis that TANG Yin's scroll painting mediates with the physical world in an allegorical way. As the text conforms to the



picture, the image-text in TANG's painting mediates with the phenomenological world in an allegorical other than symbolic way.



图 17 落霞孤鹭轴  
绢本 设色 纵 189.1 厘米 横 105.4 厘米 上海博物馆藏

Figure 7. 落霞孤鹭轴 (A tameduck in sunset).

## Conclusions

An exploration of the Chinese scroll of poetry and painting by anchoring this artistic form within the western intersemiotic discourse benefits two sides: To the Chinese culture, the western intersemiotic discourse makes our appreciation of TANG Yin's work more comprehensive and systematic; to the western culture, the lamp of western notions makes the values of TANG Yin's work easily seen by the western audience.

This comparative attempt firstly diversifies the Hoek's schema types of image text relationship.

Secondly, to Barthes' image text interpretative model, the author adds one more function to the text, which correspondently enables his model to travel into another culture and becomes transcultural.

Thirdly, a tracing of the techniques and poetics in TANG Yin's scroll of poetry and painting enlightens us that the semiotic world of image and text is at distance with the phenomenological world; the image-text in his painting mediates with the world in an allegorical way. Paul de Man's distinction between experience and the representation of experience reflected in the painters' quit of physical resemblance deepens our understanding of Chinese painting techniques. Benjamin's contentions on symbol and allegory accord well to the disharmony within harmony in Chinese painting in Ming Dynasty. Viewing Chinese artistic works from western theories does not uproot them from the Chinese milieu, it only enables us to see the commonalities between Chinese and western poetics and diversifies our vision instead of seeing from the Chinese or western vision alone.



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# Paralinguistic and Kinesic Codes of Performance: An Intercultural *Gilgamesh*

Patrick Michael Finelli

University of South Florida, Tampa, United States

This paper examines the directing, acting and rehearsal process in transforming the ancient Babylonian epic *Gilgamesh* for the stage using performers' journals as a means of determining the effect of corporeal non-western styles on actors whose prior experience was almost exclusively in naturalistic and text-based theatre. The introduction of theatrical elements from multiple cultures including puppetry and the masks and techniques of Noh drama created a multi-tiered field for intercultural exchange. While Patrice Pavis's hourglass model for the transfer of theatrical material from a source to a target culture may hold true for productions that use linear modes of transmission, translation and incorporation of text, music, costumes and styles, its limitations make it necessary to posit alternative theories that take into account intercultural rehearsal practices, the collaboration of source and target culture and the dynamic interactions that take place through the agency of actor training in the fleshly physical theatre.

**Keywords:** theatre, performance, intercultural transmission, physical theatre, Japanese acting techniques, masks

## Introduction

Intercultural theatre has been broadly defined by Patrice Pavis (1996) as "a crucible in which performance techniques are tested against and amalgamated with the techniques that receive and fashion them". Pavis developed an hourglass model to explain the transmission of culture in a theatrical production. The upper bulb is the "foreign" or source culture, which must pass through a narrow passage before reaching the lower bulb, or target culture, in an arrangement that "is not random, but regulated by the filters put in place by the target culture" (Pavis, 1992, p. 5). This metaphoric model works for productions that transfer material from a source culture through translation or adaptation and filter it through the theatrical practices and customs of the target culture. Peter Brook's *Mahabharata* (1985)<sup>1</sup> is often cited as a paradigmatic example of this type of intercultural theatre. Brook (1987) was fascinated by the relationship between performance and ceremony; he admired Kathakali dance and the Vedic traditions and did not attempt a reconstruction or representation of the symbolism of Hindu philosophy (pp. 160-161). Despite his conscious effort to celebrate a work by filtering it through an artistic process with many nationalities involved, he drew criticism for appropriating a sacred text from India and was accused of neocolonial exploitation (Barucha, 1993, p. 68). The problem was compounded because the British director adapted the epic Sanskrit poem as well as Indian styles of performance that were incorporated into a

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Patrick Michael Finelli, Ph.D., professor of School of Theatre and Dance, University of South Florida.

<sup>1</sup> Archive theatre review: Krishna comes to the city of the popes/Stage/The Guardian. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/1985/jul/16/peter-brook-mahabharata-theatre>.

western mode of production.

The hourglass model relies on translation theory, a one-way cultural flow based on a hierarchy of privilege. While Brook's production took an Asian source and staged it for western audiences, Tadashi Suzuki's *Cherry Orchard* (1986)<sup>2</sup> and Yukio Ninagawa's *Macbeth* (1980), *The Tempest* (1987) and *Hamlet* (2001) turned the hourglass upside down, reversing the direction of the cultural flow while retaining the same methodology. These productions appropriated texts written by western authors and created performances with their own culture's movement, language, vocal patterns and scenic elements. In each of these cases, the source texts were filtered through the theatrical practices of the target culture. Two recent productions have followed a similar West-to-East hourglass model: the Turkish production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Özbirinci, 2008) and the Chinese adaptation of *Desire Under the Elms* (ZHU & LIU, 2009). Lo and Gilbert (2002) considered the hourglass model to be an "accurate" way to picture the transfer of material from a source to a target culture, but admitted it cannot account for "alternative and more collaborative forms of intercultural exchange" (p. 41).

Neither Suzuki nor Ninagawa adapted plays from the western canon in order to directly explore the issue of interculturality as a theme in their performances. They put the western plays in Japanese context. *Gilgamesh*, on the other hand, exhibits the functions/meanings of different cultures by defining the roles of humans (played by male actors) and non-humans/creatures = others (performed by female actors). These clear role definitions symbolize the conflicts of two different cultures in multiple layers: animism and monotheism, indigenous culture/religion and prevalent (invader) culture/religion, patriarchy and matriarchy. Thus, the production of *Gilgamesh* does not fit into the hourglass model from a thematic point of view. The content of the play is non-linear and culturally layered. Interculturality is the theme of the play: an Asian female director with alien status in the US interprets Mesopotamian myth while training American actors with eastern techniques.

Ariane Mnouchkine is a prime example of a theatre director who employs a more collaborative production practice resulting in intercultural exchange. Mnouchkine has blended western and Asian theatricality in her Theatre du Soleil stage productions since 1964. *Les Atrides* (1992)<sup>3</sup> combined the three parts of *The Oresteia* with Euripides's *Iphigenia in Aulis* in a performance that featured Kathakali dance, Kabuki katas and a multicultural cast with Brazilian, Armenian and Indian actors in major roles. While suitable for a linear transfer and filtration from source to a target culture, the hourglass model does not sufficiently account for the cultural interactions that arise from rehearsals and performance in Mnouchkine's theatre.

Izumi Ashizawa, a Japanese director and Suzuki expert, worked with American actors for a year prior to the opening of a play based on her adaptation of the ancient Babylonian epic *Gilgamesh*. There are many aspects of the production process that fit the hourglass model including the adaptation of a foreign text for performance and introducing theatrical elements from source cultures including puppetry and the masks and techniques of Noh drama. Other dimensions of the rehearsal and performance do not fit as neatly into the hourglass model. Prior to this production, the American actors had been trained using a system that has been transmitted from teacher to students since the Moscow Art Theatre influenced Harold Clurman, Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler in the early 20th century: text analysis, emotional experience, identifying objectives and physical embodiment. The director,

<sup>2</sup> Suzuki Tadashi Suzuki Company of Toga. Available at <http://www.scot-suzukicompany.com/en/profile.php>

<sup>3</sup> Review/theater: Les Atrides; Taking the stage to some of its extremes/*New York Times* (Online). Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/06/theater/review-theater-les-atrides-taking-the-stage-to-some-of-its-extremes.html?ref=mayotteRef>

highly trained in an amalgam of Noh, Kabuki, Suzuki and martial arts in both philosophy and practice, transmitted her technique by rehearsing with her actors in intensive workshops and also performed in the production. The actors brought intrinsic bodily techniques and ideologies to rehearsals that were antithetical to Ashizawa's approach. This collision between established cultural and performative traditions created a dialectical tension that became an animating current for a performance more powerful than anything the actors had previously experienced.

### **Theoretical Models**

Performances with multiple channels of cultural interactions require the development of an alternate model that accounts for non-linear exchanges. Lo and Gilbert (2002) cited the observations of Erica Fischer-Lichte and Patrice Pavis about the difficulties in proposing a global theory of interculturalism (p. 31). Pavis located the potential for agency at the microscopic level of actor training, revealing the limitations of the hourglass model (as cited in Lo & Gilbert, 2002, p. 43). Fischer-Lichte "rejects all theorizing which suggests a communication or translation model, cuts herself off from any productive model for exchange and renounces a semiotic (even a simply theoretical) explanation, reducing everything to the target culture" (Pavis, 1996, p. 11). Schmitt and George (1989) proposed a theoretical model nearly 20 years ago using quantum physics. According to the quantum model, a multi-channel field for intercultural exchange could be considered analogous to a polyatomic reaction, which is what happens to atomic particles in a supercollider—non-linear, high energy motion with new reactions and creation of new particles—and therefore requires a mode of inquiry analogous to particle physics, one acknowledges the uncertainty principle and the transitory and indeterminate nature of the event itself. The problem is similar to that faced by physicists in detecting the results of hermitic collisions, determining what happens during and after the collisions and examining the energies and direction of their momentum. The results of an atomic reaction will be too short-lived to make much direct impression on the detectors, so any presence of them will be revealed by the identity and behavior of its decay products. Direct observation of subatomic events is impossible. Determining what takes place in a theatrical rehearsal process and performance presents a similarly daunting challenge.

Conceptualizing a theoretical framework for intercultural performance must also consider the catalytic effect of inculcating actors with new ("foreign" or "alien") techniques. We can hypothesize that this may cause the actors to question their own traditions and practices. Eugenio Barba explained this condition according to cultural anthropology:

This implies a displacement, a journey, a detour strategy which makes it possible for one to understand one's own culture in a more precise way. By means of a confrontation with what appears to be foreign, one educates one's way of seeing and renders it both participatory and detached. Theatre Anthropology is the study of the behavior of the human being when it uses its physical and mental presence in an organized performance situation and according to principles which are different from those used in daily life. This extra-daily use of the body is what is called technique. (as cited in Gough, 1991, p. 7)

If the limitations of Pavis's bicameral hourglass model make it suitable primarily for translations and adaptations of text and performance elements from source to a target culture, and the esoteric non-linear particle physics model does not apply to the observable and determinable phenomenon of rehearsal and the choices a director and actors make, then how can we develop a theoretical model that takes into account intercultural

rehearsal practices, the collaboration of source and target culture and the dynamic interactions that take place through the agency of actor training and performance in the fleshly physical theatre? When Grotowski established his workcenter at Pontedera, he stopped directing plays in order to concentrate on his “researches”—intensive work in the process of transmission with focus on the ritual arts of ancient songs, physical action, impulse and organicity. During this period, Grotowski collaborated with Thomas Richards on an approach called “art as vehicle”. Richards (1995) has documented what took place during this period of research. The challenge for the theatre theorist is to uncover primary source evidence that is comparable to Richards’s empirical, experienced-based narrative account. In order to formulate a theory of intercultural performance, it is necessary to analyze at the cellular level, to examine closely the specific activities, exercises, discoveries, successes, failures, mental processes and physical activities that comprise the synaptic nerve endings of the organic process that becomes an intercultural performance.

The hourglass model appears insufficient to conceptualize theory out of a complex network. What are some of the techniques we might use to begin developing a new theoretical model? According to Barba, the interpretation of performance texts and the transmission of performance texts can be abstracted and encoded, but the learning of secrets can only be acquired person-to-person (Gough, 1991, p. 7). Most critical studies have concentrated on the end result without examining specific rehearsal practices. Our approach must consider those steps in order to uncover how the cultural experience is transmitted by the director and assimilated by the actor. Genetic analysis has the potential to offer an alternative to a linear, translational mode of inquiry, particularly when we consider the variables of cultural background, personality differences, experience and traditions that might be considered the DNA, or genetic blueprint of rehearsal and performance (Feral, 2008). This requires a multi-nodal critical examination of the creative work involving: (1) the director’s notes; (2) the director’s transmission of techniques in rehearsal; (3) the collision of traditions; (4) performers’ journals; (5) direct observation of rehearsal; (6) personal interviews; (7) public performance; and (8) audience reception. This paper will focus on such an empirical approach, concentrating on the effect of corporeal non-western styles on actors whose prior experience was almost exclusively in naturalistic, text-based theatre in order to move closer toward formulating a performance-based theory of intercultural theatre.

### Directorial Approach

Ashizawa’s training system is made up of many intercultural layers. She has adapted fundamental movement patterns of Noh, Kabuki, Suzuki and Grotowski’s (1996) *plastiques* and *corporeals*, but the exercises that she teaches are altered to be more suited to the western students. Having amalgamated traditional movement patterns and techniques, she found another source of inspiration in the Japanese sport anime, the *Spo-Kon-Anime* (*Sport Spirit Animation*). *Spo-Kon-Anime* includes television series with *Tennis Girl* (*Ace Wo Nerae* (*Get the Ace*)), *Baseball Boy* (*Kyojin No Hoshi* (*The Star of Giants*)), *Valley Ball Girls* (*Attack Number 1*) and *Soccer Boy* (*Captain Tsubasa*) in the 1970s and 1980s that she watched every day as a young child. Most of the *Spo-Kon-Anime* consists of countless difficult training scenes and competition scenes with melodramatic story lines. The people who admired anime during this time were called *otaku* (or maniac who stays inside of the house) and belonged to the subculture category of “others”. In the late 1990s, Japanese animation started to gain a global reputation and entered mainstream popular culture after 2000. Ashizawa still worships Miyazaki’s animation, but

she is not impressed with the bloody and violent nature of pop culture anime. The cast members knew that she invented exercises inspired by the rebellious Japanese sport anime period.

The performance is based upon a translation of an ancient text initially codified in the archaic language of inscrutable cuneiform symbols. Director Izumi Ashizawa creates her own expressive codes to convey the complexities of the narrative poem in a dynamic dramatic performance. When she rehearsed her actors, one could hear the sound of their feet pounding the floor as if summoning the forces of nature from the earth. She employs techniques from the traditional Noh theatre and the Suzuki Company of Toga that require extreme discipline and physical control. She demands precision and focus in exercises like the slow squat where the actors move in successive counts of 10, 20, 30 and 40 as they imitate her own action. The stylized movement is apparent throughout; even the archaeologist Smith has to move in that way when he enters the world of mythology. The text is a fundamental signifier, but there are other semiotic systems that serve to separate theatre performance from spoken literature. The scenography, movement, masks and puppets bring an aspect of ritual to the communal performance. The stage space is filled with immediate and overpowering images. The result is an original approach: an innovative theatrical interpretation of the ancient story.

### **The Epic of Gilgamesh**

*Gilgamesh* is one of the oldest written stories in history. It ranks along with Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* as an epic narrative that explores issues of human responsibility, fate, will and immortality. It tells the story of the King of Uruk who lived around 2500 B.C.E. in Sumeria, an area of ancient Mesopotamia known as the Fertile Crescent and cradle of civilization. Originally written in Sumerian on clay tablets, the archaic wedge-shaped cuneiform pictographs were meticulously copied by scribes for centuries. The Akkadian version was found in 19th century Iraq in the ruins of the library of King Assurbanipal. When George Smith, an assistant in The British Museum, identified the great flood on Tablet XI in 1872, he recognized the similarity to the *Old Testament*. Upon translating the text, he "jumped up and rushed about the room in a great state of excitement, and, to the astonishment of those present, began to undress himself" (Mitchell, 2004, p. 4) There were someone who considered it to be blasphemous since it so closely resembled Noah's story in Genesis.

The early urban civilization of Ancient Babylonia sustained a growing population with architectural structures like temples and palaces and cultural elements such as art and writing. The original story of *Gilgamesh* was written at a time of tectonic changes in society. Gilgamesh is Uruk's tyrannical king, a builder of walls: "Two-thirds of him is god and one-third man. The form of his body none can match. He builds the wall of Uruk, the enclosure, the sacred temple of Ishtar... He is our shepherd; strong, handsome and wise" (Heidel, 1949, p. 18). As the city grows, power shifts from a temple-centric religion to the political might of the king. The king seeks divine authority to make himself godlike and immortal. In response, the gods create Enkidu to balance Gilgamesh's power.

The production bristles with a multiplicity of complex codes that correlate with specific sign systems. The most basic level is the linguistic, the poetic words spoken by the actors translated from the Akkadian language. The vocal sounds were not achieved through conventional western musical scores, but developed as onomatopoeia. Smith, exhausted from unsuccessful archeological excavations in the desert, hears the sound of flapping wings and the hallucinogenic sound of a bird (see Figure 1):

Kappikappikappikappikappikappi

Lib-ki-ka = luibki-ka

Lib-ki-ka = luibki-ka

Lib-ki-ka = luibki-ka



Figure 1. Act I, Scene i. (Discovery), Smith, exhausted hears the hallucinogenic sound of a bird (photo by Kyle Sharf).

These paralinguistic expressions are layered with literal and connotative meanings. “Kapi” connotes the sound of a lamenting bird, and in the Sumerian language it means “my wings”. Ashizawa learned this from Yajima’s Japanese translation of *Gilgamesh* that includes descriptions about archaeological evidence, history and word choices in the text (Yajima, 1998). The word became a refrain in this scene. The same source indicates that “Lib-ki-ka = luibki-ka” is from the Text A (in Assyrian language) excavated from Nineveh. This is the section where Gilgamesh loses Enkidu and laments his loss. It means literally “cry for you”. In the tablet, this same phrase was repeated twelve times. Izumi (2010) believed the repetition of the simple words “cry for you” conveyed an enormous amount of pain:

In the Japanese language we usually omit the personal pronoun—it seems like the Japanese linguistic tendency is similar to Assyrian grammar in this regard. Without the specificity, it could mean “I” or “we” or “he”. Thus, “we” are encouraged to cry for Enkidu, or it can be Gilgamesh who cries for Enkidu, or both. It gives us more interpretational freedom. It is almost child-like, lacking any complex metaphor of any kind, yet the refrain of a simple phrase expressed stronger emotion than elaborate words. One of my interests is how to convey the essence of human emotion in primal form in theatre. Along with other techniques, I wanted to experiment with the idea of repeating a simple Ancient phrase as a refrain in performance. (I. Ashizawa, personal communication, December 12, 2010)

These paralinguistic codes became expressive morphemes that evoked a sense of primal ritual. This is how Ashizawa learned Noh theatre’s *Utai* (chanting segment). There is no score for Noh theatre. The Noh script contains symbols along with poetic text. Her actors learned in a similar way by listening and repeating with slight alterations as they became more familiar with the sounds. The process for *Gilgamesh* chanting is rooted in a practice resembling shamanistic ritual passed down orally through centuries long before musical score invention. In order to make the chanting composition work fully, the director turned off the fluorescent room lights, and put one 60-watt bulb in a reading lamp. This lighting condition applied to all of the ensemble vocal compositions. All of the actors sat in a circle facing each other; close enough to touch on both sides. Then they were placed in a



four-legged animal position. In the process of composing the mothers' birth scene, Ashizawa asked male cast members to chant "E-o-e-o, E-o-e-o". She demonstrated the sound, and they repeated. Next, she asked the females to chant "E, e, e, e—," demonstrating the sound before they repeated it. Subsequently, both were uttered together: "E-o-e-o, E-o-e-o," "E, e, e, e—". Finally, she asked the females to breathe in and out in a specific way: "Ha, ha, ha—." The female breathing became the opening of this chant. Thus, "The Mother Chant" became "Ha, ha, ha—, Ha, ha, ha—, Ha, ha, ha—E-o-e-o, E-o-e-o, E, e, e, e—". Ashizawa prepared a hand-written scroll diagramming "The Mother Chant". It is used both in *Mother/Baby* (as cited in Ashizawa's script, Act I, Scene iv) and in the dream sequence (as cited in Ashizawa's script, Act I, Scene viii). The physical movement in this scene is rigorous as the soldiers and Gilgamesh take the babies from their mothers and the baby masks become part of the wall. The carved effigies of babies on the wall, powerful in its iconic simplicity, signify the persecution of the people by Gilgamesh, creating a grotesque tableau that echoes the words: "Gilgamesh does not leave a son to his father... Gilgamesh does not leave a girl to her mother", projecting a mystical sense of cruelty and mortality. The effect is a transcendental signifier of power. It is a powerful "coup de theatre" (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Act I, Scene iv. (Mythical King). A mother appears from the earth. She pulls out the mask of a baby. Gilgamesh steals it from her. It becomes part of the wall (photo by Kyle Sharf).

### **Stylized Movement and Visualization**

The Birth of Enkidu (as cited in Ashizawa's script, Act I, Scene v) displays intense primal movement, innovative use of costume and props, and ritualistic, seductive chanting. Aruru, played by the director, forms a cylinder of clay, which represents Anu's sexual organ. Aruru builds a cylinder as potters do before they start forming a bowl. Ashizawa's uncle is a ceramicist and she has practiced ceramic arts for years, fascinated by the visual transformational metaphor of clay in the process of bowl-making; it starts as asexual wet earth, turning into a shape of masculine organ, then transforming into a feminine container that later holds food, which becomes a source of sustenance and eventually goes back to the earth. The cycles of the spinning wheel make possible the metaphorical transformation of clay.

Aruru, played by the director, forms a ball of clay. Her stomach swells as she conceives an image of Anu

(see Figure 3). A transparent cocoon emerges from sand (see Figure 4); a puppet falls from the sky. The cocoon consists of two actors appearing as one. What you see is the covered upper body of one actor and the covered lower body of a second actor. They rip off the transparent cocoon, emerging as two separate puppeteers. The Enkidu puppet is dropped from the sky, landing in front of the puppeteers. They look at the puppet, look at each other, approach the puppet simultaneously and begin to animate the puppet.



*Figure 3. Act I, Scene v. (Birth of Enkidu). Aruru forms an image of Anu (photo by Kyle Sharf).*



*Figure 4. Act I, Scene v. (Birth of Enkidu) (photo by Kyle Sharf).*

The god Anu is actually a knee-mask (see Figure 5). The manipulating actor's knee movements give life to Anu's mouth. In composing the birth of Enkidu chant, Ashizawa worked with two actors, who happened to be twin sisters, cast in roles in which they must mirror each other such as Scorpion Sister, Voluptuous Woman, Tree and Mother. She asked them to observe an object in her hand. She demonstrated the following: (1) her hand wrapped in saran wrap; (2) the hand makes a pounding movement like a heartbeat; (3) the hand starts to shiver; (4) the hand slowly starts to tear the saran wrap; and (5) the hand is completely out of saran wrap and makes a rough breathing movement. After this demonstration, one was asked to put sound on this hand movement, making sure to differentiate the transitions. Next, the other sister was asked to do the same. Finally, she asked them to repeat the sound that they just created, this time without her hand movements. Then, she asked them to make the two sounds simultaneously and repeat several times. She gave several concrete directions, such as "visualize the warm blood pounding in the vein, and now exaggerate that element in your vocalization", "put the element of a baby going

through the maternal pathway in your vocal” and “put the element of suffocation”. She gave several nuanced directions such as “put a little bit more blue in the vocal color”, “put the element of cocoon, inside is liquid, then vocalize the transformation from liquid into substance” and “vocalize the way a newly transformed butterfly coming out of cocoon—but it was not a butterfly it was a moth!”. She asked them to cut some parts and elongate other parts. Then she asked them to try a part of the tune from another scene (snake chant). The melody from the snake scene sends a subliminal message of the ominous predicament to the audience. At the same time, it gives a thematic link and philosophical depth, connecting the swirling movement of Enkidu and that of snake woman.



Figure 5. Act I, Scene v. (Birth of Enkidu) Knee-mask of Anu (photo by Ashley Einfinger).

Taming of the Beast (as cited in Ashizawa’s script, Act I, Scene vi) contains extreme vocal changes in pitch and tonality as the voluptuous women absorb Enkidu, a puppet manipulated by an actor, detaching Enkidu’s arms and legs from his torso. The stylized movement and vocalization of the voluptuous women takes place within Smith’s narrative. For this scene, Ashizawa asked the twin sisters, “What is the movement or behavior of an animal that make you think most sensual?”. This action or behavior of an animal should not be the action that straightly connects to the animal’s reproductive behavior. The action or movement is the one that has no meaning of sensuality as it is, but associates with the “idea” of sensuality only through our perception. Then, she asked them to imitate animal’s behavior physically. After they repeated the same movements several times, she asked them to minimize some and exaggerate other aspects of their movement. They repeated this version several times. Next, she asked them to make sound as they moved. They repeated movements with vocal expression several times. Then she asked them to minimize some sounds and exaggerate others and repeat only their sound without movements. Finally, the two sounds were put together in harmony. This became the chanting for the taming of Enkidu. She combined some of other movement parts based on several different exercises with this “sensual animal behavior” movement composition. Throughout the play, all the movements of each actor consists of techniques devised from multiple movement compositions that had been already created based on different exercises during the training session. This fragment-assembly technique represented the fragmented nature of the original cuneiform clay tablet text. The movement physically reflects the ancient text at the end of the scene. The bloody marks in *Gilgamesh* strikingly suggest the symbolic shape of the cuneiforms.

### Transcultural Transmission

The twin sisters, Rachel and Vanessa Nolan, began working with Ashizawa two years before appearing in the Tampa premier, and performed in the Maryland production as well, giving them a unique perspective on the transmission and reception of transcultural acting techniques. Rachel (2009) wrote, “My involvement with Izumi Ashizawa’s play, *Gilgamesh*, has helped me correlate my recent experience in a physically demanding performance to the principles behind Grotowski’s training methods in Motions, and the research with the Objective Drama project”, in which an actor must be spiritually and physically disciplined. Ashizawa’s eastern influence constructed a mind-set that is alert and focused. She brought the art of silence into the training period as well as the performances.

Thomas Richards (1995) described motions as “a series of stretches/positions of the body. Its structure is fairly simple, and on its first superficial level can be taught quickly” (p. 52). Although seemingly simple, motions is rigorous physically and mentally. Richards (1995) recalled many people assuming that they had learned motions within a few days of being introduced to it. Of course, this is a contradiction. According to Richards, certain aspects of motions have taken him years to master. The “primal position”, for example, commences the training.

The “primal position” is the starting point of Motions, a position of readiness from which the body can move immediately. When I first learned Motions... I was told that from the “primal position” I should be able to defend myself from attack. (Richards, 1995, p. 53)

Izumi Ashizawa’s approach and the Suzuki method of training also begin similarly with a “primal position” like stance. Rachel (2009) described her first experience with the Suzuki exercises:

Because the majority of the class had never experienced Suzuki, Ashizawa started us with what seemed to be a simple standing position. Like many exercises in the training, the standing position’s simplicity becomes contradictory to the novice. I stood as I would in life, feet shoulder width apart, staring straight ahead. I did not know at the time, but there is a significant technique in the way that Ashizawa’s actor should stand in order to expand the body and mind to the fullest. She came behind me while I was in standing position and pushed me lightly from my back. I was surprised when my body jolted forward. One element of Ashizawa’s training is locating the center of our body. Although this seems like an easily achievable task, it is quite difficult to maintain this centeredness. Much like the “primal position”, the center is the position in which the performer always begins and ends. Without this balance, it is unlikely to see the potential benefits of training in this particular discipline. (p. 3)

During the training of *Gilgamesh*, it was often very difficult for the actors to concentrate on when a new element was added to the exercise. For instance, as the starter positions became easier to accomplish, Ashizawa would extend the position of an arm or leg to an intricate pose in which their bodies were not familiar. Rachel (2009) said:

Immediately, my eyes would stop focusing, and I would find myself holding my breath. I was no longer holding my focus or my center because I allowed my body to freeze. Later, after repeating these movements many times, I would discover that relaxation is the key to conquering the complex movements. (p. 6)

### Chanting

Fight and reconciliation (as cited in Ashizawa’s script, Act I, Scene vii), introduces Ninsun floating upstage narrating the struggle between Gilgamesh and Enkidu with solo chanting by Ashizawa followed by clappers and pitched voices with Tibetan chants in the dream sequence (as cited in Ashizawa’s script, Act I, Scene viii), where Vanessa Nolan became the solo chanter. In this scene, the director asked her to add more ominous color and make it

minor in tone and pitch, which Ashizawa called “Mother Minor”. The director prepared a hand-written scroll diagramming the chant, first demonstrating the male chant “Wo, Taratara—Wo, Taratara—” and had the male actors imitate and repeat it several times. Then, she demonstrated the female chant “U, Ha, Uu—U, Ha, Uu—”. The female actors imitated the chant and repeated it several times. The sound of the female chant sound derives from a song of a popular Japanese animation character (Sazae-san) created by Machiko Hasegawa. Ashizawa altered it, making it more heightened and violent than the song of Sazae-san. This “U, Ha, Uu” is not exactly from the song itself but is from the short moment of the opening song of Sazae-san when she eats a sweet excitedly. She swallows it too quickly and chokes on it. When she chokes, she makes the similar sound “U, Ha, Uu”.

Finally, she asked male and female actors to put their vocals together as “Wo, Taratara”, “U, Ha, Uu”; “Wo, Taratara,” “U, Ha, Uu”. As boys and girls repeated the chant together, she asked Rachel Nolan to imagine “trees as woman” and their arms, legs and hair are ripped off by men one by one and vocalize this image on top of the chant. Finally, she asked the female actors to add the same breathing sound (“Ha-Ha-Ha”) at the opening and closing of Mother’s Chant again at the beginning and the end of Tree-Cutting Chant. She used the identical lighting conditions of a single 60-watt lamp for rehearsal as she did for the earlier chanting scenes.

The other-worldly sounds of the Scorpion-Women at the Twin Peaks (as cited in Ashizawa’s script, Act II, Scene i) involved a unique process. Ashizawa had previously recorded two tropical birds communicating with each other from a distance in an Australian rain forest. Her impression was of “a most strange pitch and intonation that sounded like crying babies, or Japanese cartoon characters. They were very mysterious to me because I couldn’t see their appearance; I tried hard to see the color or shape of the birds, but they were in the dense foliage of very tall trees. The idea of hearing voice without seeing the source of the sound definitely stimulated my imagination”. She played the recording for the Nolan twins a few times while describing the forest and asked them to imagine the place and mimic the birds vocally. She suggested that they create two different tones with simultaneous variations based on the vocalization. Then she infused the Scorpion Sisters’ speech with these variations of vocal mimesis—to speak their dialogue with the pitch and tone of the tropical birds (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Act II, Scene i. Scorpion-women at the twin peaks (photo by Jemaar Graham).

### Nature and Civilization

The tension between nature and civilization as secular culture usurps the power of religion is at the core of Ashizawa's dramatic interpretation of the story. Gilgamesh and his alter-ego Enkidu defeat Humbaba, the demon guardian (see Figure 7), when they cut down the Cedar Forest to make a huge gate, symbolizing cultural displacement (see Figure 8). The mask of Humbaba is double-layered. When all the branches and heads are ripped off from female trees, Humbaba's outer mask cracks open, and a sad inside mask appears. The forest is represented by women wearing costumes with antler-like extensions similar to sea sponges or corals, signifying the cedar forest. Men play the soldiers, tearing off the branches, an iconic representation of cultural upheaval and the triumph of patriarchy over matriarchy.



*Figure 7.* Act I, Scene viii. (Annihilation of the sacred forest). Gilgamesh and his alter-ego Enkidu defeat Humbaba, the demon guardian, when they cut down the Cedar Forest to make a huge gate, symbolizing cultural displacement (photo by Kyle Sharf).



*Figure 8.* Act I, Scene viii. (Annihilation of the sacred forest). Actors imagine “trees as woman” and their arms, legs and hair are ripped off by men one by one and vocalize this image on top of the chant (photo by Kyle Sharf).

### Conclusions

At the heart of Ashizawa's mode of performance are the kinesic elements derived from Japanese traditions—the rigorous movements, gestures and expressions that are rich sign-vehicles. Her actors have become fluent in a theatrical language unbounded by verbal and textual limitations. The ensemble is made up of individual artists who work together to convey the action. They speak the text through paralinguistic techniques of vocalization using distinctive non-verbal sounds, shouts and cries with variations in loudness and tempo that



create a dialectical tension in conjunction with kinesic action and the proxemic relationships established through the interpersonal dynamics of actor-actor and actor-audience.

Ashizawa's kinesthetic method of training has not been practiced widely in western theatre, yet her philosophy and discipline changed the way these actors think and feel about acting. One actor commented that Ashizawa's training:

Changed my lifestyle. I'm learning to carry over the discipline structure of *Gilgamesh* training in other aspects of my life, such as school and work. Because of this experience I have a greater respect for acting, and the vast amount of time it takes to build a show as intricate and deep as *Gilgamesh*. (Nolan, 2009)

According to Grotowski (1996), "The actor who, in this special process of discipline and self-sacrifice, self-penetration and molding, is not afraid to go beyond all normally acceptable limits, attains a kind of inner harmony and peace of mind" (p. 45). These actors have the experience and desire to approach acting in a whole new way.

It was not only necessary for the cast to be fully focused to concentrate on mind and body, but also the technical crew. The cast became accustomed to the concentration Ashizawa demands. When the performance was nearly ready for an audience, it was time that the technical crew was also initiated into the experience. Ashizawa initiated the crew through a rite of silence. This task was essential to the performance because of the weighty responsibility the crew (and cast) had regarding the set (see Figure 9).



*Figure 9.* Cuneiform shape set concept by David Williams, Cesar Cornejo, and Izumi Ashizawa. Lighting and scenography by David Williams, University of South Florida, April, 2009 (photo by Jemaar Graham).

This set, composed of several trap doors requiring manipulation promptly at precise moments, could become hazardous if one is in a state of relaxation. Before the technical rehearsal, Ashizawa lead the crew approximately twenty minutes in a walk around campus, in which they could not talk or interact with each other. After the walk the technical crew was led into the rehearsal space where they watched the routine warm-up in silence.

The production resonates with contemporary issues dealing with power, arrogance, civilization, nature and the quest for immortality. The Tavern Woman holds a window frame with one hand and glares at Gilgamesh. He explained how he lost his beloved Enkidu and asks her about Utnapishtim, the man who gained eternal life. She replies: "You will never find the eternal life that you seek. Stop wandering around hopelessly. When the gods created humans, they also created death. They kept eternal life only for themselves. Men are born, they live and they die".

In the end, wisdom comes as Gilgamesh mourns the loss of his friend and returns to his city.



The plant's name is "The Old Man Becomes a Young Man",

Then I will eat it and return to the condition of my youth.  
 At twenty leagues they broke for some food,  
 At thirty leagues they stopped for the night.  
 Seeing a spring and how cool its waters were,  
 Gilgamesh went down and was bathing in the water.  
 A snake smelled the fragrance of the plant,  
 Silently came up and carried off the plant.  
 While going back it sloughed off its casing.  
 At that point Gilgamesh sat down, weeping.<sup>4</sup>

The central themes of this ancient story relate to our own time as we cut down rainforests in the name of progress and seek to extend life through medical advances. We look for a cure, yet we cannot achieve it. Izumi Ashizawa historicizes the story of Gilgamesh, exploring ideas beyond the similarities with antiquity, enabling us to see our own condition in contrast with the timeless inevitability of the past. Ironically, Gilgamesh, the king did not gain eternal life, but his story has achieved artistic immortality as literature in the clay tablets and as drama brought to life by the actors in Ashizawa's staging.

The production received two Kennedy Center American College Festival Faculty Meritorious Awards, one for the scenography of David Williams (Excellence in Technology) and the other to Izumi Ashizawa for Excellence in Directing.

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<sup>4</sup> *Epic of Gilgamesh: Tablet XI*. Available at <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/tab11.html>

# When Violence on Stage Becomes Real: *My Name Is*

*Rachel Corrie*

Susana Nicolas Roman

University of Almeria, Almeria, Spain

“Verbatim” is a kind of documentary theatre in which drama is made from the precise words spoken by people in evidence, witnessing or remembering. Raising political issues and controversial topics, *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (2005) is not just a moving play about violence in the Palestinian conflict. It is the real story of the murder of an American activist’s fighting to denounce the genocide of innocent people. The problems of censorship that the play suffered in his premiere in New York remark the voice of a controversial play in Broadway’s world. This paper will examine the images of violence present in the play and the value of the speaker as a real witness.

*Keywords:* verbatim theatre, violence, Israel-Palestinian conflict, documentary theatre, censorship, genocide

## Introduction

Over the past two decades, theatre practitioners have turned to documentary modes of performance-making to confront new socio-political realities. This has led to an astonishing range of performance styles, ways of working and modes of intervention in varied sites of theatrical production. Focusing on examples from the US, UK, Canada, Australia, South Africa and the Middle East, documentary and “verbatim” theatre have raised provocative questions about relationships to new technology, media, the body, the archive, memory, autobiography, and national identity. In an era of infotainment, globalisation and postmodernity, these plays apply a range of critical perspectives focused on impact and significance today.

Taking these premises into account, what should a play talk about? If we recall Edward Bond’s (1978) words, “theatre must change the world”. In this direction, the play *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (2005) portrays the real possibility to change the world on stage through a heroic action. The play is constructed radically different from conventional drama in content and form. Formally, it is a mixture of verbatim drama and a collage of e-mails and parts of Rachel’s diaries. From moving monologues to ironic excerpts of personal writings, the play is always changing registers and making use of different types of drama devices. The originality of the form directly clashes with the crudity of the content of the play. The real story of a young American peace activist killed by the Israeli army shocks the spectator because of the unique character of this event. It is not common to hear about a murder between two historical allies such as USA and Israel, but it is absolutely exceptional to perform this incident on stage and show it to the world. Taking into account these precedents, we can suppose the problems and “inconveniences” that the play had to solve to be performed in a major theatre.

### Censorship

After two successful runs at the Royal Court in London in 2005, *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* was indefinitely postponed by the New York Theatre Workshop. The impact on the media of this elegant form of censorship was enormous. Garrett (2007) pointed out directly to fear as the cause of this decision. But fear to what? Is it so powerful the Jewish community as to censor a play in 21st America? The scandal around the theatre community was incredible. Pro-Israel voices consider Rachel a terrorist, a workshop marketing staffer disregarded the play as “mollifying” for the Jewish community. Its artistic director in New York, James Nicola, wanted to postpone the play a year to settle down the political climate. The Royal Court was clearly offended and shocking articles broke on *The Guardian* and the *New York Times*.

Garrett (2007) quoted the director’s words: “We found that our plan to present a work of art would be seen as taking a stand in a political conflict that we didn’t want to take” (p. 58). Caryl Churchill and other important playwrights and actors condemned the decision of indefinite postponement. In April 2006, a panel discussion about this issue was taken place at Barnard College. The conclusions of the participants were focused on the importance of profits in American theatre and the absence of freedom of expression on the playwright’s side. Heilpern forcefully demanded, “Give us plays of passionate commitment, for heaven’s sake—not caution, compliance and fear” (Garrett, 2007, p. 62).

Our theatres are supposed to be independent forums and spaces for debate. However, external pressures have prevented the possibility of performing *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* in the place it is more needed. America needs a play to see the other side of the victims, such as the Palestinian side, and even more, told by a compatriot who had suffered the consequences to the end. Weiss (2006) wondered “who will tell Americans the Middle East story”. Until now, censorship has won the battle and the truth of Rachel Corrie remains silenced in her native country. But, what tells the play to be so scandalous?

### The Story of a Personal Drama

She was born in Olympia, Washington, in 1979. From little age, she was dreamy, imaginative and easy with words. A trip to a remote part of Russia as a teenager acts as an important awakening in her political conscience. As a student in a liberal university, Evergreen State College, she soon joins to volunteer for the International Solidarity Movement. Her decision to go to Gaza marks the beginning of her emails to family which are the fundamental dramatic basis of the play.

From the very beginning, she is shocked by the chaos and constant violence but she gradually adapts to the new situation. She makes friends with Palestinian families, lives with them and suffers with them. Rachel sounds convincing:

I feel like I’m witnessing the systematic destruction of a people’s ability to survive... It takes a while to get what’s happening here. Sometimes I sit down to dinner with people and I realise there is a massive military machine surrounding us, trying to kill the people I’m having dinner with. (France, 2008)

This extract constitutes an example of Rachel’s writings and the difficult task the editors of the play had to accomplish. Fascinated by this story, Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner, from *The Guardian*, wanted to develop a piece of theatre behind the political symbol and the legend of Rachel. With the help of the family and the great

amount of Rachel's writings, they succeed to offer a full portrait of a passionate young girl not sentimentalized nor demonized.

From the beginning, the play constructs an atmosphere of intimacy and authenticity. An actress alone on stage is always a risky challenge but a success in this case. The spectator can almost feel the breath of Rachel and is totally introduced in her world. In the first part, we understand the special character of Rachel. Her words are witty, original, concerned for a teenager: "In the world I'm building, everybody shouts hello to everybody else from their car windows... And first ladies carry handcuffs and bull whips and presidents wear metal collars. Big metal collars with tight leashes" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 6).

She has "a fire in her belly" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 7) without a clear reason for her but her trip to Russia clarifies her social conscience. Her decision to go to Gaza is taken early in the play and her first comment is completely opposed to the American view of the conflict: "you could be perpetuating the idea that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a balanced conflict, instead of a largely unarmed people against the fourth most powerful military in the world" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 12). When she arrives in Rafah, the rhythm of the writing changes dramatically. Viner (2005) regarded: "She has less time to consider but you can feel the growing fear".

Poetic writing offers the spectator another dimension of Rachel's personality. This type of language is focused on her family, friends or personal anxieties. Irony and black humour is present in her poems: "I can't cool boiling water in Russia. I can't be Picasso. I can't be Jesus. I can't save the planet single-handedly. I can wash dishes" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 20). The effectiveness of dramatic devices is carried out through the solo voice of the actress and the directness of her speech. The play is a complete journey to violence and oppression. Examples such as her description of the doctor who spent 30 years raising the money for a house to see it destroyed in three hours, or the image of retrieving a dead body under gunfire are clear examples of barbarism.

However, violence in the play does not imply blood or detailed descriptions of mutilated bodies. *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* cannot be adhered to the in-her-face movement or brutalist theatre. It could have been constructed in this way, but opposingly the form is conceived to be serene, intimate and firm. Rachel calmly describes the violent events she lives, sometimes like little notes of daily headlines: "An attack in Gaza the night before last killed fourteen and injured around thirty" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 22)/"Bombed market in Gaza City" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 23). The structure of the monologue appears sharp and abrupt. Personal reflections combine with excerpts in the form of a diary or parts of e-mails. Therefore, language is articulated in moving passages from undramatic texts to a highly theatrical device. Words express feelings of reality and real emotions of the daily suffering of Palestinian people, a violence that becomes embarrassingly common and arbitrary. Examples of violence with children are repeated along the play: "A soldier came with a sledgehammer. The tank started firing—the family were watching Tom & Jerry in the kitchen. I played with the children to distract them" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 27).

Rachel wonders about the conscience of the Palestinian children and concludes that "even the smallest of these children understand that life is not like this everywhere" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 29). Short, direct language becomes a central technique in the description of murders. This is the record made by Rachel: "March 13, 9 p.m. Intensive care unit—12-year-old girl shot from tower in school near Nasser hospital (...) Shot inside hospital—three injured—nurses 6 a.m.—houses demolished 41 injured" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 46).

The recounting of victims appears as a constant along Rachel's notes. We could conclude that Rachel emphasizes the endless number of Palestinian people suffering constant violence. She is insisting in the idea of unbalance between the victims of both sides of the conflict. For her, the dignity of the Palestinians can only explain their possibilities of life: "I am amazed of their strength in defending such a large degree of their humanity against the incredible horror occurring in their lives and against the constant presence of death" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 35).

Apart from violence, fear and oppression are extensively depicted along the play. Probably, the most graphic example recalls a daily episode in a checkpoint: "2.40 p.m.—it opens. Then came five women with four children and a baby in arms. A soldier runs forward, yelling. The women kneel, stand up again, and return" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 32).

Witnessing all the horror of this occupation, the last diatribe of the play powerfully resonates in the spectator's conscience. In the first part, she insists in the non-violent resistance of the Palestinians and lastly, she cries a shout of commitment: "This has to stop. I think it is a good idea for us all to drop everything and devote our lives to making this stop" (Rickman & Viner, 2005, p. 49). Aged 23, she was killed in 2003 by an Israeli bulldozer when opposing the demolition of a Palestinian house. Some witnesses reported that it had time to stop. Actually, the end of the play is told in the third person narrator for the first time in the play. She died in the ambulance a few minutes later.

Non-standard, passionate, pathetic or even too sentimentalized and naïve, *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* is not a comfortable play to see. It is cruel and violent in her silent blood: real victims for a real conflict with a young American idealist in the middle. However, the play's merit stands within and outside the political background on which it is based. Spencer's review on the *Daily Telegraph* pointed out the transcendental dimension of the play: "One leaves the theatre mourning not only Rachel Corrie's death but also one's own loss of the idealism and reckless courage of youth" (Spencer, 2006). Obviously, it is passionate and it is told exclusively from one point of view. But is it not one of theatre's aims to engage and provoke controversy?

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[literature.art@davidpublishing.com](mailto:literature.art@davidpublishing.com), [art.literature@yahoo.com](mailto:art.literature@yahoo.com)

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