Lantern

Light your way...

Contents:

EDITORIAL

Yazdan Mahmoudi

Exploring the nature and the meaning of literature is far from being fully appreciated. The root of the word "literature" is Latin, and as we know in its modern sense, it dates back to the seventeenth century. Many critics have tried to define the word literature. The analysis shows that there is still much more to understand with regards to the extent of literature's boundaries. Literary scholars in an attempt to specify some definitions or boundaries to what is literature and what is not literature consider literature fine writing, but this cannot be true as fine writings can be found in other fields such as history, philosophy, etc. This contributes to the development of our awareness to a certain degree as there is a disparity between essentialist and non-essentialist theoreticians. Essentialist critics of literature believe that they can define literature based on a number of distinct features that exist in literature everywhere and every time. Such critics believe that didactic function and the profound and direct influence literature invokes are the characteristics essential to the literature of all cultures around the world. Other essentialists believe that literary works share a universal characteristic and that is the idea of rupture. For instance, an innate truth resides within the idea that all literary materials are imaginative and transfer the reader into an imaginative world which is totally fictional. Therefore, these critics believe that the language of literature is unique and its strangeness and the unfamiliar world of the literature is an essential feature for it. Of course, this imaginative world is not available to the reader, but the reader can portray the imaginativeness of literature in his own mind and create a response that demands situation between him and the literary work. According to these critics, literature gives us an alternative world. Regarding the language, Attridge (2004) states that "It is extremely difficult to talk about the activity of linguistic (or any other) creation, which usually remains mysterious to the creator—indeed, some degree of inexplicability is often taken to be definitive of creation, in contrast to the simple act of production in accordance with existing models and rules." (18)

As opposed to essentialist critics, anti-essentialists share a strikingly different worldview and consequent conception of literature and believe that there are no essentially universal attributes or characteristics for literature. They support the idea that there are relational properties in literature. One of the prominent critics who believe in the anti-essentialist theory of literature is Ludwig Wittgenstein who believes that there are resemblances and similarities in literary works but such resemblances are not essential; that is, they cannot specify certain predetermined criteria for literature at any time and any place. Therefore, anti-essentialist critics of literature believe that there is no definite single definition for literature. Some of these critics hold the theory that literature is an institution which has no intrinsic or essential attribute, so they consider literature a human practice that finds its meaning in different contexts based on different epistemologies of that specific period. Culler (1997) states

IS LITERATURE?
CHALLENGING AN ESSENTIALIST CONCEPTION

that literature, we might conclude, is a speech act or textual event that elicits certain kinds of attention. It contrasts with other sorts of speech acts, such as imparting information, asking questions, or making promises. Most of the time what leads readers to treat something as literature is that they find it in a context that identifies it as literature: in a book of poems or a section of a magazine, library, or bookstore. (27) Based on such an idea, literature is a set of practices or interactions of human beings in various societies. The idea of institution of literature or literature as an institution is anti-essentialist because it recognizes no limits for the subject or content of literary works. Of these elements are cognitive detachment and relational properties, to name a few, which represent themselves in literary stuff in various forms based on the ontological and epistemological horizons of different literary periods. Therefore, the presence of preexisted or metaphysical attributes to the conception of literary signification is fundamentally put into challenge during recent decades as some characteristics are perceived as literary in one location and period but conceived non-literary in others.

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Literature:

A Journey into Literature, Linguistics &Criticism

Mohammad Ali Bagi

Literature, Linguistics, and their distinction:

We are all aware that language is the stuff out of which literature is made, whatever literary genre might be concerned – novel, drama, poetry. Linguistics expresses the system underlying the language use, while literature utilizes the relevant aspects of these linguistic features so as to express what the writer wants to communicate to the audience. Thus, a study of the linguistic features related to a particular literary text will shed much light on the feelings or ideas the writer desires to express.

Peter Lamarque in "The Philosophy of Literature" defines the literature as, "certain works of poetry, drama, and prose fiction constitute literature, conceived as an art form, in virtue of the type of appreciation they invite and reward." In particular, Lamarque argues that a work of literature an institutional object, tied to a particular context of origin, whose existence as a work (and not merely a text) depends on conventions "determining expectations and responses of appropriately competent participants" (p. 78).

G.N Leech's take on the relationship between literature and linguistics is very compelling as well: "literature is the creative use of language, and this in the context of general linguistic description can be equated with the use of unorthodox or deviant forms of language.» Literature, thus, includes fundamental elements of meaning and aesthetics, which are not present in the world of linguistics. Linguistics, however, aids in analyzing the meaning and effect of style in literature in objective terms such as word forms, sentence structure, syntax, sound sequences, etc. Before the employment

of linguistic analysis, literary style was assessed only subjectively, and not based on concrete or objective grounds.

Criticism and the language of literature:

Roger Fowler (1971) describes this in an essay entitled "Criticism and the language of literature." "A work of literature», he says, «is usefully considered as a verbal structure, whatever else it may be. This verbal structure may be described.» Even though description and criticism have different ends, yet, «criticism in this century in terms of most theoretical and practical efforts has entailed the activity of description. "Objectivity" is a prudent quality in the modern age.

While accepting the importance of evaluation, R. A. Sayce (1953) remarked, «The critic›s first and most important task must be to discover, as far as he is able, the objective characteristics of the work under consideration.» The characteristics he spoke of were aspects of the language such as syntax, sound patterns, etc.

Literary Critics Pushing Back Against Linguists:

At the beginning of the 20th century, T.S. Eliot (1923) (cited in Fowler, 1971) opposed to the two major shortcomings of critics:

1) Literary criticism had become an emotive response to a stimulus; it had degenerated into an art of persuasion, an art founded on oratory.

2) Criticism lacked a significant and shared critical vocabulary. The critic refused to analyze, to say how, in terms

of his perception of the verbal text, he made his evaluation.

Richards in his two influential works on Criticism focuses, «firstly, to supplant the easy-going and vaguely laudatory criticism that was still largely in vogue, by something more rigorous, and secondly, to apply the science of psychology to the process of making and enjoying literature.»

In "Practical Criticism," Richards shifted his notice to individual poems and tried to provide guidelines for literary analysis through the breakdown of isolated texts. Nonetheless, Fowler feels that "the ends to which the detailed scrutiny is addressed as well as the terms and assumptions it employs, suggest a distinctly non-cognitive and non-verbally directed quality». Much English literary criticism since Richards, he says, «displays fundamentally affective and emotional tendencies, if not moralistic tendencies, for which «the terms of descriptive criticism function as a screen of pseudo-objectivity.»

Richards, regardless, is the father of modem critical theory. There are two major reasons for this: Firstly, he wanted to professionalize literary criticism and hindered the rash forms of novice criticism, and to this goal, he focused on practical criticism. Contemporarily, however, he elevated the theory of literary criticism to a new level of gravity with especial focus on the textual features of analysis.

The Rise of New Critics:

Inspired by Richards, the next generation of literary critics (the New Critics) invented a batch of new concepts for the analysis of text, e.g.

Empson›s "ambiguity," Brookes› "paradox" , and Blackmure›s "gesture" and "irony" , "tension" and "dramatic structure."

The underlying problem was that the terms needed to be "more" concrete than vaguely related to the aspect of the multi-levelled and all-encompassing meanings in literature. The terms «had to be given meaning by a sensitive insight into the way language works. Richards› dogmatic linguistic listings could not communicate meaning to a descriptive terminology.
(Fowler 1971)

Empson›s "Seven Types of Ambiguity" (1930) became the primary stimulus to descriptive criticism in England. In a dispute for the logical analysis on Literary Criticism of poetry, Empson says, «Unexplained beauty arouses an irritation in me. The reasons that make a line of verse likely to give pleasure, I believe, are like the reasons for anything else, one can reason about them ..." Empson›s benefaction has been in regards to his focus on «the words, the sentences, the syntax, the metrical structure of poems." (Fowler1971).

Winifred Nowottny (1962) speaks of literary form and the essentiality to ground literary criticism on verbal analysis. «In considering the language of poetry», she says, «it is prudent to begin with what is "there" in the poem – "there" in the sense that it can be described and referred to as inarguably given by the words» (The Language Poets Use: I)

Thus, Fowler says, "whenever one begins an analysis of a poem, one is going to be led off into other corners, detect new relations between

elements, and interpret details in the light of unique confrontations of linguistic levels.» An in depth analysis and interpretation of syntax paves the way for the discussion of meter and meaning.

David Lodge›s book "Language of Fiction" (1966) arose considerably from the same critical and linguistic background as Nowottny›s. He introduced two principles for the evaluation of style in narrative:

• To isolate deliberately or at random, one or more passages and to exhaustively analyze these (the "textual" approach).

• To trace significant threads through the language of an entire novel. (the "structural" approach).

Style & Stylistics:

The word "style" has an undisputed meaning; style refers to the way in which a particular person uses language in a particular context for a particular purpose. The speaker or the writer makes chooses from the linguistic system for the necessary discourse. However, even speaking about the same topic, for example, the weather, style is established by the occasion. Therefore, certain English expressions like «bright intervals» "scattered showers" belong to the style of weather forecasts, while others like «lovely day» «a bit chilly» are expressions utilized in everyday conversational comments about the weather. The proper selection of elements from the linguistic reservoir dictates and establishes the style.

"Style" can be studied in the spoken and written forms of language, whether literary and non-literary. In the field of literary writing, the term may be utilized to refer to the linguistic habits of a writer, or to the way language is used in a particular genre, period, school thought, or some variation of these. Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics referring to the study of style in texts, aimed at but not exclusive to literary works. Also called literary linguistics, stylistics focuses on the figures, tropes, and other rhetorical devices utilized to give variety and a discreteness to someone›s writing. Stylistics, at its core, is linguistic analysis combined with literary criticism. Most stylistics is not simply aimed at describing the formal features of texts for their own sake, but in order to illustrate their operational importance for the interpretation of the text.

How Stylistics Resolved the Issues between Linguistic Critics & Literary Critics:

We explore the style of a work, because we want to explain some aspect of its meaning, and to consider how the style highlights its meaning. Thus, the linguistic question is - why does the author wants to express himself in this particular way? From the critic›s perspective the question is, «how is this variation of an aesthetic effect accomplished through Language?" The aim of literary stylistics is to find a middle ground between the critic›s concern about aesthetic appreciation with the linguist›s concern in regards to linguistic description. The dispute between the linguist and the literary critic in this regard is minimalized, and in the last two or three decades, we have witnessed more linguists coming to the world of literature to study the enriched and deviant ways in which language is utilized. As he carries on the analysis of the literary text, the linguist forms his

or her own subjective interpretations and does not solely rely on bring a clinically bland attitude to his or her reading. On the other hand, as we have witnessed literary critics have felt the urge to incorporate greater objectivity, by utilizing linguistic analysis, into their aesthetic appreciation and assessment of a literary text.

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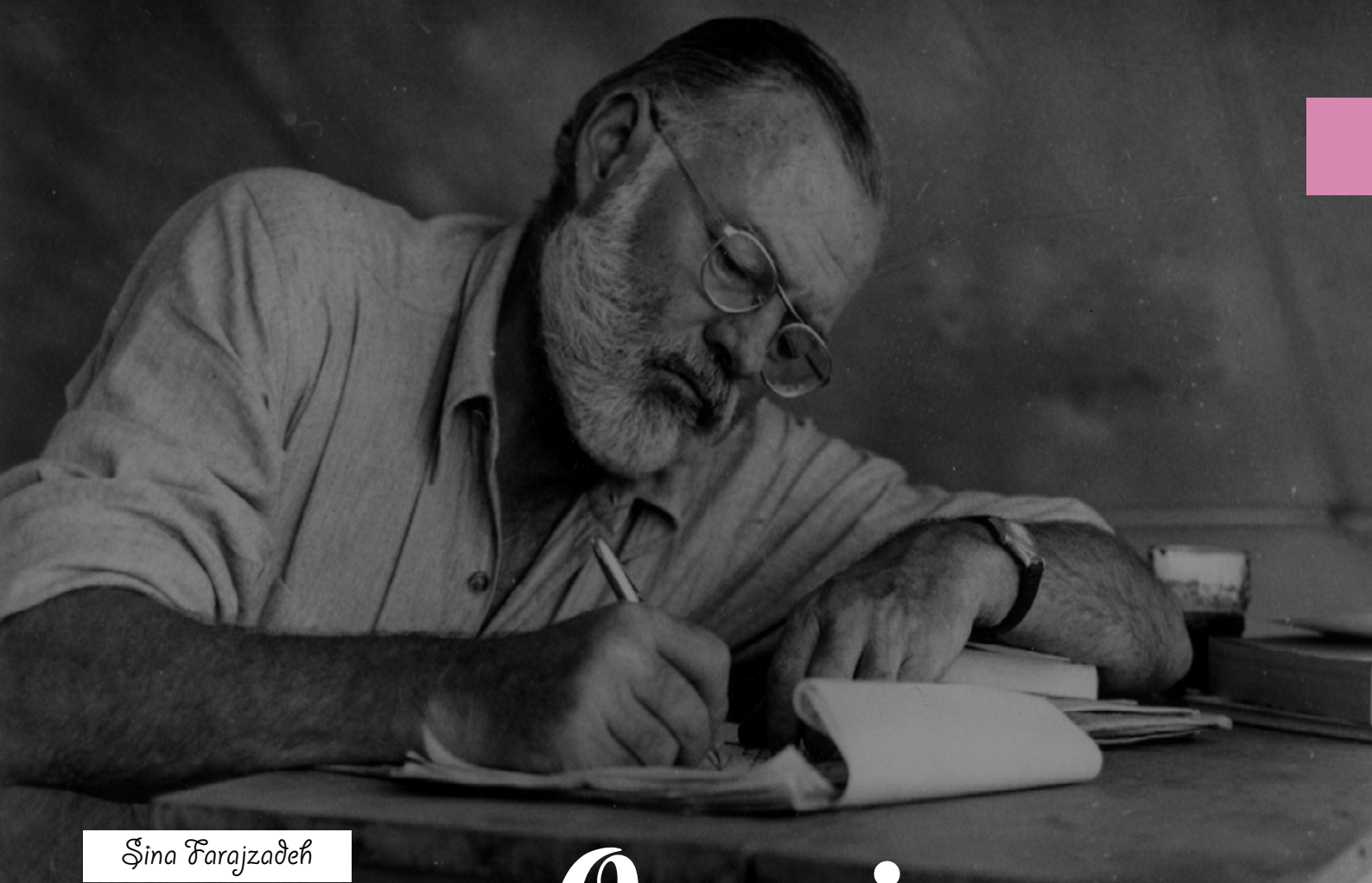
Sina Farajzadeh

The Significance of the Opening Lines in Literary Works

Introduction

In the last decades, both in doctorate and master's exams in the national university entrance examination tests included several questions about the opening lines of various works and authors. Many students wonder why those kinds of questions are being asked in such important exams and wonder why the opening lines of a poem or a novel should matter at all? It was with such a question that this study was initiated. It is a common belief that successful and talented authors start their works artistically. The opening lines are where the readers can 'get hooked,' which is why many Creative Writing professors pay great attention to how future writers can begin their pieces to attract their readers› attention and invite them to finish reading what they have just started.

For a good writer, every word has a special meaning, and therefore, they intentionally use specific words with some hidden meanings and indirectly state their intentions through their writings. Hence, the beginning of a play, a poem, or a novel can provide the readers with some keywords to express the author›s views and intentions. For this reason, the opening lines of a literary work can guide a critical reader to read the text with better and more complete comprehension.

Thus, the opening lines of literary works can be crucial parts designed by authors to express some direct or indirect opinions

intentions. Many talented authors use plenty of techniques in order to talk more to their readers in an indirect or direct manner. Through such techniques, their works gain a unique and pleasant style from the very beginning. Accordingly, in what follows, some of these techniques in a select number of famous literary samples will be elaborated on.

Discussion

The opening lines can differ based on the genres of literature and the authors' tastes. Sometimes the opening lines must be written in a specific way and with some rules because of the genre's nature. For instance, the essence of an epic poem is that in the beginning, the narrator "invokes a muse or guiding spirit to inspire him in his great undertaking" (Abraams 98), and "the narrative starts in medias res ("in the middle of things"), at a critical point in the action" (Abraams 98). This is the literary tradition of epic poetry that writers are required to follow when starting an epic poem. A good example is the opening of Paradise Lost by John Milton:

> Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
> Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
> Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
> Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
> Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
> That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed
> In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
> Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion Hill
> Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd
> Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
> Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song (12-11)

In these lines, the poet provides the readers with a brief background about what happened before – Original Sin in this case – and then asks for help from Muse (a pagan source) and Christian God, a traditional invocation in epic writing. In this literary genre, the beginning must follow some rules so the readers can know that what they have just begun reading is an epic.

The opening lines of a literary work can also identify the authors' philosophical views and the specific schools they promote. In his Waiting for Godot, one of the most celebrated plays of the 20th century, for instance, Samuel Beckett makes use of such a technique. At the very beginning of the play, one of the main characters, Estragon, says: "Nothing to be done" (5). The first word of this well-known drama is 'nothing,' which emphasizes absurdity and nothingness. The complete sentence that designates helplessness is also an answer to one of the most fundamental questions of Existentialist philosophers who ask, 'why was I born and what can I do about it?' Hence, the first word that the actor says on the stage is 'nothing,' which is one of the most basic words for the philosophy of

absurdity. As the most influential figure of the 'theatre of absurd,' Beckett highlighted this philosophy of nothingness in the opening of his play which projected "the irrationalism, helplessness, and absurdity of life" (Abrams 2).

Another example of Irish literature that illustrates a writer's philosophy and literary school in the opening lines is The Picture of Dorian Grey, written by Oscar Wilde. This famous and witty author was a leading aesthete and a prominent figure of aestheticism, "a philosophy of life and of art, and an English literary and artistic movement, culminating in the 1890s, with Oscar Wilde as its most extravagant exponent" (Childs 2). In this school, the key concept of beauty is the most dominant one. So, Oscar Wilde's only novel included a short preface that repeated the word 'beautiful' abundantly in its opening lines:

The artist is the creator of beautiful things.
To reveal art and conceal the artist is art›s aim.
The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things.
The highest as the lowest form of criticism is a mode of autobiography.
Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.
Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope.
They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only beauty. (3)

One more interesting way the opening lines can play a significant role in accomplishing a literary work is through the manifestation of the main characters' characterization. Many authors have used some keywords that depict the true nature of their main characters. Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House can be considered as an excellent example of this technique. This play starts with the main character, Nora, saying, "Hide the Christmas Tree carefully, Helen. Be sure the children do not see it till this evening, when it is dressed" (6). One who reads this Norwegian dramatist's work to the end knows that hiding is one of the main features of Nora's character in this much-acclaimed play. For instance, to hide the truth, she insists on not telling her husband that she had borrowed money from Krogstad. The entire play revolves around this characterization; to show another example, one can refer to the fact that the game Nora recommended her children to play was 'hide and seek': "Come, let us have a game! What shall we play at? Hide and seek? Yes, we'll play hide and seek. Bob shall hide first. Must I hide? Very well, I'll hide first" (26). As a result, this play's first word is used as an indirect code to reveal the main character's characteristics.

The first sentence of Edgar Allan Poe›s The Tell-Tale Heart can be presented as the direct usage of the opening lines for indicating the main character›s characterization. In this work of fiction, the unnamed paranoid first-person narrator is a nervous person whose anxiety results in a murder, and due to his nervous characteristics, he eventually confesses his crime to the police officers. Although the character resisted accepting his madness and tragic flaw, the first lines of the story directly talk about his nervousness: "True!—Nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am! but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them" (203).

The opening lines of a literary work can also reveal a summary of the entire plot. A well-known

model is Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen. This novel's first line summarizes the whole story: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (1). The reader can easily guess that this novel is about marriage. To show this technique through another author's writings, one can refer to the last major work of fiction by Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea. This novella's beginning also feeds the readers' imagination and expectations of the whole story: "He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish" (11). As the plot reveals, the old fisherman's endeavors which had failed him in fishing for quite a while, in the end, also turn to be futile and unsuccessful. Consequently, through this technique, some authors present the complete story in a nutshell at the opening of their works. One more unique way to start a literary work is by making the opening lines indicate the main thematic messages, and so some writers enjoy expressing the

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona (where we lay our scene),
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife. (67)

theme of their work in the first line. Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare starts this way: These opening lines from the play's prologue indicate its major elements and themes, such as love, fate, and family disputes and grudge, which thematically construct the plot of this excellent tragedy. Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina can be regarded as another famous example: "All happy families resemble one another; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" (3). As these lines show, happiness and unhappiness in family and marriage are the main themes of this Russian novel around which the story revolves. Finally, the literary technique of foreshadowing in the first lines can strengthen the work's accomplishment. "A well-constructed novel, for instance, will suggest at the very beginning what the outcome may be; the end is contained in the beginning, and this gives structural and thematic unity" (Cuddon 326). The beginning of some works can symbolically foretell and ground the setting and the atmosphere. For instance, George Orwell's 1984 that opens with "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen" (3), depicts and predicts the novel's dystopian setting via using words such as 'cold' and 'thirteen.' The first symbolizes an oppressive and dismal atmosphere in literature. The latter, which has been considered a number related to bad omen and misfortune in various cultures, anticipates a doomed ending.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be inferred that many outstanding authors from different nations and ages have paid much attention to their works› opening lines. At the beginning of their works, some writers have followed the traditions and rules of the specific genres such as epic poems; others have directly and indirectly used their first lines to convey a message or show their intentions. As the samples in this essay indicate, some authors used their works› first sentences to state their philosophy or literary school, characterization of their main characters, and their works› summary and themes by foreshadowing. Thus, the opening lines have a very significant role in literary

works.

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Figure1: Shakespeare's The Tempest
A Scene from Act I, Scene 2 (Ferdinand courting Miranda)
By William Hogarth

Shakespeare's Dramatic Legacy at a Glance

"No legacy is so rich as honesty"

William Shakespeare

This article discusses a part of Shakespeare's great legacy and addresses key themes of his plays and the similarities among them. William Shakespeare›s works have been a significant influence on theatre. Not only he created some of the most admirable plays in literature, but he also transformed English theatre by emphasizing characterization, language, genre, and plot. Shakespearean plays fall into five main categories. The Comedies, the Tragedies, the Histories, the Romances. This list contains plays that fall into each category.
The Comedies
17 Shakespeare›s plays are considered comedies: Taming of the Shrew, Comedy of Errors, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Winter›s Tale, Cymbeline, Pericles, Love›s Labour's Lost, All›s Well that Ends Well, The Tempest, The Much Ado About

Nothing, and The Two Noble Kinsmen, Twelfth Night, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Merchant of Venice, As You Like It (also known as romantic comedy)[1], Measure for Measure and Troilus and Cressida (also classified as tragedies)[2]. The comedies have common elements: they involve lovers and almost always have a good ending.

The Tragedies

10 plays are among the tragedies: Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar Titus Andronicus, Coriolanus, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, and Timon of Athens. All the tragedies have a hero who must overcome internal and external obstacles. Often, the protagonist has a ‹tragic flaw› that leads to his destruction. Macbeth can be a good example, whose evil ambition overtook him and caused his downfall.

Figure2: Shakespeare's Macbeth A Scene from Act IV, Scene 1 (Macbeth and the three witches) By Thomas Barker, painted 1830

The Chronicles

He wrote 10 Chronicle (or history plays): Parts 2 ,1, and 3 of Henry VI, Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2, Henry V, King John, Richard II, Richard III, and Henry VIII. The main theme of his history plays is the loss and gain of power, and, specially, the theme of divine right. Shakespeare spends a lot of time discussing what makes a wise, and successful leader in his plays.

Figure3: Shakespeare's Henry VI Part III, Act II, Scene III, (Warwick, Edward, and Richard at the battle of Towton) By John Augustus Atkinson

Figure 4: Shakespeare's Cymbeline
Act III, Scene 4, (Imogen Discovered in the Cave)
By Edward Penny

The Romances

Sometimes Shakespeare's late comedies are considered romances. Like Cymbeline, Pericles, The Tempest, The Winter's Tale, and (hardly, The Two Noble Kinsmen). These plays, at times, seem more like tragedies than comedies, but they have the standard ‹good ending›. Many believe that the romances are his best plays, and represent the poet at his most mature stage of writing.

Themes are Shakespeare's ideas that he explores dramatically through the experience of the characters in his plays, and they define the play. There are common themes in all of his plays, such as reality and appearance, however additionally, each play explores its own issues, which are dramatized in the actions of the characters, their language, and in the setting.

He uses tragic heroes, or antiheroes, in his comedies and tragedies to make key points about justice, revenge, free-will, morality. Shakespearean plays also include some form of supernatural participation, often involving the Greek gods. Generally, his plays incorporate troubles of romantic relationships, which lead to conflict or destruction in the end.

Tragic Heroes

Shakespearean plays often involve tragic heroes who don't recognize their shortcomings or imperfection till it's too late. In some cases, they receive false information and react unwell to the lies. An example, in Macbeth doesn't recognize his hunger for power, immoral murderous actions or unwavering trust in the three witches until Lady Macbeth commits suicide. In Hamlet, hamlet doesn't come to grips with his insatiable seek revenge until he's fatally wounded. In Romeo and Juliet Romeo falsely assumes Juliet is dead and commits suicide, finally causing Juliet to end her own life. His plays, especially the tragedies, don't usually end on a high note.

Recurring Themes

As mentioned the similar themes of his plays are Free-will, revenge, betrayal, and the corruption of power. By using these themes his aims is to make the audience contemplate deeper issues in human nature. For example, in Richard III, Macbeth, Hamlet, Julius Caesar and Romeo and Juliet the audience must consider whether fate or free-will is to blame for the characters› bad decisions and unfortunate upshot. In King Lear and Anthony and Cleopatra he shows that the roots of betrayal often stem from aggressive, unjustifiable quests for political power. These recurring themes reveals the darker side of human nature, eventually leading to, suicide murder or madness.

Supernatural Elements

Mystical elements, like witchcraft and Greek mythology, add suspense and seduction to his plays. However, the participation of supernatural beings doesn›t get humans off the hook for their selfish ways. In A Midsummer Night›s Dream Shakespeare shows Theseus and Hippolyta, a Greek god and goddess, as the king and queen of Athens. These parallels help readers to make connection between their knowledge of Greek mythology and the meaning of the play. In Macbeth the three witches, with the help of a Greek goddess named Hecate, use witchcraft to convince Macbeth that he will become the king of Scotland. Plots don›t usually end well when the supernatural beings are involved.

Troubled Romantic Relationships

This element add tension to the plots, resulting in emotional confusion and devastation for the characters. Some dishonourable intentions and others allow selfishness or the hunger for power to get the best of them. For instance, Macbeth/Lady Macbeth, Hamlet/Ophelia, Anthony/Cleopatra, Brutus/Portia, Othello/Desdemona and Beatrice/Benedick, struggle to maintain authentic, self-giving, long-lasting relationships. In Romeo and Juliet fear and naivety finally lead to the demise of their love which is forbidden. Shakespeare uses tormented romantic relationships to convince the audience that love doesn›t always conquer all.

Key themes of Shakespearean plays
Theme: Ambition [3]

Ambition is treated to a greater or lesser degree in almost all his plays, and merge with, the other themes. Hamlet, in Claudius' ambitious bid to become king he murders his brother, Hamlet's father. That leads to Hamlet's decision to bring him down by avenging his father's murder. Ambition in Macbeth is far from a straightforward illustration of the theme. It engenders a debate in the mind of the audience as to who the ambitious character is. In terms of classical tragedy Macbeth fits the bill. He's a hero, virtually worshiped by the other feudal lords of Scotland. When realizes he can become king he believes that all he has to do is to kill the king, he will be the king, and that will be that. The rest of the play works that idea through and throws up its various complications. In the end the hero, by now regarded as a hellish villain, is brought down.

Theme: Appearance & Reality

The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream, are mostly about the confusion between what is real and what is not. As well Iago in Othello hides his real nature behind a facade of honesty and is trusted by all, whereas, in his dealings with everyone he is manipulative and remorseless. In Measure for Measure Angelo, apparently incorruptible, is in reality a deceitful sexual abuser.

Shakespeare's plays are full of references to men who hide their evil natures behind smiles. For example, When Hamlet thinks about his father's murderer he comments 'One may smile, and smile, and be a villain.' Such observations about men's smiles fill the plays: 'There's daggers in men's smiles'; 'Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile'; 'Some that smile have in their hearts, I fear, millions of mischief.' The characters in Shakespeare's plays often wear masks. Several characters conceal their true identity behind disguises. The Duke of Kent, for example, banished by King Lear, determines to stay with him and look after him: he disguises himself as a servant. The device of disguise is highly dramatic and Shakespeare exploited it to the full. One of Shakespeare's favorite tricks was to disguise a girl as a boy. Probably the two most famous are Viola in Twelfth Night and Rosalind in As You Like It. In those cases everyone is deceived, regarding appearance as the reality. Also A Midsummer Night's Dream is all about confusing appearance and reality. Shakespeare uses various devices to create confusion as to what is real and what is illusion. There are two worlds in the play, the fairy world and the human world. They operate harmoniously but separately. However in this play the fairy world intervenes in the human world and throws up all kinds of illusions as the action develops. The fairly king's servant, Puck, plays tricks on the lovers and that makes things seem to be what they are not and bewilders them: Puck becomes confused himself and puts the love potion in the wrong young man's eyes, further complicating matters. The four lovers are not only lost in the forest but have lost their grip on reality.

Theme: Betrayal

In Othello we see a different treatment of the betrayal theme. As in Julius Caesar, which is one of those plays that are driven by betrayal, betrayal is central to the drama, and it drives the action, but it isn't one single act of betrayal: it's a prolonged narrative of betrayal with several other betrayals throughout the play, encompassing all of the main characters, right up until the very end. As the play progresses through its final scenes it's almost unbearable for the audience, who are watching the betrayals, witnessing the pain it produces, everyone's emotions mercilessly manipulated by a psychopathic character's heartless actions. Shakespeare's plays are filled with characters committing acts of betrayal, including the comedies. In the history plays, where politics and the ambition that goes with those involved in it, betrayal is commonplace. The history plays are about kings and the powerful people around them, most often people with their own ambitions prepared to support someone in a major act of betrayal, including regicide, in order to further their own careers. Many of the plays are a working through of attempts to dethrone monarchs, a lead up to an attempt and then a working through of the consequences. The history of Britain is full of betrayals at that level and Shakespeare revealed in reproducing that history in the theatres, to the delight of theatre-goers.

Theme: Conflict

Conflict in Shakespeare is not only an external thing but often a process within one individual. Macbeth and Hamlet are good examples of that. An internal drama takes place in the minds of both: there are choices to be made and the conflict

is between and among those choices. The question is always, what to do. As the action of the play progresses the inner conflict becomes more intense. At the same time the various conflicts in the action continue: for example, the thanes moving against Macbeth in rebellion, and the plotting against Hamlet's life. King Lear is often described by commentators as Shakespeare's greatest play. Several suggest that the play does not fully work in performance but that it is the overwhelming winner intellectually and poetically. They argue that because, unlike other plays with a main plot and one or more subplots, Lear has two major plots, and for that reason, neither can fully engage the audience, whose attention and involvement is fragmented. That may be so but, on the other hand, at the same time it is probably Shakespeare's most integrated play, with the characters, the action, the ideas and the imagery all working in harmony as a single unit.

Theme: Deception

Deception is essential to Shakespeare's dramatic works in that it governs the relationships between the characters and drives the plots. It is the many acts of deception, both unintended and intended, through the comedies, histories and tragedies, that provide the dramatic devices that inform the action. Deception in Shakespeare's plays has many different faces. It could be accidental, as in The Comedy of Errors or it could take the form of well-planned tactics in the hands of evil characters, as in Othello and Julius Caesar. In taking two plays, for example, Hamlet and A Midsummer Night's Dream, one a tragedy and one a comedy, one can easily list many instances of deception in both forms, an unhappy or happy ending, seriousness and mockery, lightness and momentousness. A quick survey of some of the plays indicates the widespread use of deception in Shakespeare's works: In Hamlet, the prince's father is murdered in a secret plot by his uncle to seize the throne; Hamlet pretends to be unbalanced to avert his uncle's suspicions while he gathers evidence of his crime; Hamlet employs a group of actors to stage a play depicting Claudius killing his father to confirm Claudius' guilt. All of those deceptions drive the plot and have the consequences of the deaths of most of the play's characters. In Romeo and Juliet the two young people fall in love and court each other against the wishes of their families; Juliet secretly marries Romeo; Juliet fakes her death to avoid marrying Paris. The consequences of those deceptions are that Romeo arrives at Juliet's tomb, sees her apparently dead and, unaware of her deception, kills himself; Juliet wakes up, sees Romeo's dead body and kills herself; the two families end their feud. In Macbeth we mainly have Macbeth deceiving himself. He convinces himself that he can control fate when he is told by the witches that he will become king; he deludes himself that no man could harm him; he deludes himself into believing that the witches are on his side and not agents of his destruction. The results of the self-deception are that everyone in Macduff's family is killed and that both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth die. In Othello Iago deceives Othello into believing that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio; Iago plants a handkerchief on Cassio to frame him; Iago tricks Roderigo into killing Cassio. The results of the deception are that Othello kills Desdemona and later commits suicide. Over that act; Roderigo, Cassio, and Emilia all die and Iago is imprisoned.

Theme: Hatred and Revenge

Let us take Othello as a play in which hatred is at the center of the drama. The conflict of the plot is driven by hatred: hatred is fuelled by racism and jealousy and by the end of the drama we are left with the impression of just how destructive it is Iago's hatred for Othello is irrational. No matter how many times we may see the play we can never get to the bottom of why he hates Othello. Romeo and Juliet's setting is the environment of hatred. Shakespeare's exploration of the theme is different from that he employs in Othello. In Romeo and Juliet the hatred between the two Verona families that causes death and suffering, and affects the lives of so many young people, is often mentioned, but it doesn't actually exist. It is an ancient hatred. Shakespeare's revenge play, Titus Andronicus is quite possibly the most grotesque play of the period, with its unpalatable violence. Audiences could not identify with the methods of the protagonist, but in Hamlet we have a thoughtful, decent, highly intelligent young man who would not normally do anyone any harm and, indeed, is unable to perform the violence that his call to revenge demands. Conventionally, in revenge plays, the avenger is something of a hero but, in seeking revenge, is himself a killer. In some of the plays the avenger is not in any way a hero but utterly villainous. It is an interesting situation because although the avenger has the right to realise justice by taking revenge it is simply not Christian. The Christian way would always be forgiveness. But forgiveness is not an option in revenge plays. Shakespeare, of course, as he always does, resolves this problem by having all the wrongdoers, including Claudius, the murderer of Hamlet's father, caught in the traps they have set for the young prince. Hamlet does not have to do a thing to any of them, and never intentionally kills anyone. His father's death is avenged by the end of the play but there has been no violence from Hamlet. Even Hamlet, often called Shakespeare's best play, follows this somewhat simplistic formula. However, Hamlet is not just entertainment as many of the revenge plays of the time were, but a deep psychological character study with profound moral reflections. And, of course, with the language to go with those things, the poetry that we associate with all Shakespeare's plays.

A lot of Shakespeare's plays deals with really big, universal themes that can still relate to today, so Shakespeare›s influence continues to be felt today because of his contributions to English and his timeless stories that can easily be re-envisioned for modern times. It's a legacy which never gets old.

1) Romantic comedy is a general term for comedies that deal with the indiscretion and misunderstandings of lovers, in a joyful and happily concluded manner which usually avoids important satire».The Merchant of Venice forms one of a group of such comedies, along with The Two Gentlemen of Verona, As You Like It, and Twelfth Night.

2) In Shakespeare studies, the problem plays are three plays that William Shakespeare wrote between the late 1590s and the first years of the seventeenth century: All›s Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, and Troilus and Cressida. Shakespeare›s problem plays are characterised by their complex and ambiguous tone, which shifts violently between dark, psychological drama and more straightforward comic material; compare tragicomedy.

3) Source : www.nosweatshakespeare.com

Names in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

Nava Eghdami

Let's consider "What's in a name?" uttered by Juliet in Shakespeare's play. Juliet tells Romeo that a name itself is an artificial and meaningless convention, and that the name does not make the man. But is that so? Can we be defined without our names? Do names individuate us? Are surnames the same as names?

Shortly after meeting Romeo, Juliet tries to find his name and while eagerly searching for it she says: "If he be married, my grave is like to be my wedding bed." This means that nothing else matters than him being married or not. Neither Romeo's wealth, nor his

lifestyle is important for her at that time and actually "at the heart of the play it is Juliet who speaks more eloquently and urgently to define". This situation changes when Juliet finds out that Romeo is a Montague, and she exclaims: "My only love sprung from my only hate, too early seen unknown and known too late." So after all, the problem is not being married or living far away; the problem is their names.

Throughout our lives, we undoubtedly live with a name which we did not get to choose but we make a reputation under it, and stand up for it, so the name is indeed important for the context of reputation and the main choices we make. Warren Buffett once said: "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it", on the other hand there is a fact that our character is what we really are and our reputation is merely what others think we are. So the question is, are we defined by our names or can we be ourselves without these given names? In other words, is Juliet's remark that "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" true?

In the play, both Romeo and Juliet call each other by different phrases and not just their given names. They try to ignore the unfortunate fact that their names are an enormous obstacle in the way of their love because, as a matter of fact, names send signals about who we are and where we come from. In the first balcony scene, Juliet's monologue is all about Romeo's name: "O Romeo Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" She has no idea he is listening, and all she cares about is his name because she is madly in love with him and the name 'Montague' is a significant problem for her. Before all else, she suggests him give up his name, still not knowing he is listening; "Deny thy father and refuse thy name". Here, "Juliet imagines a succession of (im)possibilities: that Romeo should repudiate his father's name, or she hers; that he should be named differently; and finally that he should simply remove his name, as if it were extrinsic, separable from identity." (Belsey 133) As the story goes on, things go wrong and life proves them that their names are inseparable from their identities, yet they are reluctant to face the fact that they are from two opposing families in Verona. Both Juliet and Romeo try to ignore it, but they know their surnames will inevitably remain enemies.

A name is a word that can create images in our mind, but the character of the name owner can change those images. There is a reciprocal relationship between a name and a character. A given name may be just a word, but that simple word will become more elaborate and multifaceted as you get to know the people who bear those names. After all, if life was all about names, people with the same names should have been all the same. On the other hand, things can get much more complicated when we discuss surnames. Our surnames are not just given names; they are our bloodline, our history, and our family. They are quite telling about our background, the communities to which we belong, and our place in this huge world. As in the play, surnames 'Montague' and 'Capulet' are not just a bunch of letters grouped together. They are the place, the family, the culture, and the history that raised Romeo and Juliet, so they cannot abandon them merely for the sake of their love.

To sum up, we already know that neither our names nor our surnames define who we are, but many things in our lives depend on them. Our surnames and our socioeconomic status are often very closely linked together, in particular in the view of those who know us, creating the illusion that surnames can have some sort of power over our lives, when, in fact, they do not. Our decisions and the choices we make throughout our life are the things that matter more and are the facts that will ruin or build up our reputation, dignity, and well, our names.

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THE LIBRARY OF BOREDOM:
EXPLORING BORGES' LABYRINTHS

Ghazal Rezaei

Introduction

Borges is a world of enigmatic ideas and complex perceptions. He is considered as a pioneer of great trends in structuralist and post-modern thought. Borges, as an Argentinian author, seems to be obsessed with both his country's literature and history, as well as the ideological issues which have dominated the western world from the beginnings of the 20th century to the cold war. He had a major impact on Latin American literature and literary fiction in other languages. Being an essayist and a poet as well, he is famous for his ficcines – short stories whose brevity makes one read them over and over. Therefore, the aim of this essay is to provide a short introduction to his philosophy and style of fiction. Moreover, by focusing on one of his major short stories, The Library of Babel, the notion of boredom, with which most of us are struggling nowadays, is going to be discussed.

The philosophy

The rudimentary step to understand Borges' fiction is to be familiar with the philosophy behind his works. At a very young age, he got the chance to be familiar with metaphysics, idealism, and Zeno's paradoxes. The paradox had a major impact on both his writings and his view towards life. Later on, he read works of other thinkers like Hume, Berkeley, and Schopenhauer whom he referred to many times when dealing with the idealism which was essential for his imaginative writings. He was interested in metaphysical issues such as identity, time, eternity, determinism, and the limits of human understanding.

Borges was not a philosopher, though; for a philosopher is expected to imply a grand systematic way of thinking of his own. He simply described himself as a man of letters

sure that there is a universe outside our mind when we cannot perceive it; in Berkeley's words, the universe exists, if it is perceived. This brings us to the notion of nominalism. Borges believed that we cannot understand what reality is and what is not; because we are dealing with nominals everyday even without being aware of their presence. Nominalism was a great source for Borges' writings. As mentioned earlier, he has been searching for a new definition for concepts so that they compete with the old concepts in philosophy. Above all, this nominalist belief gives his writings the motivation to go against the old concepts of western thought like god, the truth, the universe, the self, or time. For example, he declares that there is no whole self by declaring "the nothingness of personality" (Bosteels, 2009, p.41); that is there is no stable notion of the self. Just like identity or the self, time is subjective as well. To explain the subjectivity of time, he refers to Heraclitus' idea of time which he describes as a flowing river that is constantly transformed. Thus, the past, present, and the future are mixed together; and time will be a mere illusion.

The Style

The major tenet of Borges' fiction is in the form of the labyrinth which unfolds complex possibilities. He tends to reveal the tension between actuality and possibility by blurring the borders between actual possibilities and possible actualities. This pattern of labyrinth makes his fiction keep 'fictioning', that is endlessly opening up bifurcating paths and possibilities within the text. Thus, by these endless bifurcation possibilities in the actual, the reality in Borges is blurred and as a result it comes to be total fiction; but this fiction is not merely a literary work filled with imagination, rather, the actuality produced in the form of 'fictioning' opens up both numerous unexpected possibilities in the future and by blurring the time boundaries recovers and reopens possibilities in the past.

By avoiding the traditional linear form of story-telling, he explains that "the present is always a beginning, an always already beginning future." (Ziarek, 2009, p.75) That is the present is constantly happening and leads to various futures at the same time. In the short story The Library of Babel, the

and declared his disdain for any philosophy, believing that any systematic philosophy tends to lead astray. (Gingerich, 2009) But this reaction against any systematic philosophy would design a new system of thinking, that is anti-philosophy. Borges, as an anti-philosopher, opposed traditional and the universal concepts, Truth for instance, and was searching for a new and radical definition of Truth; but not to replace it with the old one; rather, to continuously compete with the universality of Truth in philosophy. Furthermore, he described the world as an infinite library with transfinite collections of books in it. He asserts that, "according to Mallarme, the world exists for a book; according to Bloy, we are the versicles or words or letters of a magic book, and that incessant book is the only thing in the world; or, rather, it is the world." (Bosteels, 2009, p.40) For Borges, the world cannot be known; that is, ontologically, we cannot be

idea of possibility of existence comes in a footnote to the narrator's explanation of a total book and also the nature of the library: "It is enough that a book is possible for it to exist." (84) Besides, as the narrator explains that nothing is going to be discovered, it is the searching itself which is important, not the outcome; for this act of searching simply indicates the possible paths of experiencing the endless possibilities.

Borges tends to not only present events simply in a short story form, but also maintain these events in a way which is always open for the emergence of possibilities. In other words, this form of fiction does not lead the reader to just one strict conclusion which is put at the end by the subjective author. Rather, it is the fiction's ability to tell and direct a story in which the reader is faced with numerous mysteries of possibilities. That is why one should reread his stories; not simply for the plot or the sheer fun of the labyrinths he uses, rather, to go through the mysterious possibilities and merge with them. More interestingly, these fictional possibilities are not designed to be limited to the words on a piece of paper, but to show that our being is not limited to just one future already planned by ourselves or society and the process of knowing various futures to understand ourselves properly is never going to be finished because of different possibilities. As Heidegger asserts, "human existence means a continuous projection ahead of itself as an existence whose understanding of itself is never finished or complete." (Ziarek, 2009, p.71)

The Library of Babel

The representative of Borges' mature writing, The library of Babel, was first published in 1941. It is said that this story was inspired by the boredom Borges felt during the period he was working as a librarian. The library is a metaphor for the universe. Each paragraph stands independently from one another and explains a specific event that has happened. Generally, the paragraphs resemble the history of humanity from the modern to the post-modern period regarding the reality and the human failures which results in boredom.

The story begins with the explanation of the events that happened with the rise of modern philosophy. With the rise of modern philosophy, there emerged a thought which most of the philosophers and thinkers believed. That is, the world/ nature is a book; if we read this book properly, we will understand the world. "Five shelves correspond to each one of the walls of each hexagon; each shelf contains thirty-two books of a uniform format; each book is made up of four hundred and ten pages, each page of forty lines; each line, of some eighty black letters." Borges, 1962, p.80) Based on this notion, a book is written by somebody's mind; if the world is a book, it is the product of a mind; and that is the god's mind. "That cynical book is god." (ibid) As a result, there is no mystery and there exists nothing that humans are unable to understand and perceive it. This idea was impossible to be rejected and remained for hundred years. To be more precise, they believed that the structure of the mind and that of the world are the same; for when the mind tends to produce something, it does it through oral speech or written texts. So, like the Rationalists who declare that the mind is the mirror of the world, or like the Empiricists that state the mind is a tabula rasa which perceives its materials from the world, the mind resembles the world; thus, the mind is absolutely coherent and well-organized.

Now the searchers in the library believed that they discovered everything; for there remained no mystery. The debate between the existence of god and the death of god has reached its peak. Between the god and the nothingness, people choose nothingness. By this choice, humans consider themselves as the ultimate gods in the universe. But they did not fulfill the role of the god successfully. This is the time humans fall down from the ultimate tower of beliefs they built. People left the old beliefs of the ability to understand the world behind and chose an indifferent attitude to begin the post-modern thought. Historically speaking, during the 19th century, thinkers like Freud explained that the mind is not that coherent but a complete chaos. We do not have access to the mind's depth and we cannot control its chaotic parts. This idea lasts through the post-modern thought and

mixed with uncertainty toward any notion like reality and truth. Borges, as a major thinker of post-modernity, takes this notion as the basic idea of his writings but he adds another function of the mind. He explains that the mind is nothing but the language which produces sentences and words and texts. That is why our understanding of the world has been already written down and explained by others, so we, just by reading the books are able to perceive the world. The paragraphs one by one show that the early ponderings are now replaced by passive acceptance of bewilderment and the everlasting boredom. Now the world becomes deeply boring since life is not able to create diversity and make any new changes. And even those small changes are the same as the old ones, but in a novel shape. So, it endlessly repeats itself which results in absolute boredom.»… that absurdities are the norm in the library and that anything reasonable is an almost miraculous exception.» (p.86) According to Schopenhauer, now that most of the human needs are fulfilled and humans can understand the world perfectly, the boredom will begin to darken the world. Thus, humans are constantly thrown back and forth between pain and boredom. They just tend to fulfill their desire; they do not care about any special satisfaction. (Svendsen, 2005)

The Library of Boredom

The phenomenon of boredom has always been with the humankind throughout history so that it cannot be traced back to its origin to find out when it arose. In his Either/Or, Soren Kierkegaard elaborates on the origins of boredom and maintains that

"The gods were bored, so they created Adam. Adam was bored because he was alone, and so Eve was created. Thus, boredom entered the world and increased in proportion to the increase in population… Consider the consequence of this boredom. Humanity fell from its lofty heights, first because of Eve, and then from the Tower of Babel." (2004, p. 286)

Nowadays, boredom turns to be as a major phenomenon in the postmodern era for it is not a mere personal state of mind; rather, it is a widespread phenomenon with which probably one hundred percent of the population is dealing .

The state of boredom mostly occurs when humans are not able to do what they desire to do, or when we are forced to do something we cannot bear doing. But, the extreme extent of boredom happens when humans have no idea of what they really want to do, or much worse, when they have no idea of what they are doing in their daily life. At this stage, they do not have the willpower; lacking the will, they cannot free themselves from the state of extreme boredom.

In modern world, boredom has made humankinds put greater emphasis on the interesting instead of the valuable. Humanity lost their interest in valuable things; things that can change the life in greater extent. Struggling with boredom, they immediately grab for things which are interesting on the surface so that they can distract humans from the state of boredom. But this interesting things are going to be dull again and be looked at as boring. As a result, humans are lost in this state and, more importantly, lose the true meaning of life. According to Existentialists, life has no meaning and humans must be able to create the meaning for themselves. There always has been a simple way to create the meaning of life; that is, humans can find the meaning of life through emotions and passion, or having a specific feeling toward something or somebody which cannot be conveyed through words and language. Therefore, the meaninglessness of life will be forgotten for moments and the need for meaning will be satisfied and humans, as the subjects, will be comfortable. The problem is that in the postmodern world, even this feeling cannot occur anymore and the boredom or discomfort humanity feels everyday does not let even that meaning to be achieved. It is the responsibility of each society to function well and help citizens to find meaning in the world. In pre-modern societies, human beings could find the meaning in some collective modes of thought like religion or nationalism, but todays even these codes are useless for the extreme sense of boredom which is dominant. The modern technology which

is progressing every day, makes humans trapped in the state of boredom by turning them into mere consumers without any control over the desire for not to go with the flow. This human-made giant makes them passive beings rather than active beings. In the broader extent, boredom takes place during the lack of individuality, personally-defined meaning of life, and freedom of thought; these three factors are there because humans are given false information and everything they want to know is fully coded and they do not participate in realizing the meaning. When everything is already fully coded, humans, who tend to create their ideal society actively, are driven to the state of extreme boredom.

Conclusion

Borges, during his life, made his indifference clear toward philosophy and he described his fictions and essays a mere literary work. He simply called himself a man of letter; not a moralist or a philosopher. He read works of idealist philosophers and was interested in metaphysics to build his own way of thinking upon to create new definition for words to compete with the old notions like time and identity. The Library of Babel, is a major work by him in which we can find so many ideas from our world, of which the most obvious one is the idea of boredom. Boredom, as a widespread phenomenon makes us have an indifferent view towards life. But humans can moderate the extent of this phenomenon if they try to alter the way the world works and find the meaning of their life.

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MELVILLE'S BARTLEBY, THE SCRIVENER: A NARRATIVE REVOLT

Masoud Karimian

Melville's subtitle, "A Story of Wall Street," screams and enunciates a picture: the law office, its employer and employees, its interior arrangements and procedures epitomize the American financial world, with its power structure, division of labor, and distribution of profits, all contributing to a hardening system of class and caste relationships. For some literary critics, "Bartleby" has appeared as a pessimistic view of the fate of the writer in America, forced to abandon the originality of his own expression and made to copy what his employer (or publisher) commands; other readers, moving from focus on artistic creativity to spiritual fulfillment, emphasize the ethical incompatibility of Christian doctrine and the way of Wall Street. For Melville, the story was one of several he would write to illustrate how mid-nineteenth-century America had failed to maintain its youthful promise and come to exhibit faults associated with older societies. But the story also stresses the importance of point of view, perception, and interpretation of character and event in determining the "truth" or meaning of a story. The reader sees nothing from Bartleby's point of view and must learn what ails him with the help and hindrance of the lawyer-narrator's interpretation of his clerk's behavior. As the lawyer tells us in the opening paragraph: "Bartleby was one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources, and in his case, those are very small" (p. 4). Yet despite the scarcity of sources, the narrator provides a detailed account of Bartleby's last days, becoming an unlikely, unwilling, and unwitting evangelist in the process. His account has its inherent limitations, but it is the only gospel we have. Melville's handling of the point of view in this story is a conscious artistic achievement unprecedented in American literature, and his development of the narrator's character and values displays a deft dependence on ironic self-revelation without self-realization. With cheerful ease, the lawyer proudly conveys his sense of success and self-satisfaction. As a narrator, he is reliable at times and unreliable at others, revealing and obscuring the meaning of his troubling experiences. A representative of conservative business interests, he is eager to profit greatly without laboring excessively, has little genuine philanthropy, but in his own way is considerate of his employees and able to overlook their faults if he can make use of them at other times. Despite his limitations, he proves to be capable of considerable moral growth, even though he has to convince himself that his charity will also have some practical benefits. Melville's most telling tactic, much like that of Mark Twain in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, is to make the narrator's language suggest far more than the character consciously realizes. When his words suggest meaning (or double meanings) beyond his understanding, we sense the author's point of view. Thus the narrator's attitudes, actions and reactions, and most importantly his vocabulary reveal the meanings that his mind cannot reach. For Melville, the sustained irony of a narrator unaware of his own verbal hypocrisy provides the strategy by which he unfolds his moral project: to show the collapse of democratic principles and the breakdown of community, communication, and fellowship.

Within the physical and social divisions of the Wall Street office, however, all three have failed. Again the narrator's words reveal a truth he would prefer to suppress: the possessive pronoun forms the core of his value system, as he informs us of "myself, my employées, my business, my chambers, and general surroundings; some such description is indispensable to an adequate understanding of the chief character about to be presented" (p. 4). By these means, Melville means to tell us to watch the narrator. He introduces himself before he introduces Bartleby, and the author's clever metanarration suggests that this is the lawyer's story, even more than it is Bartleby's. Bartleby is the pitiful instrument by which the lawyer is made to realize his moral deficiency.

Like the self-satisfied and overbearing lawyers in Melville's The Paradise of Bachelors, who use the law to right no wrongs, the narrator has sought "the cool tranquility of a snug retreat" where he can "do a snug business among rich men's bonds, and mortgages, and title-deeds" (p. 4). Known as a "safe" man possessing such virtues as "prudence" and

method, he omits morality, justice, passion, or compassion from his value system. Money is his goal, and "the late John Jacob Astor" is his god (p. 4). He serves in a priesthood of profit, and his proprietary attitude includes not only his business office but also the men he employs. They can be inventoried like the inanimate furnishings of his office, because they have value only as means to serve his financial ends.

Some readers might object to such a harsh judgment, citing the lawyer's tolerance of human weakness or eccentricity in his clerks, Turkey and Nippers. He can put up with Turkey's drinking, irritability, and carelessness, however, only if it is confined to a limited part of the day and as long as his elderly clerk remains useful and productive during the remainder of the day (an affordable kindness, since he pays his copyists on a piecework rate rather than a salary or an hourly rate). Turkey is unreliable in the afternoon, but Nippers, the other copyist, is at his best then. Between them, they produce a day's work – a situation acceptable to the narrator as "a good natural arrangement" (p. 5). Since the narrator proudly fills "the Master's office," and accepts the respect and obedience of his workers, whose remarks are usually preceded by a phrase like "With submission, sir," this "good natural arrangement" suggests Melville's more cynical observations on the lack of democracy in the workplace. The narrator offers no encouragement or direction to his younger, more ambitious clerk. Instead of admiring Nippers for his enterprise, he resents "his diseased ambition," and feels no obligation to lessen the authority of his office by raising a subordinate to greater responsibility.

"The Master's office" refers to the position of Master in Chancery, to which the narrator has been appointed. The holder of such office exercised considerable quasi-judicial power, administering decisions in matters of equity. "Equity" can and does refer to what is fair, just, and impartial, yet it also refers to financial holdings, mortgages, bonds, and shares of stock – in short the business in securities and equities associated with Wall Street. Needless to say, the partiality and self-interest of the narrator are never in doubt, and his conscience through most of the story demonstrates the internalized values of Wall Street.

Against this system of values, Bartleby's refusal to assist in proofreading, repeatedly saying his infamous catchphrase "I would prefer not to" when asked, is far more than the complaint of an employee who feels that the request lies outside the requirements of his job description. It is an assertion of autonomy that threatens a carefully controlled network of assumptions, expectations, and relationships. The next stage of his peculiar revolt moves from insubordination to appropriation of private property for personal use. Sleeping in the office strikes the narrator, threatening his property, his status, even his masculine power. He first feels "disarmed" (p. 11) by Bartleby's rebellious behavior and ultimately "unmanned" (p. 17) by the threat to his authority.

Feeling weak and impotent after every attempt to cajole, persuade, entice, command, or bribe Bartleby to provide even a semblance of what he was hired to do, the narrator finds his will harshened by the Wall Street society that has served him so well. The attitude of benign compromise and accommodation that has so often enabled him to manage difficult circumstances to his own benefit fails repeatedly when confronted by Bartleby's bland, unreasoning refusal. Turning to the forms and phrases of Wall Street business communication, he offers a helping hand while denying any real sense of community, or at best mocking it: "If, hereafter, in your new place of abode, I can be of any service to you, do not fail to advise me by letter" (p. 23). With this speech, he rids himself of Bartleby (or so he thinks) in brilliant fashion. Reveling in what he has achieved without bullying, arrogance, or even raising his voice, he boasts of a mission accomplished without violence, "Masterly I called it," and again, "I could not but highly plume myself on my masterly management in getting rid of Bartleby'' (p. 23). The key adjective "masterly" (unintentionally, in the narrator's mind) refers to the narrator's title, his position in the office hierarchy, his masterly use of authority, and quite possibly the masterly defense of slavery.

So far Melville has established a system of

class and caste antithetical to American political promise. But beyond the obstacles to community and the barriers to communication, there lies another level of indictment that widens the gap between the all-powerful and the powerless: the impossibility of fellowship and communion between one human being and another. When Bartleby will not be moved by his employer's various modes of "masterly management," the narrator offers a series of blunt rhetorical questions: "What earthly right have you to stay here?" (not realizing that something more than "earthly right" might be involved). "Do you pay any rent? Do you pay my taxes? Or is this property yours?" As his anger piles up, reaching a pinnacle of self-righteousness, he is cursed by a wave of liberal sympathies that grind his hard-headed Wall Street gospel and soften his malicious and unfeeling masterly ways. Quietly he wonders whether "the circumstances of being alone in a solitary office … entirely unhallowed by humanizing domestic associations" could cause Bartleby's insidious eccentricities (p. 6–25). Under the influence of this new perception, and as true as he tries to remain to his Wall Street principles, the narrator seemingly moves toward a redemption as he confronts his radically unsettling humanizing association with Bartleby. However, his progress is limited. He cannot eject Bartleby into the street, so he takes the unlikely course of moving his offices to another location. By separating himself from Bartleby, leaving Bartleby for others to deal with, and denying any further responsibility, the narrator decisively fails the test of gospel of humanism.

Although he has failed Melville's test, this transformation in the lawyer is really the synthesis of the story. Bartleby is the agent, the instrument, the defeated victim powerless to save himself, yet strong enough to save another. Through Bartleby's influence, the lawyer, whose efforts at charity are at first so callous and pragmatic, becomes increasingly filled with a sense of humanity and compassion. Never completely free of his Wall Street principles, he gradually shows less need to rationalize his actions or find a utilitarian justification for them. His private reflections reveal not only th growth of tolerance and sympathy, but also the greater insight of a spiritual transformation:

For the first time in my life a feeling of overpowering stinging melancholy seized me. Before, I had never experienced aught but a not unpleasing sadness. The bond of a common humanity now drew me irresistibly to gloom. A fraternal melancholy! For both I and Bartleby were sons of Adam. (p. 17).

"The bond of a common humanity," a sense of a shared vulnerability to the human condition – they shape the foundation for an ideal of community, a concept of fellowship, comradery, and communion, and they penetrate the narrator's conscience, though only so far. In an ironic reversal of Christ driving the money-men from the Temple, Wall Street landlords and city authorities, with considerable difficulty, remove Bartleby from the office, arrest him as a vagrant, and lock him in the Tombs prison. Christ driving the money-men from the Temple. The narrator plays his part but can stimulate in Bartleby no will to live. Bartleby's last words to his repentant former employer, who has tried to stress that signs of encouragement exist even in this environment, are "I know where I am" (p. 32), and indeed this place of total prison is familiar – the same encircling walls, the same repressive and castigating normality, and the same stony embodiment of antihuman institutions.

Appended to the story is an unconfirmed rumor about Bartleby's previous employment as "a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington" (p. 34). Its position and its content providing the only information about Bartleby's past, it compels the reader to look more carefully than does the narrator, who sees only a possible source for Bartleby's negativism and depression: "Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men? Conceive a man by nature prone to pallid hopelessness, can any business seem more fitted to heighten it than that of continually handling these letters, and assorting them for the flames" (p. 34). Yet, considering those undeliverable letters, he sees a little more: "For by the cartload they are annually burned. Sometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring

– the finger it was meant for perhaps, moulders in the grave, a bank-note sent in swiftest charity – he whom it would relieve, nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing, hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death. Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!" (p. 34). Although the lawyer's words seem sentimental and melodramatic, they are not banal. He has come far in his account of Bartleby and what it means to him, letting himself be drawn into a human problem for which there is no "legal" solution at all.

To consider the lawyer's moral evolution, then, enables us to estimate how a man who Embodies Wall Street greed could come to express tragic insight. For although Bartleby does not rise from the Tombs, his story does, and the story is evidence that the narrator has accomplished in his record of mind, memory, and conscience the only immortality Bartleby is to have. Without the encounter with Bartleby, the narrative would not exist, and we would not have witnessed the transformation by which this man is somewhat saved. In Melville's dimly lit theater of hope, life is often a surrealistic allegory, and art, which can counter the conventional view of the world and invert the more typical judgments of society, is the only faint and feeble means of enlightenment and redemption.
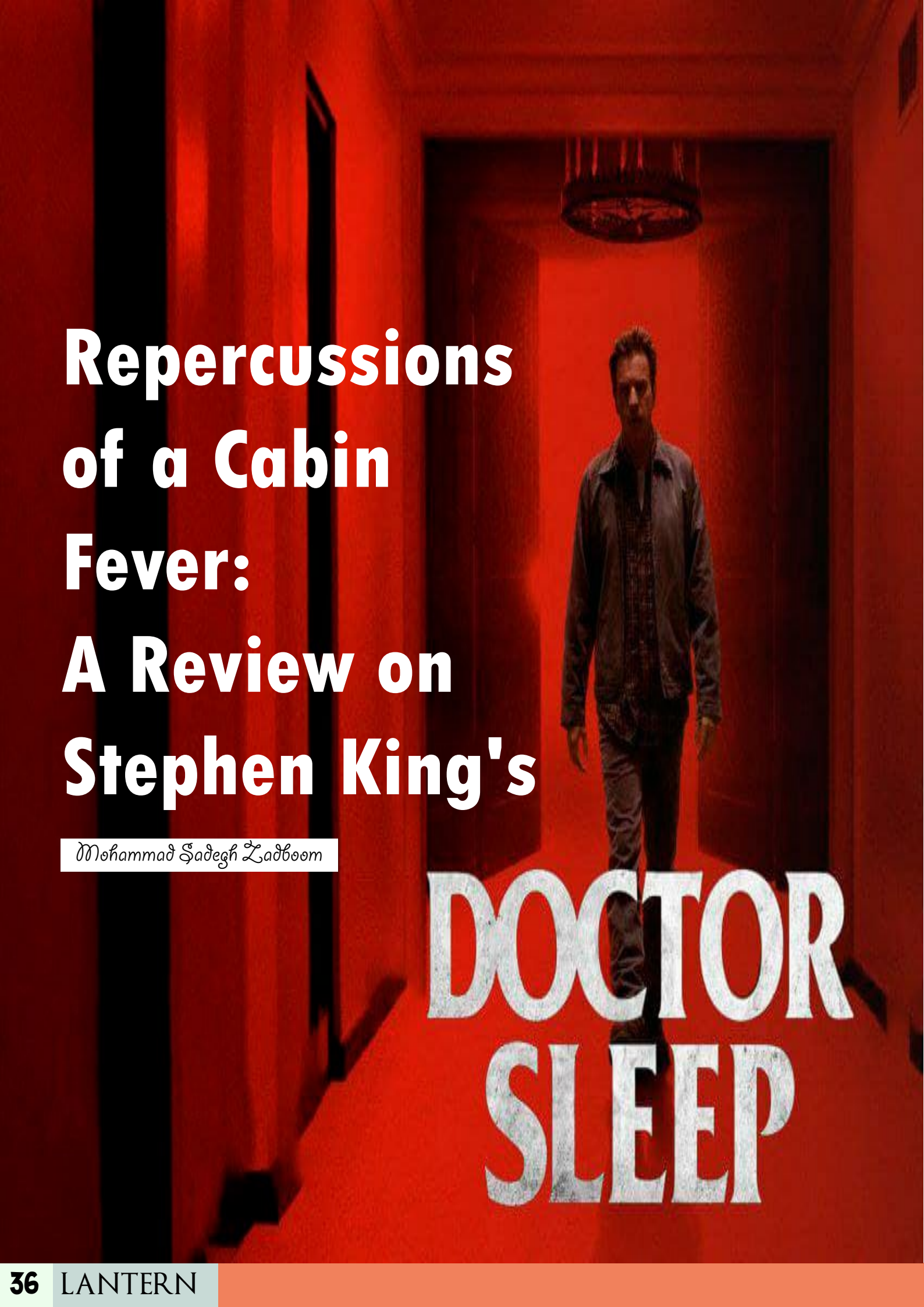
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Repercussions of a Cabin Fever: A Review on Stephen King's

Mohammad Sadegh Zadboom

Forty-four years ago, while staying at a Colorado hotel that was closing for the winter, Stephen King had a lightning bolt of an idea. Watching the isolated mountain ranges and the remote setting of the place, he had a thought: What if a family find themselves in a hotel like this for the whole season? Wouldn›t this make an amazing horror story? Then he went on to write The Shining. Locked in a rented room, away from his family, he managed to finish the book in just six weeks. The book became an instant classic, and the movie adaptation of the novel was secured by Stanley Kubrick, which, too, became a genre-defining piece of work.

Later on, King went on to do other things. Like having an amazing career, profiting more than 400 million dollars, and publishing more than 70 books. But the follow-up to The Shining, hummed under his feet for the decades to come. It finally became Doctor Sleep, published in 2013, which was one of the best horror books that he had written in years.

The Shining

Jack Torrance, a recovering alcoholic, has a severe anger problem and cannot help but to throw temper tantrums at any given moment. This makes him getting nowhere in his career as a teacher, so he tries to break into a writing career. The severe financial difficulties that his family faces as a consequence, makes him question his ability to fulfill the role of a father. He›s filled with a sense of shame and worthlessness, because his relationship to social life, «the symbolic» is damaged (if we want to speak in terms of psychoanalysis, his writer›s block also symbolizes that he›s dissociated with «language»). As the story progresses, his repressed childhood traumas come to the surface and Jack reproduces a pattern of violence just like his father›s and begins to abuse his son, Danny. To make a long story short, he finally gets his Darth Vader, Return of the Jedi moment and finds retribution by resisting the urge to kill his son in his final moments.

At its heart, The Shining is the story of a disintegrating family taken to heartbreaking extremes. Its unique beauty stems from the eloquently designed vignettes about familial tragedy, addiction, and masculinity crisis. The power of King›s supernatural-made-flesh realism exalts our everyday struggles into a source of horrifying ecstasy.

Doctor Sleep

See the child, Danny, who in the first elegiac chapters of the book comes to terms with his survivor›s guilt. He learns to trap the demons that he has seen in the Overlook hotel into a mental box (which symbolizes his repression of trauma). In his adolescence, and in what feels more like Blood Meridian than Stephen King, he goes from job to job and is displaced from town to town. Unfortunately, he goes on to repeat the mistakes of his father. Alcoholism, violent behavior, you name it. At the same time, we are introduced to the two other main characters of the story: Rose the hat and Abra, whose name is taken from –you guessed it– Abracadabra.

The three storylines of the book intersect and intercut with each other. When that happens, King uses a technique called «Head Hopping.» The term signifies the instants that the writer shifts through different narrators in a single scene. The characters, like the previous book, are connected through Danny›s superpower called shining. Shining symbolizes the power of collective unconsciousness (one of the main themes of The Shining was how the past and the present, the dead and the living collide. Also notice how children have it, but they lose it when they grow up). This power consists of the usual insert-your-superpower-here clichés like telepathy, telekinesis, and seeing the near future. All of which both Danny and Abra possess. This enables them to develop a psychic bond and work against Rose the Hat, who with her charisma and femme fatale character brings the same bewitching ambiance to the story that the naked lady brought to The Shining.

Halfway through the novel, the dragging pace of the story may get on your nerves, but it›s the nature of the book that dictates this kind of pacing. Instead of rushing them, King lets the events of the story unfold naturally. Yes, at times it feels like you are reading a numbing cascade of telepathic set-pieces that you don›t care for. Yet this allows the

characters and the setting to breathe and become more sensible. Which is crucial to the character development and the overall impact of the story.

All the virtues of King›s writing are present here. Like Visual descriptions: «America is a living body, the highways are its arteries, and the True Knot slips along them like a silent virus.» 1, and the verisimilitude of supernatural elements (how many books have you read that illustrate telepathy in such a realistic way?). All of this would amount to nothing if he did not dare to probe the psychological aspects of horror. Colored by the tone, the menace, and the built-in suspense, his fiction is mainly about sympathizing with the characters who are dealing with loss and trauma. The conventions of horror are just a gimmick, a writer›s trick to get you in. It›s all about the ordeal that these characters go through to become their better selves.

Danny›s character arc

With a granular, detailed characterization, Danny›s evolution from «Dan the scumbag» to «Dan the hero» is written in a very realistic way. Like in most stories about middle-aged people, Danny has to overcome guilt, shame, loneliness, and find a meaning for his bleak existence. By putting away his addiction and finding a stable job at a hospice, where they call him Doctor Sleep, he finds a narrative for himself outside of his traumatic pain. Moreover, through helping Abra and protecting her, his sense of belonging is satisfied. It is through this beautiful human connection that he manages to escape from the pessimistic view of the world he had once.

Against its very modern backdrop, the beating heart of the ancient works of literature is pounding inside Doctor Sleep. If the Homeric man›s obsession was to dominate gods and nature to reach his goal, who can say Danny is any different?

Doctor Sleep is a masterful work of fantasy, macabre, and triumph of human decency. Just thinking about it makes me want to read it twice.

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Younes Poorghorban

A Portrait of the Chaotic World of Milton in Samson Agonistes

An anti-royalist, a devoted puritan, a civil servant for the Commonwealth of England, and a literary genius, Milton was born in 1608 England. It was during the turbulent years of English civil war that his political preferences came to be known to everyone. Shortly after his dismay with the fall of Cromwell's government and restoration of Charles II, he found himself lonely, poor, blind and sick, with numerous tragedies in his life, there he composed a literary tragedy, Samson Agonistes.

Samson Agonistes is one of the major works by John Milton, a dramatic poem which revolves around the fall of Samson that also portrays indirectly aspects of Milton's own life. Israelis have long been the centre of attention by God, according to their religion, Israelis were the chosen tribe and God loved them dearly. In the Book of Judges from the Old Testament, God sends Judges to guide their people, but whenever a Judge dies, people begin their heretical lives and fail to recall God and, God has to send another Judge to guide the people.

Samson is not a normal human being, rather he is blessed by God's power and has superhuman abilities, however, in the end, we find Samson betrayed, blinded, weakened and his life ended tragically by murdering his enemies and the fall of his own. This is while Samson is a Nazarite and he has been guided and blessed by God many times, yet he is the subject of lust, violence, and ignorance which eventually led to his fall. Ironically, Milton attempts to clarify that regardless of Samson's superpowers, he fails to rule as an absolute king. On the contrary, royalists suggest a different interpretation of the Book. As for the royalists, Samson and all the Judges are compared to the kings of England, and the permission to rule over people without any commitment is justified in this way.

An analogy is made by Milton between his people and the people from the Old

Testament, and this is precisely why Milton uses Samson as the source of his play. In both Milton's own time and Samson's time, people seem to be ignorant of their rights and they are ignorant of God's ways. In Milton's view, people of the Book of Judges and the people of his own time are all the same. They are both ignorant of their inner understandings and seek someone with absolute power to save them, and that person is accountable for his deeds only to God and not the people.

Bible and the Book of Judges in particular were interpreted to the benefits of many parties in England. In some instances, the same story from the Book of Judges was interpreted both in favour and in opposition to a single political party. Milton's religious devotion encourages him to bring about the same form of discourse which shapes his only closet drama.

Philosophy of Death in Literature

Amir Hossein Ahmadi

A Brief Survey of Blanchot's Life

Maurice Blanchot was born in Quain, a village in Bourgogne that was a region in eastern France. He had a conservative family; his father forced him to study Latin at home, and not in school. Blanchot, then, went to Strasburg University. There, he had the opportunity to study Philosophy and German. Those years at the university were blessing years for him, since for the first time he met Levinas, and the two became life-long friends. In these academic years at Strasburg, and before the beginning of World War II, he was mostly related to the political journals with an inclination to the right-wing parties and newspapers. During the war years in Paris, He also started to write for the journals like Les Temps Modernes, which was directed by Sartre and Maurice Merleau-ponty. But the most important independent journal with which he contributed was «The Critique»

belonging to his close friend Georges Bataille. The war caused him take distance from politics at least for some years, and he never looked back upon his former extremist (right-wing) ideas. After some collaboration with these publications, he went to Eze-ville. From 1947 to 1957, when he was living in that area, was a real component in his life. There in Eze-ville he completed some novels that he had left unfinished in the years of war. His literary career included the next decade when he was collaborating with the famous literary journal «Nouvelle Revue Freancais" that was published in the form of a monthly review until 1968.

In 1957 Blanchot travelled to Paris again. The years as he was settling in Eze-Ville provided him with the opportunity to turn his thoughts from politics to literature. But when he re-started living in Paris, the political atmosphere forced him again to take stance. The difference of his second settlement in Paris with the first was that in his second settlement he moved away from the thoughts of his 1930s right-wing politics to a left-wing stance. Some reasons can be considered for this extreme shift in his intellectual life: It goes without saying that (1) he belonged to an opposition that urged for an immediate stop of the French occupation of Algeria in the 1960, and that (2) by the publication of his «Manifesto des 121» against the occupation of Algeria, he was threatened with jail by General Charles De Gaulle›s administration. Later in 1968, when the revolt against the repressive policy of the right-wing government of General de Gaulle broke out in Paris University, Blanchot helped, with the publication of some student pamphlets, with a demonstration against the closure of the left-wing party in the university. It was a revolt against the repression of the conservative government of de Gaulle, against the promises not made yet. So, these were the main motives persuading Blanchot to take an opposing stance against the right-wing government of General de Gaulle, for he believed that the president's policies had grounded the reduction of the French national policies to a mere military cause, and that the promise of removing materialist culture and bringing a good political state into work in which everybody could hold his or her personal political views was not being fulfilled.

Death in Philosophy

In Blanchot's theories, there is often either a direct or an indirect reference to the German philosophy including the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel (1831-1770) and that of Martin Heidegger (1976-1889). Although Blanchot has taken the concept of death out from their philosophies, in literature he has provided a different conception of death. Yet, what Allen mentions about him seems more interesting: Blanchot's writings progress «within the purview of these influences without directly following any of them» (Allen, 2009, p. 1). In Blanchot's oeuvre, including his works in language, literature, and philosophy, death is a main theme that runs everywhere to shape the map of a real maneuver. And he develops his theories of literature mainly by way of philosophy, especially within the purview of the two aforementioned German thinkers. So before getting to Blanchot's thought to see how he develops and peruses the notion of death in literature, I will look briefly at the definition of notion of "death" in the philosophy of Heidegger while at the end we I will attempt to discuss the meaning of death in the works of the French philosopher in order to show how Blanchot develops and pursues his own definition of death within the purview of this aforementioned German thinker. Death for Blanchot is a critical term since it shadows his theories of literature. He believes that the Heidegger has looked at death by way of philosophy while he believe that death is a term that can and should

be experienced in literature; and he provides his own understandings of death.

Death in Heidegger›s Being and Time

Firstly, the use of "to exist" should be explained in distinction with "to be". For Heidegger, «Dasein›s essence is grounded in its existence» (2010, p. 114). For example, in order to clarify the existence of a particular object like (a piece of) stone, you have to bestow it with a static description like "stone is this or that," while the existence of humanity can be described as "being able to be." This is to mean that the human existence is described as something «not yet» in the sense that the human existence is, unlike that of stone, not fixed. In other words, as Heidegger reminds us, «Dasein» finds its existence in temporality. To be more precise about this: human existence becomes really existent only in the sense that if I know my present situation for example, meaning that if I am aware of who I am or what the future has for me in terms of everyday choices (if I am aware of what or who I want to become), I am able to make my existence real. Therefore, it is temporality that situates Dasein in the midst of everyday life. Dasein is, in Heidegger's viewpoint, stocked between everyday realities, and so the true existence of «Dasein» is entangled in its "everydayness"; it is something

that has not yet reached and «is always yet to be thanks to its possibilities» (Haj›jari, 2019, p. 65). This is to mean that human being in general can make these everydayness possibilities into authentic «being-toward the end» (Heidegger, 2001, p. 353), that is, human being can choose those possibilities and live according to its own choices.

But what it exactly means to choose something? it means to consider your life as a whole, to be able to look at your life from all the perspectives. In a broader sense, to live authentically, you have to consider your life as a whole and you should be able to look at life form every corner. But a problem arises from considering life as a whole, for while we know that our life has not been accomplished and that it has not come to an end, that is, while we know that our life is still incomplete, how can we look at our whole life? As it was mentioned earlier, insofar as Dasein is entangled in its everydayness, meaning is something that is «not yet,» and therefore to grow authentically we have to make choices, because its life is not yet complete. The difficulty with looking at my life as a whole lies in the fact that only after my death this knowledge of life will be available to me. Since I cannot embrace my life, there will be only two ways for living life: the first way is that after my death my life will exist in the eyes of the other people. It means that only those who survive me can only judge the value of my life. This mode of life is inauthentic, because of the clear fact that by looking at its life via the viewpoint of other people, Dasein will fail to realize its very own existence; that is, by this way of life, Dasein will forget that it has a mission to live singularly. This means that individuality as the most important factor for «Dasein» to live authentically is ignored. What Heidegger says in this regard, can be linked to our modern-time mode of living and our very own lives. If we take a look around ourselves, we will realize that our lives are shaped like the lives of other people, as we wear the same clothes that they wear and take the same meals that they take, and so on.

Now we may ask ourselves: how we can differentiate between lives according to the norms set up by others, and how we can live authentically? As it was mentioned before, «Dasein» is something that is not yet, something entangled in its everydayness, which means that it has to make choices in its everyday life. For example, the whole of my life is on one hand not available, but on the other hand it

"constitutes the meaning of my future" (Hasse & Large, 2001, p. 46). This being not yet puts me in a place wherefrom I see the future as the place of chances, choices, and possibilities that force me to determine my life. This is exactly the second mode of living that Heidegger believes is the most authentic. So not only the wholeness means not to look at your life from every perspective, but on the contrary, for "Dasein" will find its incompleteness and realizes itself as something not yet; it will realize that I can freely project towards my future possibilities till I am reached the end of my life, that is the instant of my death. In this case, Dasein will realize itself as a temporal being. Temporality, a concrete time, which consists of that time given between my birth and my death. So basically, Dasein is a temporal being, which means it «is becoming until death consumes it» (Haj›jari, 2019, p. 66). Dasein as a temporal being, will realize that its present time is nothing more than a culmination of my past and future; past as something that is out of my hands which shaped me as what I am right now, and future towards which I am striving as a place for my possibilities (as a place for hopes and decisions). As we can see, the relation to death is more than just a passive waiting for death to take me way. On the opposite, it is a possibility that our impossibilities become possible. To speak of Heidegger again: it is «the possibility of the absolute impossibility of dasein» (2010, p. 241). This is to mean that, when I know that my life is not like that stone that lasts forever and that in every moment of my life there is a chance for my demise, I will try to make something useful of my life. Heidegger calls this awareness of temporality, an authentic Being-towards-death or "anticipation".

So, for Heidegger the practice of death should not be defined as just a passive infertile waiting that happens for every man, on the contrary, it should be defined as «existential death», death should be defined as existential death because of the very clear fact that this «existential death» is different from other kinds of death including death as a perishing incident. On the contrary, as Fynsk (1982) points out:

The existential analytic does not first pose the individual Dasein as given and then proceed to construct its relations to others and to the surrounding world. On the contrary, it seeks to define the constitution of the self within the 'simple and multifold relation to others, to things, and to oneself'. (p. 185)

For Heidegger, the main purpose of death is not to peruse other people's death or other definitions of it. Only this «existential» death that "Dasein" finds within his «temporality» is of outmost importance. In this case, death for Heidegger is a «the possibility of the impossibility».

Blanchot's Dying

Blanchot strongly rejects both Heidegger and Hegel›s definitions of death; he believes that their definitions of death cease to suffice in order to understand its essence. He believes in death not as a perishing phenomenon, but as a literary and philosophical entity that should be experienced which can only be done through the medium of literature. He rejects Heidegger›s definition of death as something that is Dasein›s grasp, and that it gives him the power to master (his own) death by giving him the possibilities of life. From this point of view, Blanchot rejects Heidegger›s term «the possibility of impossibility» and reverses it to the «impossibility of possibility». What Blanchot indicates is that in the sphere of literature I cannot empower death to force "me authentically to grasp the significance of my life, rather it is something that wears me down" (Hasse & Large, 2001, p. 52). So he changes the notion of death into «dying» and «they die» which indicates that this kind of literary experience is the experience of the horror of the absence of the world. When we read a work of literature, we enter into a kind of sphere in which all my capabilities become unreal, until the individuals (either the writer or the reader) disappear in the passivity of dying. Unlike Heidegger, who believed death would give the power to act, Blanchot believes that in dying I am deprived of the world of action; a kind of world in which, as Blanchot indicates in Literature and the Right to Death (1948), «the one who dies encounters

the impossibility of dying, that is to say, the impossibility of turning the world into something meaningful» (p. 334). «Dying» here is no longer related to the other world and its possibilities, but it is something that is experienced only through the medium of literature, which deprives me of any possible meaning and the chance to impose my thoughts on the text; it is via the power of the word that literature can negate the meaning, can separate me from myself, and in consequence can show me an a kind of power over which I have no control. Blanchot believes that this dying is the other side of death, that is, the «unlimited and ungraspable» side, and is the only possible for writers to experience this through the language of literature. Then Blanchot (1989) says:

They die: this is not reassuring formula designed to put off the fearsome moment. They die: he who dies is anonymous, and anonymity is the guise in which the ungraspable, the unlimited, the unsituated is most dangerously affirmed among us. (p. 241)

Therefore, death in literature no longer appears as the «demise of a particular person» or death in general, but it shows itself to the terrorist writers as "dying". It shows itself as an «anonymity» in which writers are unable to write according to their own values. Here is the appearance of what Blanchot calls «Midnight» or the other night, because what we have already said of the experience of literature is quite indicative of the «midnight»; as in the midnight everything seems ambiguous and unclear, the «experience» of literature too seems ambiguous. Blanchot is of the idea that «this experience is purely nocturnal; it is very experience of night» (p. 163). He calls this experience "midnight," because he believes that at midnight when everything has disappeared appears. This is what he calls «the other night» which is a movement of «experience» in which the «the outside» glimpses upon writers, but still seems unapproachable, in which the only thing that appears, is pure nothingness. Next time, I will discuss the feature specific to the literary language that causes much of the controversy for Blanchot.

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Ivan Ilyich in a Post-Modern World

Niloofar Rezaee

When a man dies, he does not just die of the disease he has; he dies of his whole life.
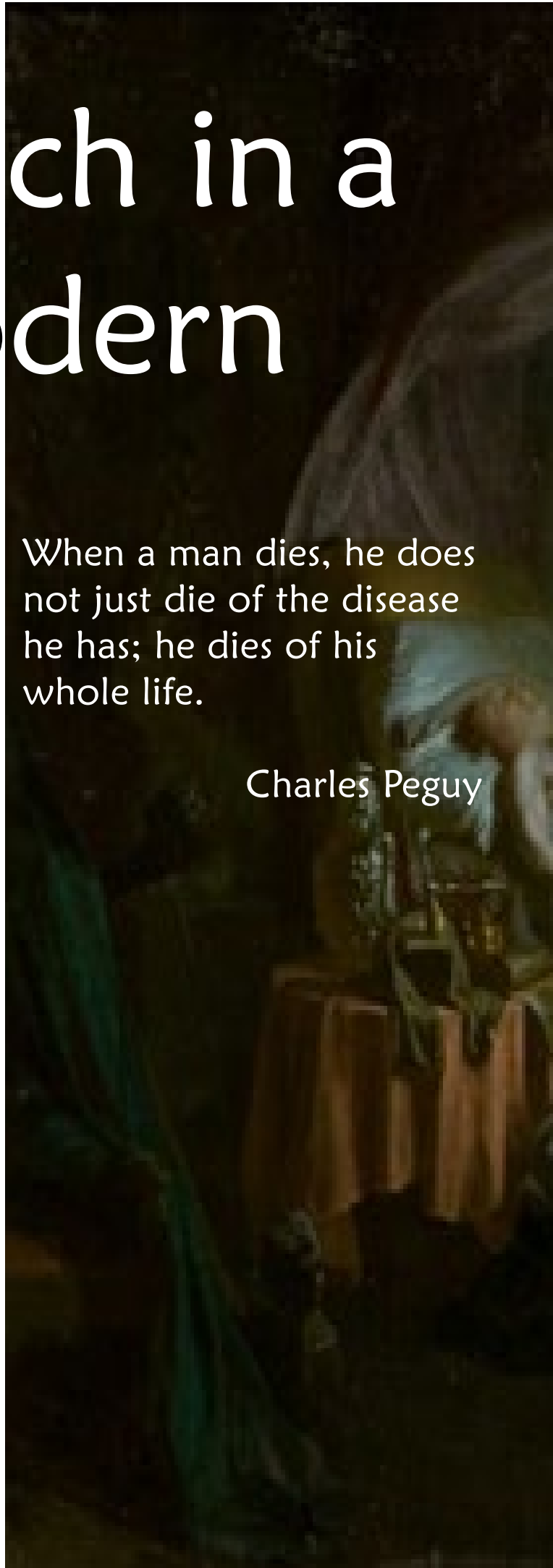
Charles Peguy

What a time. One day we were freely roaming the streets. The next, we got locked down. Through the pandemic, bit by bit, changes started creeping over our lives. First, the schools were shut down, then the hospitals got overloaded, depression and stress won over many around the world, and many started disappearing forever from among us. That is it, death, the last straw, the most prevalent theme of these days. Numbers of deaths each day ring in our ears like prophets of bad omens. "What if this happened to me?", we constantly ask ourselves, yet we refuse to believe it would.

But it will, some day.

We are humans, and Humans innately despise defeat. What could be a worse defeat than death? To go through an agonizing moment of unknown transition? And to probably disappear forevermore. This is the most inevitable fate we humans shall face. All shall someday lie in a grave. Our fathers

have been facing the same entity for many years. Our cave-dwelling ancestors knew it and so do we. No wonder why our very first literary remnant, the epic of Gilgamesh, reflects upon how we lost the plant of immortality and remained vulnerable to death forever. The theme of death, therefore, has been there in literature from a long time ago. Let your mind flow with the works you have so far read. You can find more than enough examples to know death has always been there.

There is one writer-philosopher that, if not more, but surely not less than others, pondered most of his life on the questions of life and especially death, Leo Tolstoy. The reason why he got driven towards such questions is not of interest to me. What interests me, instead, is how he faced that indispensable fear.

Psychologists do believe this fear to be the most innate humane fear. But how could one live if one sees on the horizon such dark destiny? I think Tolstoy has found an answer to this question, which if modified according to the exigencies of our own era, might be of help in these rather gloomy days. Tolstoy represents his personal resolution in facing this fear in many of his works. But his Death of Ivan Ilyich is the most manifest marker of that resolution.

The Death of Ivan Ilyich is the story of an ordinary man. A man like the rest of us. A man with a mediocre job, family, income, house, and life. Most of the time he wonders how he could make his mediocre life seem more noble and aristocratic;

a better job, or even better curtains to cover the windows. In other words, he is overwhelmed by his mechanical way of living. We, as the residents of a post-modern world, if it could be taken as the extension of modernity, are probably most familiar with such automatization of life. Life happens so habitually that consciousness gets deprived of experiencing it. We live without being aware of living. Have you never experienced moments in which you forgot whether you have locked the door, called your friend, or taken your pills? There are thousands of such instances a day.

Why does such automatization happen? For one thing, we are the victims of habituation. Our minds throw themselves into an energy-saving mode by turning most of what we do into habits. A second reason is giving in to conformity and authority. We follow what society expects of us without questioning where this blind pursuit might lead us. As we read in the story,
He was just what he remained for the rest of his life: a capable, cheerful, good-natured, and sociable man, though strict in the fulfillment of what he considered to be his duty: and he considered his duty to be what was so considered by those in authority.

These two reasons lead to our ignorance of death. It›s as if death is a virus everyone could catch but not us, because we believe nothing would dare to stop the flow of our habituated lives. As in the story, when the news of Ivan›s death reaches his colleagues and friends, all they think about is who would be next to fill up

Ivan›s now-vacant job post and that Ivan›s dead, not them. As Tolstoy put it perfectly,

Besides considerations as to the possible transfers and promotions likely to result from Ivan Ilyich›s death, the mere fact of the death of a near acquaintance aroused, as usual, in all who heard of it the complacent feeling that, "it is he who is dead and not I."

Keeping these in mind, we can now better understand what Tolstoy›s description of Ivan›s life implies «most simple and most ordinary and therefore most terrible." Ivan gave in to what others expected of him, not what he himself desired.

Ivan lives by this automatization, until he visits a doctor for a rather minor pain in his side. This visit changes his life. He now knows he is sick. He doesn›t know whether it›s a serious case or not, and nobody›s there to tell him. He gets drowned in suspension. Procrastinating admittance of his illness, Ivan goes through days of hopefulness and hopelessness. In other words, his existential crisis starts. And there is a constant lethal reminder, an alarm that wakes him up every time from his dreamland of hopes to the bitter reality, the pain. Ivan suffers, yet refuses to accept that HE could die, too.

As he lies in his bed, one night, reflecting upon the questions of life and death, the pain in his side strikes again, this time with full force. His wife and children are living their lives outside that room, they›re having a dinner party, not caring what

probably at the club busy with a game of cards. In short, the rest of the world is peacefully leading their mediocre lives just as before. It›s just Ivan, he alone, who is suffering and must look death in the eye. He trembles, cries, but knows that time is fleeting before his feet. That some day, not too far, all shall be, but not him.

Suddenly he felt the old, familiar, dull, gnawing pain, stubborn and serious. There was the same familiar loathsome taste in his mouth. His heart sank and he felt dazed. "My God! My God!" he muttered. "Again, again! And it will never cease." And suddenly the matter presented itself in a quite different aspect. "Vermiform appendix! Kidney!" he said to himself. "It›s not a question of appendix or kidney, but of life and . . . death.

«Knowing," however, is not equal with «accepting.» Ivan knows death is marching just behind his door, but his psyche which has been used to this bodily form for forty years refuses to let go. He tries to distract himself, he reaches out to oblivion as the last resort.

He tried to get back into the former current of thoughts that had once screened the thought of death from him. But strange to say, all that had formerly shut off, hidden, and destroyed his consciousness of death, no longer had that effect.

But can one's futile life be forgotten by such forgetfulness?! Obviously, no. It only worsens things. The ringing pain

is still there. Ivan watches the people around him, his family, friends, and doctors pretend that nothing is wrong with him. They, too, fear death, and try not to let its tentacles pierce their consciousness, but with this attitude, Ivan and his suffering get marginalized. No one cares what is happening to him, except for one, Gerasim, his peasant servant, who alleviates Ivan's psychical pain by holding his feet high, and his parallel emotional pain by keeping him company, an uneducated man of the low classes. He is the only person that observes death in its full picture. He alone treats Ivan as a sick man awaiting death.

This, however, does not make it easy for Ivan to accept his fate. When the hour gets near, and the pain reaches its most severe, Ivan starts shouting. Three agonizing days pass. Ivan in the shifting fits of consciousness and unconsciousness ponders upon the same questions.

Till about three in the morning he was in a state of stupefied misery. It seemed to him that he and his pain were being thrust into a narrow, deep black sack, but though they were pushed further and further in they could not be pushed to the bottom. And this, terrible enough in itself, was accompanied by suffering.
"What do you want? What do you want?" he repeated to himself.
"What do I want? To live and not to suffer," he answered.
And again he listened with such concentrated attention that even his pain did not distract him.
"To live? How?" asked his inner voice.
"Why, to live as I used to—well and pleasantly."

"As you lived before, well and pleasantly?" the voice repeated. And in imagination he began to recall the best moments of his pleasant life. But strange to say none of those best moments of his pleasant life now seemed at all what they had then seemed—none of them except the first recollections of childhood

Ivan finally understands how his life has been wasted, how filled with regrets it is, and how he had never cared for no one in his life. In other words, the ignorance and selfishness with which his family has been treating him is the result of the same ignorance and selfishness he himself had for so long imposed on them.

In his delusional near-death moments, his hand touches the crying face of his seven-year-old son looming upon him (the only selfless characters that understand death and pity Ivan are Gerasim and Ivan›s little son, the former for his philosophy of life, and the second for his being a child). His eyes then turn to his wife, standing at the door. With his begging eyes, he asks her to take his son away, and she herself leave, too. Ivan realizes the burden he has been to his family and the pain he has been inflicting upon them by being selfish. This epiphany eases death for him. He lets go. Light comes back to his life and he experiences a final peaceful moment.

"And death . . . where is it?"
He sought his former accustomed fear of death and did not find it. "Where is it? What death?" There was no fear because there was no death.

In place of death there was light."

Indeed, by now, you have guessed the spiritual and religious intentions of this work intended by the author. That, however, is not my concern. For the distortions the two world wars and the Cold War have brought to our world cannot be wiped out by religion. There is, however, a more transcendental, yet humane, quality that could save us from what there is. The apocalypse has already happened. In primitive times, humans tried for their survival. Now the innate desire to survive, to be immortalized is a more complex one. It is in other words an anthropocentric death drive. The desire that leads to extreme individualizations.

Looking for proof? Check your Instagram page. How every and each of us tries to leave some «unique» trace behind. The result is, of course, counterproductive. We have all become alike, but that would have nothing to do with what we believe internally. We want uniqueness. We believe that we are different. Narcissism is the plague of our age.

What would be the horizon of such a state? Selfishness. Just add to the equation a nuclear war to see the full result. We shall return to the primitive crave for survival. Maybe we are already there, in a more gilded democratic modern form, which bears underneath a rotten core. Every one of us is an Ivan, caring only about ourselves.

How could we escape such a predicament? My proposition has two steps. First, we must accept this tragic flaw. We must embrace the fact that we ARE selfish. Put briefly, if every action is done consciously and according to one›s standards (the Žižekian definition), it is selfish. So how could humans, who all follow this rule, find redemption?
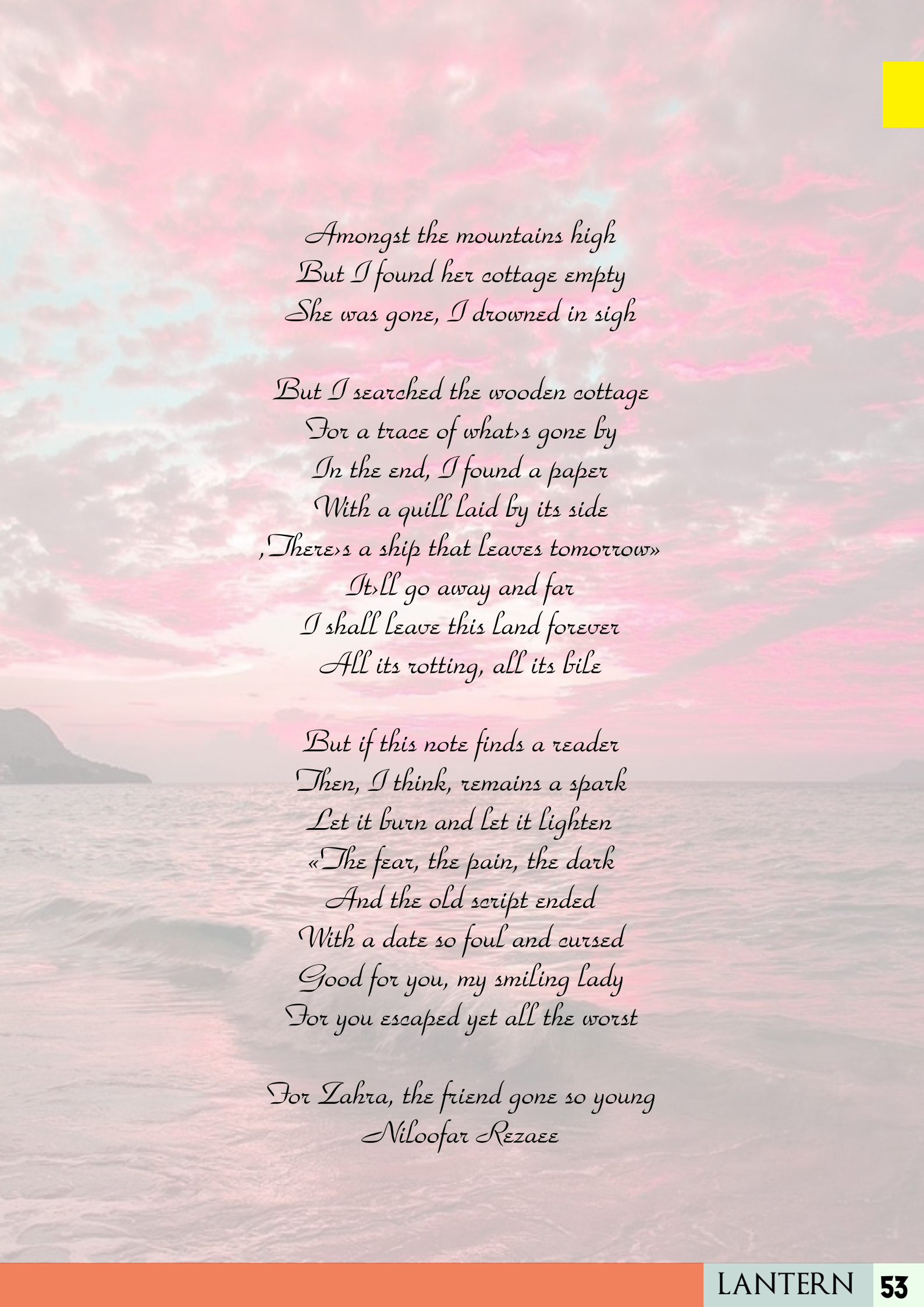
The answer lies in the second step, every one of us must reach within himself, consciously, to find out a selfless Prometheus. He had the power of foresight and knew the abominable consequences lying ahead. We might not possess such powers, but we could, just like him, accept the consequences, and raise the right torch, and complete the journey from a selfish Ivan to a more selfless one.

Cuimhne

On the sixth day of my travels
I came upon a land
A land of filth and darkness
Where no chants were made or sang
The clouds were all in weeping
The sun was dark and cold
The earth was just a wasteland
And no flowers could it hold

O, the people were slumbering
As if they were all asleep
Or enchanted by dark magic
Like of which I›ve never seen
Why?» You wonder that I traveled»
«!?To the sadness?!,» «To the chains»
Oh, my dear friend, it was a myth
That took me to the pains

The myth of a smiling lady
Of her grandeur and her grace
That bewildered every creature
Even the worst of humans› race
And I went there, to her meadow

Amongst the mountains high
But I found her cottage empty
She was gone, I drowned in sigh

But I searched the wooden cottage
For a trace of what›s gone by
In the end, I found a paper
With a quill laid by its side
,There›s a ship that leaves tomorrow»
It›ll go away and far
I shall leave this land forever
All its rotting, all its bile

But if this note finds a reader
Then, I think, remains a spark
Let it burn and let it lighten
«The fear, the pain, the dark
And the old script ended
With a date so foul and cursed
Good for you, my smiling lady
For you escaped yet all the worst

For Zahra, the friend gone so young
Niloofar Rezaee

Time

Just for a moment, Think wise

What if everything goes clockwise

And you wake up at not seeing the

sunrise

You have a life that you can›t memorize

Neither stay nor reprise

You can›t even catch the butterflies

Now you may understand and realize

That, A star shines right before it dies

With a light, shining everyone›s eyes

It seems like a suprise

But just take my advise

Live your life before anything goes wrong

Always Stay strong

Cry but not for too long

Then Sing a song

Find where you really belong

And Remember that nothing is

...lifelong

Nava Eghdami

POLITICS OF JOKER:

WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD?

Shahin Ghazaee & Roxana Nejati

Foreword

Due to the spread of Covid19, we will probably remember 2019 as the year of the pandemic, but it was a year of rebellion as well. A few months before the virus emerged, people in many countries all over the world revolted against their governments' policies of austerity. The neoliberal governments that promised prosperity and development to their citizens, provided the majority with nothing but destitution. Needless to say, lack of an alternative to the neoliberal system condemned the rebellions to fail miserably.

Also 2019 was a year of social conflict films. Many films depicted the huge class gaps in societies and their subsequent and consequent struggles and dangers. Bong Joon-ho's Parasite won the Palme d'Or and the Oscar for the film of the year, Just 6.5 became the highest grossing non-comedy film in the history of Iranian Cinema, and The Platform totally blew away the moviegoers. But it was probably Todd Phillips' Joker that sparked the most heated controversies. Some – such as Micah Uetricht in an article for The Guardian– saw the film as a revolt against the late capitalist system and called it "a brilliant portrait of a society that has chosen barbarism" over

socialism (link in Works Cited) and some others discussed the conspiracy theories surrounding the film; Shaibal Chhotray, for instance, claims that Joker was "not an anti-capitalist, anti-rich, pro-anarchy take on the current global scenario" and called it "simply a comic-book origin film" (link in Works Cited).

These two extreme viewpoints, we claim, are not helpful enough in understanding the film because they neglect the enchained, ideological aspects of cinema and also the emancipatory inner tension of films. These narrow understandings of cinema as an art form have led

to such one-dimensional interpretations that cannot connect the readers to the reality of cinema or politics in the modern world. We claim that Joker, like any other film, is bound to the ideology of the system that produces it, yet the tension lying within the art of film keeps some spots out of reach which allow the contradictory interpretations. In other words, the claim the writers make here is that although this film is not an anti-capitalist one, it can give us some hints as to overcome capitalism by reminding us of some of the flaws in the system and some suggestions. Hence, this article tends to read

ARTHUR WINS OUR SYMPATHY IN A CONVENTIONAL WAY.
THE CAMERA SLOWLY DOLLIES OUT AS ARTHUR IS CRYING IN PAIN ON THE GROUND.
GARBAGE IS EVERYWHERE AROUND HIM. THE GLOOMY SOUNDTRACK IS ON.

this film in a different way that can help us have a better understanding of the film and rethink our real world politics.

Although Joker lends itself to many approaches and welcomes different interpretations, the first part of this article attempts to present a political understanding of the film by brief aesthetic, psychoanalytic, and cultural readings to support our claim. In the second part, first the Jokerism that has prevailed in the real world since the film premiered is discussed; then, the writers share their views on what people can do to make changes in the world to their own benefit.

Poetics of Joker

In Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, Fredrick Jameson argues that since today we cannot set ourselves apart from the system we criticize, our criticism itself becomes a part of the system and, therefore, becomes neutralized. He believes that creating a new form of aesthetics is the solution. Aesthetically, this film is no different from a Hollywood classic. A rebellious work of art, first, needs to undermine the aesthetics of the system it revolts against. Joker does not go beyond the conventional Hollywood characterization and stylistics. An instance is

when the main character is introduced. The film opens with a character dolly showing Arthur being what/who he is, while the radio news voiceover fills the audience in regarding the setting and context of the film world. A classic introduction! The following sequence is usually supposed to make the audience relate with the character. In Joker's case, done perfectly! While he is doing his job and harming no one, Arthur is bullied and beaten up by a few villains. The camera slowly dollies out as Arthur is crying in pain on the ground and the gloomy soundtrack is on. Garbage is everywhere around him. Now the title of the film fills the screen: JOKER. The role the title plays here is to say that this is how Jokers are made. Now Arthur wins our sympathy.

This conventionality in style extends throughout the film. But to avoid over-length, only one more example of clinging to the conventions and the traditional form of filmmaking is mentioned. The parts in which tension prevails, such as the chases, are represented in an exciting way as if the film is a Hollywood blockbuster. Again no break from the common aesthetics. Today, the first thing an artist needs to do to create a revolutionary piece of art is to revolutionize the tenets of aesthetics

itself. According to what Jameson says and since – as explained above – in terms of narration and form the film comes up with nothing new, the film is not against the system, but a part of the system itself.

Psychology of Joker

Arthur is under psychological treatment. As a schizophrenic person, he is out of touch with reality, lives in the illusions of being a good son to her mother, becoming a comedian, having an intimate romantic relationship, etc. But the most significant element in the film that tempts us to read it psychoanalytically is the absence of the father figure. According to Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the Father is more than the real father. The Father not only regulates the Oedipal relationship between the child and the mother, but also represents the Law, the rules of life in the society. Hence, the Father represents, obeys, and passes down the Law. The logical consequence of the absence of the Father is that the child will not abide by the Law.

Arthur has always had to cope with his father's absence. The only person that somehow played the role of the father for Arthur was Penny's boyfriend who abused him as a child. His schizophrenia also provides the ground for illusions in this matter. He is in search of a Father both in reality and his illusions. In his pursuit of the Father, he gets to Thomas Wayne, a politician. Wayne rejects him with a punch in the face. Then Murray Franklin – who in an illusion tells Arthur that he would give everything up to have a kid like him – rejects him, too when he makes fun of him for his tasteless jokes by playing his videos and inviting him on the show. This rejection from the Father, negatively influences Arthur's adherence to the Law. His revolt against the society and its rules stems from this issue. Through this reading, it can be concluded that the film seems to say that problems with Jokers come from personal issues and relationships, independent of the system and its structural flaws. Therefore, it can be inferred that here again the film is not a rebellious film against the system.

Politics of Joker

The movie is set during the early 1980s, when Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in England were engaged in forcing new policies of austerity and the free market, the ideology currently known as neoliberalism, onto all areas of public life. Neoliberalism, as the name divulges, is a revival of liberalism. This definition suggests that the absence of liberalism, for a period of time, as a political ideology paved the way for the emergence of its recent reincarnated form. In their Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction, Steger and Roy define it as "a set of economic reform policies which are concerned with the deregulation of the economy, the liberalization of the trade and industry, and the privatization of the state-owned enterprises" (14). This movement, which was shaped by a network
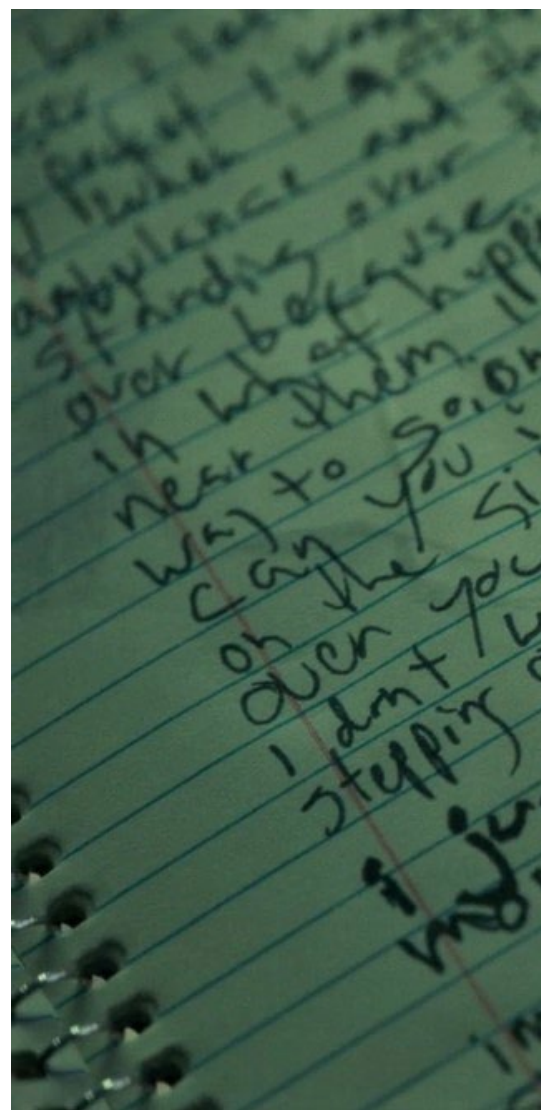
of specific intellectuals and institutions in the Post-WWII era, took its power and validation by selling the lie of engendering economic growth, prosperity and, of course, freedom for all people, and cutting the tyranny of monarchical and aristocratic authorities. Quite opposite, neoliberalism proved to be socialism for the rich minority and austerity for the poor majority.

Arthur is the representation of the outcome of neoliberal policies. An oppressed, isolated, alienated individual who is mentally ill, lives with his mother in a small apartment in the rotten city of Gotham and is a clown by vocation. He is not paid a living wage for his job as a clown and has been denied public services and mental health care by public hospitals. The economic insecurity, emotional stress, inequality, physical assault, scorn, and many other consequences of neoliberalism are the reasons behind Arthur's transformation into Joker. The movie opens with Arthur doing his clown makeup while the TV newscaster is warning people about urban blight, the growing piles of literal and metaphorical dirt. The sovereignty and wrecking influence of neoliberalism – and its resultant class conflicts and miseries – over people's lives is featured through various episodes from news shows (the radio says "The city is under siege by sores of rats"), shots of newspapers (headlines saying "KILL THE RICH"), some references to the sanitation worker's strike, and the piled up garbage constantly visible on Gotham streets.

An important crisis in the film world is unemployment which is always a problem in neoliberal systems. In the film, "People are upset. They are struggling looking for work. These are tough
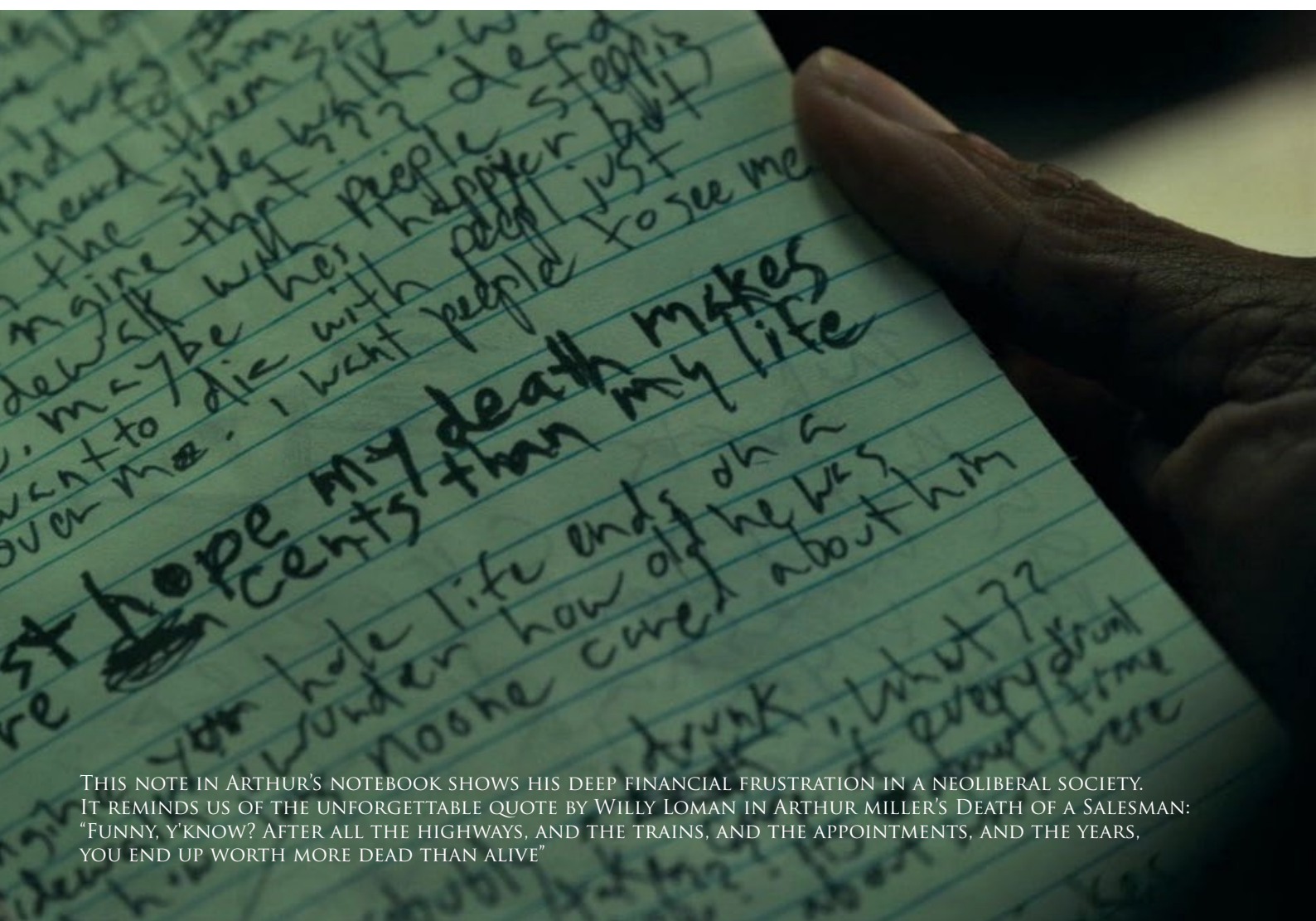

This note in Arthur's notebook shows his deep financial frustration in a neoliberal society. It reminds us of the unforgettable quote by Willy Loman in Arthur miller's Death of a Salesman: "Funny, y'know? After all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive"

times." The insecurity that unemployment brings turns competition into a social law. This is shown in the film when Randall sets Arthur up to take his job. In his Mutual Aid, Peter Kropotkin argues that competition is the law of the jungle, but cooperation is the law of civilization. When Arthur says "Nobody's civil anymore," he touches upon the competitive nature of neoliberalism that turns the society into a jungle in which everyone has to compete against the others to survive.

This study of the context and background of the film demonstrates its critical view of late capitalism, the distress it has caused, and the way politics works in it. In the neoliberal era, although they themselves are responsible for the problems in the society, Right-wing populists have the upper hand in politics. In their political campaigns, they promise a bright future and trick people into believing they hold the key to solve their problems instantly. The paradox is that they are conservatives; they want to improve conditions without making structural changes in the system, which seems to be an impossibility. Thomas Wayne is a perfect embodiment of the Neoliberal Right-wing populism; a well-off, white, straight candidate, living in his own ivory tower. He

A SIGNS HELD BY A PROTESTER IN THE FILM WHICH IMPLIES THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN POPULISTS AND FASCISTS.
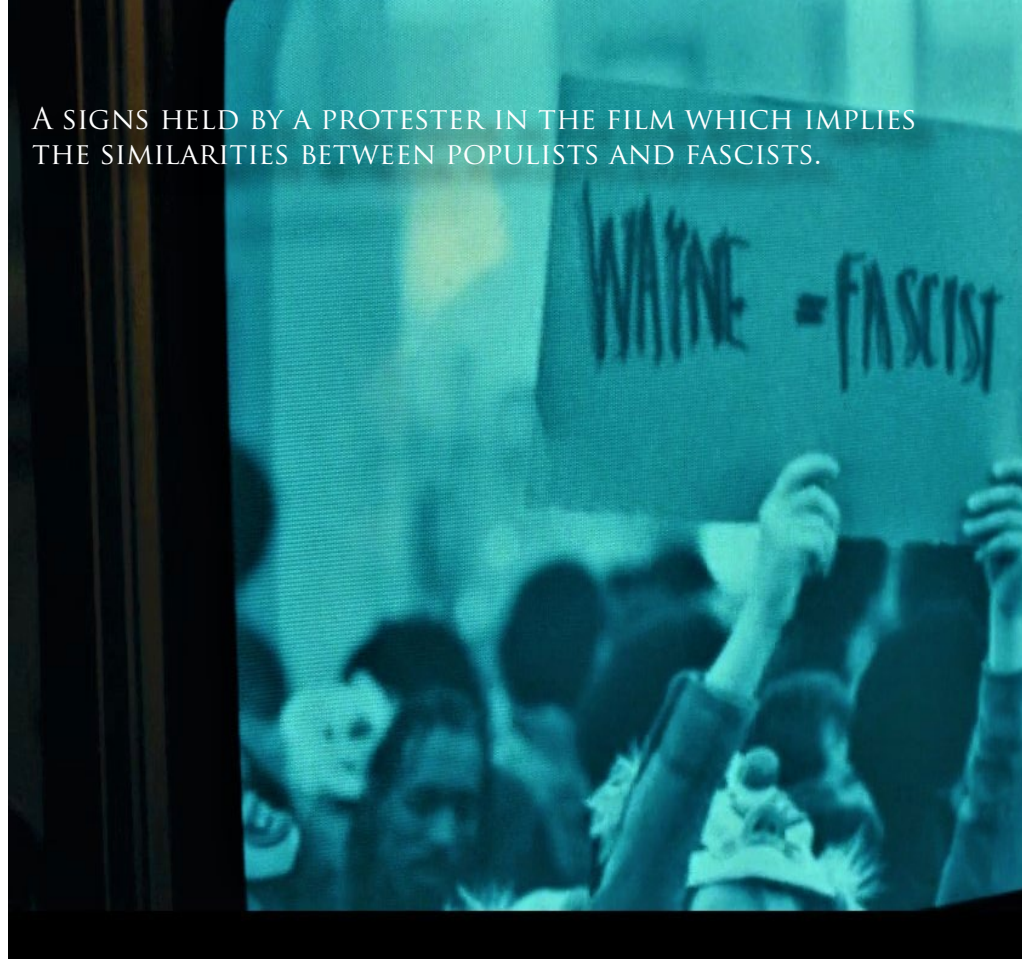
brags about lifting people out of poverty and helping make their lives better. He knows himself "their only hope." Yet, he denies that underprivileged people have been deprived of some opportunities and thinks protestors who are fed up with inequalities are just "envious of those more fortunate than themselves." This is probably the truest face of all Right-wing populists in the real world.

At the end, citizens start a collective movement and revolt against "the whole system." They even kill Thomas Wayne, the one that gives them false hope. On this layer, the film delivers a harsh criticism of the neoliberal system. However, it does not try to say what happens after the riots and never gives a hint of any plan that the people hold as an alternative for the neoliberal system, and in this way the film reduces the political to the sentimental. Here also seems that the film is not an anti-capitalist one.

What Is to Be Understood? As discussed, Joker is not against the system. But does this mean that it has nothing to give us? Not at all. From this film, one can learn many things about the present world. People related to the film as if they have seen themselves in the mirror. The images in the film are not strange to us: trash everywhere and the city "under siege by sores of rats", people looking

for food in garbage with cats, the funding cuts of social services and limitless privatizations, grudges against the rich, psychologists that want to normalize individuals to fit into the system, naïve people who think "He is the only one who could save the city", the media that takes the role of a safety valve through which social tensions are released (Murray on TV joking about the mayor's incompetency), and lonely people who are desperate for a hug, may it be of a fridge.

Joker is not an anti-capitalist film but a smart capitalist one, just as Theodor Roosevelt – the American president during the Great Depression who proposed the new deal not to destroy the system but to save it – was not an anti-capitalist but a smart capitalist. The film warns politicians of the outcomes of the status quo and implicitly invites them to make necessary changes. It reminds us to hold the government responsible for the conditions, something people have forgotten and persist to shift all the blame to their personal incompetency. It also warns the governments of the rebellion and the outrage resultant from their irresponsibility and neoliberal policies. This is emphasized even in the psychological layer of the film. One can say the film is using a conceptual metaphor through which a subject's relation with the father('s absence) is illustrated. This is not an over-interpretation. Nations and governments have usually been likened to children and fathers, respectively. Even what George Lakoff presents, in his Moral Politics, is an understanding of how different forms of governments are like different kinds of fathers. In Joker, Arthur and other citizens are ignored by the father/government (its deep impact is vivid when the advisor tells Arthur "They don't give a shit about people like you Arthur, and they really don't give a shit about people like me, either.") and his absence plunges them into chaos. This chaos is the desperate rebellion of those who have been left behind in a landfill as huge as Gotham City, a city taken over by the few rich people bit by bit.

The reaction of the people all around the world to the film was spectacular. In protests against the neoliberal policies of their governments, people – from China to the US – wore Joker masks. If all this makes sense all over the world, and if we relate to Arthur and think we live in the same conditions, it is because – as Bong Joon-Ho in an interview (link in Works Cited) says – "Essentially we all live in the same country called capitalism."

What Is to Be Done?

This film does not try to answer this question. The movie ends with scenes of demolition, brutality, directionless looting and arson. The outrage, resentment, and disgust of Arthur and the masses with the status quo eventually boils down to insane murderousness. The writer-director Todd Philips does not take the course of movie any step forward. The film ends right in the middle of tumult. It is solely a moral critique of capitalism; it

does not come up with an alternative idea or a collective action, there is no intimation of either any political agenda or any specific program of change. The darkness and gloomy atmosphere, the relentless murders, and the violence of the final scenes is precisely the picture that the system tries to present of those in opposition for this is how the system manages to keep itself safe and settled. This film was more, to the writers, a critique of the system by the system to keep away the real critics of the system and nullify their real critiques.

When on the show Arthur says that he is not political, he is right, in this sense that he has no political plan and alternative for the system. But the fact that the neoliberal system has come to a deadlock compels us to think of the possible alternatives. This system can no more satisfy the needs of the people and only adds to the present pile of environmental, social, and political crises. In his Prison Notebooks, Antonio Gramsci once said "The old world is dying away, and the new world struggles to come forth: now is the time of monsters" (267). The truth is that the world is changing and the old order needs to be replaced with a new one. If not, the advent of monsters would be inevitable. These monsters can be Jokers who just revolt violently without any alternatives, as well as politicians who want to keep the unjust system. One lesson we may learn from history is that in the neoliberal system, when alienated people have trouble finding a job, making money, putting food on the table, and supporting their loved ones, they rarely unite for collective progressive movements. On the contrary, people PRIVATIZE their everything: their anger, pain, fears, and lost hopes. They keep away from the society, stay home and lick their wounds. They lose hope for a better future. And that is the right moment for a monster, a fascist, an opportunist, a right-wing populist to show up and claim to revive people's dignity and decency if they give her/him power. This is how conservatives, chauvinists, and racists such as Donald Trump are in power all over the world now. People need to go beyond electing these populists/Thomas Wayne-s every four years who will only misrepresent them. Now ecological crises and a rise of class wars within nations (particularly in the post-COVID19- era) are the main concerns in the world. Since these are global problems, national mechanisms must be replaced with transnational ones to tackle the condition. Countries need to work collaboratively to save the environment and eradicate poverty. People by demanding radical changes and theorists by theorizing a new world order based on those demands need to cooperate. For the former, we need to demand radical changes in the capitalist production system which is the main cause of the ecological crises; not because it

is cool, but because it is rationally prior to anything else. For the latter, the writers believe, at this stage, we need to demand a redistribution of both income and property rights; not because it is moral, but because it is scientifically just. Alongside many civil rights, none of these two demands can be met in the present global capitalism. Now progressive theorists need to unite and devise a theory; the type of theory that – as Karl Marx said – "becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses" (182). For this, this emancipatory theory needs to create a hopeful picture of the post-capitalist future. It needs to be a convincing narrative comprehensible for common people with a wide horizon that can target the demands of as many groups of people as possible.

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PROTESTERS WORLDWIDE IN 2020 & 2019 ADOPTED JOKER'S MASKS

Ali Ghaderi

The Terrors of Birth and the Monstrous in Jean-Pierre Jeunet's Alien Resurrection

The Alien series, since her birth, has been spelling out a new form of space horror and a monstrosity which is visually in debt to H. R. Giger. Motherhood, female body and subjectivity have been the center of the Alien series' horror. Female body and sexuality in the different contexts of the Alien films represent the marginalized identities and challenge prejudices against women. In the past decade, the franchise has been reborn in a series of prequels; Prometheus (2012) and Alien Covenant (2017). These two also have shown a unique tendency to link female body and horror in more innovative ways. These films are outstanding examples of space horror genre. Moreover, they are unique in representing motherhood and the female body along with their relation to the act of giving birth. In this short note, I am going to explore the deformed body of mother and fetus in the fourth movie of the series Alien Resurrection. Then, I will demonstrate that the way motherhood, birth and fetus are represented creates a form of cosmic horror that puts the female body at the center. Finally, I will argue how the monstrous fetus and the grotesque biological, albeit synthetic, birth are patriarchal means through which the female body becomes a mere 'object' for the destructive, male, sexual energy, and how Ripley 8 finds her own way to emancipate the female body and soul from the male dominance.

In the first movie, Alien (1979) directed by Ridley Scott, the audience is presented with a story whose horrific core relies on the anticipation of a human body being torn apart to give birth to an alien body which

falls within the definition of the monstrous. This monster, known as the 'xenomorph', is born not out of a birth channel but the chest of the victims. So far, we could consider the chestburster a parasitic being. This parasite crosses the species and the borders between them not only in its literal act of birth but also in its anatomical features. According to Turnock (219), at the core of body horror exists an act of "breaking down boundaries – between internal and external, self and other, human and non-human (be it animal, alien or machine)." In the case of the xenomorph created by Giger, the monstrous is a hybrid of three different bodies: human, alien and machine. The xenomorph has several phallic traits which make it a perfect metaphor for a destructive version of male sexual energy: its abnormally shaped head, inner jaw teeth tongue and spikes protruding out of its back: a male, aggressive, predatory rapist whose violent attacks are for the sake of making more hosts for more creatures and not sexual orgasm or producing sentient beings. Therefore, the xenomorph only seeks to destroy all other sentient life forms.

The first three movies in the series focus on the mother-child bond between Ripley and other characters; in the first movie the cat and in the second and the third ones, a female teenager called Newt who has survived the xenomorph pandemic on planet LV426-. However, she dies aboard the escape pod that crashes onto the surface of Fiorina 'Fury' 161. Following these films, the fourth movie gives us a matriarch who is resurrected from the dead but is ruthless and bold; even more when compared to Ripley's previous portrayals. She is clones with a chestburster dormant in her chest. The life cycle of a xenomorph starts as an egg (the ovomorph) incubating the facehugger. The latter assaults the victims orally and plants the chestburster entity inside their bodies. The parasitic entity later is born tearing apart the victim's chest. From that stage, it is only a matter of a very short amount of time before the adult form starts reaping souls to guarantee the birth and survival of a colony. However, the curious and intriguing thing about the fourth movie is how Ripley's cloned body breaks this chain of abominable parenthood. This creates a peculiar specimen; the 'Newborn' which is a hybrid of the human body and the xenomorph monstrosity.

The point is this hybrid is not purely an offspring of a queen; it comes out of a womb attached to the queen xenomorph (01:36:24). This human womb is a gift to the queen which was surgically removed from the cloned Ripley 8's chest; a grotesque version of a Caesarean section. Furthermore, both Ripley 8 and the hybrid Alien are deformed bodies; altered to become the monstrous. Both of them stand on the borderline that separates the two species. In this regard, Ripley literally goes through multiple births and deaths to become an 'other' to her 'self,' gender and race. This grotesque alterity even involves a scene in which Ripley 8 confronts her several dead, monstrous selves kept in a laboratory (01:01:37-00:58:00). According to Wolfreys (14), the "sense of self is interrupted" in the process of alterity through an "encounter with the face of the other (emphasis is mine), and thus the self, the I as Levinas puts it, knows itself" not "in its self-sameness but in its own alterity, in coming face to face with the face of the other." Prior to this point in the film's narrative, Ripley 8's superhuman strength and acidic blood are the two features she shares with the xenomorphs, but she is not aware of the 'otherness' she carries in her self-same identity. In that laboratory, or rather, nursing house for deformed bodies, she meets her 'self' deprived of a normal human body; the monstrous physique in the literal sense. A grotesque cloned Ripley has been in constant pain and begs for death when the two meet in awe and horror. Although Ripley 8 has not experienced the pain of giving birth to an infant, she has to bear the existential pain of terminating her monstrous clone.

The successful biological replica of Ripley and other failed 'bodies' are created, manipulated, tortured and abused surprisingly not by the Aliens but by a patriarchal system aboard the spaceship USM Auriga. The aim of Auriga is to exploit the savagery of the Alien species. Aboard this ship and through a phallocentric lust for dominance and destruction, we see that human code of morality fails. This idea is fortified when the true identity of Annalee Call is revealed. She is a synthetic, but she is

capable of human sentience and possesses a higher code of ethics. In fact, Annalee's being is two things that male mind tries to dominate in this narrative: the machine and the female body. By the end of the movie, she becomes Ripley 8's surrogate daughter although she possesses a mechanical body. However, before this happens, the monstrous child needs to be un-born in a very grotesque and painful manner. This is a symbolic destruction of the male destructive, sexual energy. Nicholson argues that "the film's iconic xenomorph facehugger, as argued by Slavoj Žižek, clearly represents the Lacanian 'lamella,' the residue left behind once one emerges from the Real into the realm of the Imaginary" (4). Added to this is Ripley 8's extremely non-human yet sexually attractive body as a mother and center of attention for the scientists who dominated and exploited her.

Against the xenomorph queen and the Newborn stand Annalee and Ripley 8. When Ripley 8, Annalee and others are trying to escape Auriga, which is set on a collision course with Earth, the Newborn attacks Annalee aboard Betty (01:41:31). To save Annalee, Ripley 8 confronts the Newborn with pretentious motherly sentiments. First, she hugs the Newborn and caresses its teeth to inflict a wound in the palm of her hand, then she uses her acidic blood to create a hole in a window (01:45:06). From this point onward, the Newborn is gradually torn apart in an agonizing pain through the hole. Meeting its horrible end, it is delivered into void where death and the non-symbolic exist (01:46:33-01:45:38). The xenomorph queen, the Newborn and Ripley 8 are linked to each other through the existence of a monstrous infant and a grotesque process of childbirth. Eventually, this monstrous motherhood is ended when the Newborn dies in a process which is the exact reverse of childbirth: the monstrous is reduced to biological particles thorough a hole which is created by the mother's blood. Thus, the Betty's window is a metaphor for the barrier between this world and the void. Furthermore, by assuming the role of a surrogate mother to the highly sentient, female android Annalee, Ripley 8 liberates herself, Annalee and humanity from the threat of libidinal, destructive male energy. Of course, Annalee here is a metaphor for human body and intellect freed from flat, sexual force; an energy that goes everywhere aiming to destroy sentient life.

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Edvard Munch, The Scream, 1893, one of the most famous expressionist works

GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST CINEMA REVISITED

Kimia Mehrabi

METROPOLIS (1927)

In the early 20th century, after WWI and the rise of Weimar Republic, political turmoil of Germany led to an era known as The Golden Age of Cinema. During this era various artistic movements emerged. This article briefly reviews the Weimar cinematography and expressionism.

In From Caligari to Hitler, Siegfried Kracauer nearly exposes psychological dispositions of Germans – which was the basis of expressionism – based on their cinema industry from before the Weimar Republic to after Nazis – nearly from the WWI to after WII. He, then, precisely depicts his own contention:

"What films reflect are not so much explicit credos as psychological dispositions—Those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness. Of course, popular magazines and broadcasts, bestsellers, ads, fashions in language and other sedimentary products of a people's cultural life also yield valuable information about predominant attitudes, widespread inner tendencies. But the medium of the screen exceeds these sources in inclusiveness."   (Kracauer, INTRODUCTION, 1947)

1. A brief history of German cinema industry

Until after the emergence of Soviet montage cinema in the mid-and late 1920s, German films from the first half of the decade – under the heading of Neue Sachlichkeit – of which the best-known is still Robert Wiene's The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920), are often labeled "German Expressionism," borrowing the name from an avant-garde movement in literature, drama, painting and sculpture, and associated with such artist groups as Der Blaue Reiter, Der Sturm and Die Brücke, which peaked around 1912, and whose creative energies were largely spent by the end of WWI (Elsaesser, February 2016 ,19). Germany's cinema, in fact, got off officially on the edge of the first world war and after it (1913,1914); with some primary works of a few filmmakers like: Max Skladanowsky and Oskar Messter. Before this time, practically, there was no professional film industry in Germany. In 1909, after flourishing in America and France, sound-films also became popular in Germany. Years later, after the United states' attendance at the war, German officials set out to compete with Hollywood movies that had conquered the world, and also to defend Germany from the spreading anti-German propaganda of foreign movies. As a consequence, to boost the movies, Paul Davidson made contact with Max Reinhardt, the leading Berlin stage producer, and, about 1912-1911, participated in founding of a kind of guild which was to regulate the relations between film-makers and playwrights. (Kracauer, 1947) Later, in 1916 and 1917, respectively, German government founded the first two official film Companies (Deuling (Deutsche Lichtspiel-Gesellschaft) & Bufa (Bild-und Filmamt)) with the support of economic and cultural authorities. This was a great improvement for Germans in film industry. These two companies, in fact, were providing military documentaries of war fronts and commercial military films in order to publicize the land across the Rhine river during WWI which was not yet able enough to compete with American movies. Eventually, in November 1917 by the German high command in close touch with prominent financiers, industrialists and ship owners, Messter film, Davidsons Union and companies controlled by Nordisk merged into a new enterprise: UFA (Universum Film A. G.). Its stock of shares amounted to about 25 million marks. The official mission of UFA was to advertise Germany according to the government directives. To attain its aims, UFA had to raise the level of domestic production, because only films

of high standards could be expected to compete with, let alone outstrip, foreign achievements in effective propaganda. (ibid)

2. German Expressionism: A Time for Reappraisal? (1973)

Expressionism, indeed, cannot be simply defined. Some consider all Weimar period movies expressionist; however, Expressionism was an aesthetic, thematic movement which culminated mainly after the first world war to portray the German spirit of fear, terror, and tension of the war in a form of self-revealing era with the help of visual tools. After boundaries being shut, on the verge of the WWI, all foreign movies were banned; hence, rising demands for domestic movies resulted in different creations, and consequently, expressionism. Expressionism also was an attempt to compete with the Allies (mainly the U.S and France) movie industry. Poverty and constant insecurity help to explain the enthusiasm with which German artists embraced this movement which, as early as 1910, had tended to sweep aside all the principles which had formed the basis of art until then. (Eisner, 2008) Being full of contradictions and containing crash tones blended with emotional individual experiences,

The German spirit of fear, terror, and tension during the war shown in the form of expressionism

expressionist posters mostly reflected an artistic, commercial hues; therefore, in opposition to a realistic illustration, expressionism is concerned with individual experiences and emotions. The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari by Robert Wiene, is one of the most outstanding, must-see works of the period. Other works like: Metropolis (1927) by Fritz Lang, The Golem (1920) by Paul Wegener and Carl Boese, Nosferatu (1922), by F.W. Murnau, and The Student of Prague (1926) by Henrik Galeen are other works which all gave rise to film-noir and horror genre. In comparison, Caligari is not far-reaching but still superior to others in terms of visual and aesthetic dark effects.

3. The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

Directed by Robert Wiene, and written by Hans Janowitz and Carl Mayer, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is the cornerstone of German expressionism. In Roger Ebert's view, Caligari is the first great horror movie of cinema. Having a bizarre, theatrical setting with oblique lines, sharp angles, and mysterious scenes, this movie pictures a nightmarish atmosphere. It also reflects the unconscious demands and the general spirit of Germans during the war time. The prologue and epilogue were added as an afterthought in the face of objections from both authors. The result of these modifications was to falsify the action and ultimately to reduce it to the ravings of a madman.

The film's authors, Carl Mayer and Hans Janowitz, had the very different intention of unmasking the absurdity of asocial authority, represented by Dr. Caligari, the superintendent of a lunatic asylum and proprietor of a fairground side-show. (Eisner, 2008) What sets this film apart from its contemporaries is its absolute commitment to the expressionist movement. Muted sets, heavy dark/light makeup, light and shadow, and a gothic storyline are classic expressionism. The photography is beautiful and so crisp that it creates an eerie sense that this hellish scene is actually the real world. (IMDb, 2004)

4. Metropolis (1927)

Metropolis, directed by Fritz Lang and written by Thea Von Harbou, is another expressionist science-fiction drama produced in Universum Film A.G. (UFA) in Weimar period. Many attempts have been made since 1970s to restore the film, and finally in 2008 a cut of Lang's original cut was found in a museum in Argentina, then, the film was %95 restored and shown on large screens in Berlin and Frankfurt simultaneously on 12 February 2010. (Wikipedia,

2021) To describe the mass of inhabitants in the underground town of Metropolis, Lang used expressionistic stylization to great effect: impersonal, hunched, servile, spiritless, slavish beings dressed in costumes of no known historical period. Those people for whom the German film begins with Caligari

METROPOLIS (1927) AND THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (1920) VINTAGE POSTERS (CONTAINING CRASH TONES BLENDED WITH EMOTIONAL INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES, EXPRESSIONIST POSTERS MOSTLY REFLECTED AN ARTISTIC, COMMERCIAL HUES).

should see an episode of this extraordinary film, which has passed almost unnoticed. It contains, in addition to the chiaroscuro, all the elements of what the German cinema was to stand for during the next fifteen years. (Eisner, 2008)

5. The Collapse of Expressionism

Kracauer's account of the end of this era is noteworthy: "After establishment of the gold standard in Germany, the big Hollywood industrialist recognized that the German market would offer them pleasant possibilities. They were determined to step in, and began flooding Germany with American movies. They also purchased big German movie theaters and even built several new ones. To stem the flood, the German government decreed that for every foreign film released a German film should be produced. To be sure, studio minded products persisted long after 1924. But on the whole the films of the stabilized period [from 1924 to 1927] turned toward the outer world, shifting the emphasis from apparitions to actual appearances, from imaginary landscapes to natural surroundings. They were essentially realistic. A change in aesthetic standards took place also. Compared to the post-war films those of stabilized period were aesthetically dubious." (1947) Hence, after 1925, expressionism which had peaked in

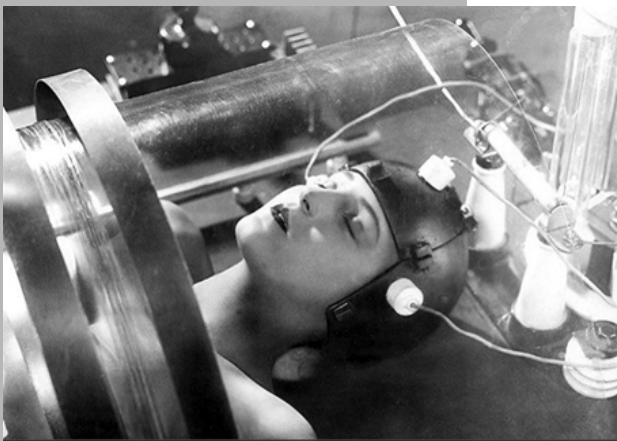Lang and Harbou in their Berlin apartment in 1923 or 1924, about the time they were working on the scenario for Metropolis (from Wikipedia)

Brigitte Helm in Metropolis (1927)

1920 to 1924, gradually, lost its popularity. As a matter of fact, Metropolis was a beginning for the collapse of this movement. German filmmakers' departure to Hollywood, followed by a change in Germany's social status led to the decline of the movement. Years later, in Nazi Germany, expressionist artists were branded "degenerate", and many of them were imprisoned. Despite The Golden Age of Weimar cinematography has not given its due up to current post-cinema era, according to Paul Rotha : "The true German film died
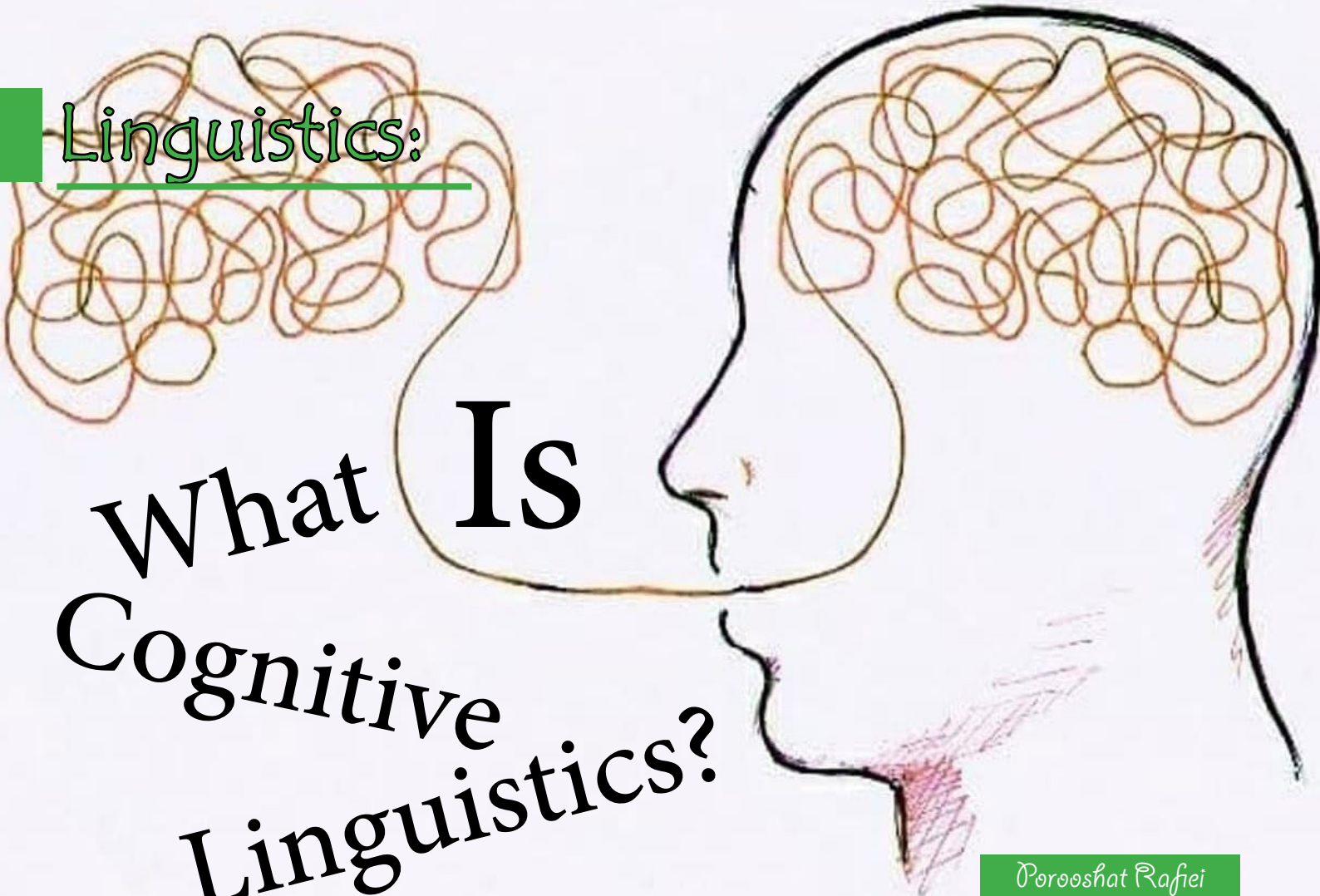

Metropolis, Fritz Lang, 1927

quietly."

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Linguistics:

What Is Cognitive Linguistics?

Porooshat Rafiei

Cognitive Linguistics began as an approach to the study of language, but it now has implications and applications far beyond language in any traditional sense of the word. It has its origins in the 1980s as a conscious reaction to Chomskyan linguistics, with its emphasis on formalistic syntactic analysis and its underlying assumption that language is independent from other forms of cognition.

Early research was spearheaded during the second half of the 1970s by the so-called «founding fathers" of cognitive linguistics: Ronald Langacker, George Lakoff and Leonard Talmy Langacker, during this period, began work on his theory of Cognitive Grammar, then dubbed «space grammar.» Lakoff was working on a related approach to grammar that came to be dubbed Construction Grammar, as well as a semantic basis for grammar, termed «linguistic gestalts.» This notion later evolved into his theory of conceptual metaphor theory, developed with philosopher Mark Johnson.

By the mid to late 1980s these approaches, together with research from other leading researchers, most notably French-American researcher Gilles Fauconnier, had coalesced into a broad research program that adopted a broad empiricist and non-modular approach to language and mind, that came to be called "cognitive linguistics;" in essence, the various theories shared a common impulse to model language and human communication in ways that were cognitively realistic, rather than adopting the modular, computational view of mind inherited from early research in cognitive science. And by the early 1990s, there was a growing proliferation of research in

this area, and of researchers who identified themselves as "cognitive linguists." In 90/1989, the International Cognitive Linguistics Society was established, together with the journal Cognitive Linguistics. In the words of the eminent cognitive linguist Ronald Langacker this "marked the birth of cognitive linguistics as a broadly grounded, self-conscious intellectual movement."

The Field of Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive linguistics has its roots in theoretical linguistics. Today, cognitive linguists no longer restrict themselves to the narrow remit of theory construction: ideas, theories, and methods from cognitive linguistics are increasingly applied to a wide array of aesthetic, communicative, developmental, educational and cultural phenomena across a wide array of disciplinary contexts including the behavioural, biological, cognitive and social sciences as well as the humanities. This is a testament to the broad appeal and applicability of the range of ideas and theoretical frameworks that have emerged within the cognitive linguistics enterprise. Of course, as language provides a somewhat partial window on the mind, cognitive linguists invoke the notion of converging evidence. Behavioural studies from experimental psychology have been deployed in order tso provide converging evidence for the psychological reality of conceptual metaphors, for instance. The upshot is that cognitive linguistic theories, that have deployed language as the lens through which cognitive phenomena can be investigated amount to models of the mind.

The second constitutes a focus on language: After all, cognitive linguists, like other linguists, study language for its own sake. But again, a consequence of the commitments of the enterprise, language is held to reflect general aspects of cognition. And as such, language can›t be artificially separated from the conceptual phenomena that it in large part reflects and is shaped by. One concrete manifestation of this is that language is held to reflect more general, organisational properties of cognition, such as embodiment and the nature of categorisation. Another is that aspects of language that are treated as discrete and encapsulated in formal linguistics, such as grammar, cannot be treated as such within cognitive linguistics; cognitive linguists take a broadly functional perspective: language emerged to facilitate communicative meaning. Hence, grammatical organisation, which supports situated meaning, cannot be artificially separated from the study of meaning, which it is specialised to facilitate. Within cognitive linguistics, the study of language often exhibits either a focus on semantics, or on grammar, although there is typically no hard and fast division between the way the two are studied, despite the specific focus adopted. In practice, the division arises due to the focus of a particular researcher, or of the research question being investigated, rather than due to a principled division. The area of study involving cognitive linguistics approaches to semantics is concerned with investigating a number of semantic phenomena. One such phenomenon is linguistic semantics, encompassing phenomena traditionally studied under the aegis of lexical semantics (word meaning), compositional semantics (sentence meaning), and pragmatics (situated meaning). It also encompasses phenomena not addressed under these traditional headings, such as the relationship between experience, the conceptual system and the semantic structure encoded by

language during the process of meaning construction.

Cognitive linguistics' approaches to grammar take the view that a model of meaning (a "cognitive semantics" account), has to be delineated before an adequate cognitive model of grammar can be developed. This is because grammar is viewed within the cognitive linguistics enterprise as a meaningful system in and of itself, which therefore shares important properties with the system of linguistic meaning and cannot be functionally separated from it. Cognitive grammarians have also typically adopted one of two foci. Scholars including Ronald Langacker have emphasised the study of the cognitive principles that give rise to linguistic organisation. In his theoretical framework, Cognitive Grammar, Langacker has attempted to delineate the principles that serve to structure a grammar, and to relate these to aspects of general cognition.

The second avenue of investigation, pursued by researchers aims to provide a more descriptively detailed account of the units that comprise a particular language. These researchers have attempted to provide an inventory of the units of language. Cognitive grammarians who have pursued this line of investigation are developing a set of theories that can collectively be called construction grammars, or sometimes constructionist models. This approach takes its name from the view in cognitive linguistics that the basic unit of language is a form-meaning symbolic assembly which is called a construction. It follows that cognitive approaches to grammar are not restricted to investigating aspects of the grammatical structure largely independently of meaning, as is often the case in formal traditions. Instead, cognitive approaches to grammar encompass the entire inventory of linguistic units defined as form-meaning pairings.

These run the gamut from skeletal syntactic configurations such as the ditransitive construction, e.g., The window cleaner blew the supermodel a kiss, to idioms, He bent over backward, to bound morphemes such as the -er suffix, to words. This entails that the received view of clearly distinct «sub-modules» of language cannot be meaningfully upheld within cognitive linguistics, where the boundary between cognitive approaches to semantics and cognitive approaches to grammar is less clearly defined. Instead, meaning and grammar are seen as two sides of the same coin: to take a cognitive approach to grammar is to study the units of language and hence the language system itself. To take a cognitive approach to semantics is to attempt to understand how this linguistic system relates to the conceptual system, which in turn relates to embodied experience. The concerns of cognitive approaches to semantics and cognitive approaches to grammar are thus complementary.

Derived from
Cognitive Linguistics (An Introduction) VYVYAN Evans and Melanie Green, Edinburgh University
The Bloomsbury companion to cognitive linguistics (John R. Tylor and Jeanette Littlemore), Bloomsbury

A BRIEF LOOK AT KURDISH LANGUAGE

Roya Tabei

Kurdish Language belongs to Indo-European family (McCarus, 1995; Fattah, 1997; Thackston, 2006), although McCarus believes Kurdish cannot be classified in an individual group in Iranian languages. In fact, he considers Kurdish in a branch between western Iranian northern and southern dialects. Kurdish is one of the spoken languages in western Asia including Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Armenia, and Azerbaijan with more than 20 to 30 million speakers. Languages like Balouchi, Gilaki, Taleshi and Farsi share some similarities with Kurdish both morphologically and syntactically (Gharib, 2011). Generally, there is no agreement on Kurdish dialects and classification either in Iran or other countries. Dabirmoghadam (601 :2013) divided Kurdish language into three classes including Northern, Central and Southern Kurdish. Northern Kurdish is the dialect which spreads among the Kurds in Turkey, Syria and Iran (Western Azerbaijan) called either Kurmanji or Badinani. According to Mackenzie (1961), Northern Kurdish keeps older morphological and phonetic features of Kurdish. Central dialect is the native language of the people in Kurdistan (Iran), and parts of Khorasan, Mazandaran and Sistan-and-Balouchestan which is known as Mokryani. Southern Kurdish is the dialect of Kermanshah and Ilam.

Other classification is posed by Daneshpazhouh (2010) which is conducted based on Ergativity and sentence structure including Northern Kurmanji (Kurmanji), Central Kurmanji (Sourani), Southern Kurmanji and Hawrami.

Northern Kurmanji is the native language of more than two third of Kurds having different variants like Boutanni, Bayazidi, Jazirei, Hakari, Shamdinani, Badinani and Shekak. The speakers mostly settle in Northern and western Kurdistan (located in Turkey and Syria), the regions near Urumiye (known as Shekak), Balouchestan, northern border of Kurdistan Region (called Badinani), Lebanon, Armenia, Russia, and Azerbaijan. Central Kurdish has been the standard and administrative dialect of Kurds since the beginning of Iraq government dated back to 1920. This dialect includes different variants like Mokryai, Ardalan, Bababn, Jafi and Sourani. Mokryani (known as "Mahabadi Variant") is the communicative language of the Kurds living in Western Azerbaijan and northern part of Kurdistan in Iran including Oshnaviye, Boukan, Saqez and Baneh. This dialect has been able not only to keep the original forms of most words and structures but also to be used in formal writing and media. Kalbasi (1983:12) has separated this variant from

Northern Kurmanji placing in Sourani. Ardalan is the dominant variant in some regions of Western Azerbaijan and Kurdistan Province including Divandareh, Marivan, Kamyaran, and Dehgolan. Baban variant is the language of the people in Soleymanieh. Sourani is spoken in Souran and Arbil. Jafi is in eastern Kurdistan in Javanroud, Ravansar, Sarpol-e-Zahab, Sala-e-Babajani and parts of southern Kurdistan in Shahrouz, Karkouk and Kelar. Southern Kurmanji is the leading dialect in the south of eastern Kurdistan in Iran which is spoken in a wide region of Ilam, Ghorveh and Bijar.

Dabirmoghadam (794 :2013) places "Owrami" or "Hawrami" in northern-western language class including Gourani and Zazaei. Mackenzi (1966:3) considers Hawrami as an amazing island carrying astonishing features. In his opinion, Hawrami has an aspect of an ancient middle Iranian dialect. Hawraman Region is located in southern and eastern Kurdistan known as Hawraman Lahoun and Hawraman Takht respectively.

Thackston (2006: vii) and G.Kreynbroek (2005:55) also provide another classification of Kurdish which is simpler than the previous ones. Kalbasi (1992) considers this classification more common. Accordingly, Kurdish is divided into two main groups. The first class is "Kurmanji" which is the spoken language of more than 15 to 17 million Kurds in Turkey, Syria, Armenia, Azerbaijan and small regions in Iraq and Iran; this region is known as Kurdistan Bakur. Second group is "Sourani Kurdish", the communicative language of about 12 million Kurds in Iraq and Iran; this region is called Kurdistan Başûr. G.Kreynbroek (2005:55) believes that these two goups share the same ancestor, although they are linguistically different. For example, Sourani has no grammatical gender and case marker, while Kurmanji possesses both features. These differences are so strange that Kurmanji speakers are not able to communicate with Sourani speakers.

KURDISH DISTRIBUTION IN MIDDLE EAST (GUNTER, 2009)

Kurdish has 28 consonants and 6 vowels. Syllable structure is made of at least one consonant and one vowel (CV) and maximum 5 consonants and one vowel (CCVCCC). Consonant cluster is common at the beginning or the end of each syllable.

CV	pə (پ)
CCVCCC	Prinčk (قطره)

Pahlevannezhad and Asadpour (2007) Can you speak Kurdish? Which branch?

Hadi Heidari

A CRITICAL VIEW ON MEDITATION

J acques Lacan, the French psychoanalyst, introduced three stages for psychological development calling the first one "the Real", the stage in which the infant experiences the threshold of the Real Order, which means that his perception of the world is close to reality, since he lacks language, symbol or memory. The concept of self in not yet shaped, therefore, if an infant at the age of one to six-month-old looks at himself in the mirror, he cannot recognize himself in the mirror. In other words, he does not know that it is him who is in the mirror. The infant is not able to distinguish himself from the world around. He thinks that he is a part of his mother or the environment. He feels a sense of unity with the world around. Animals stay in this stage more or less for the rest of their lives because they are not equipped with language, although they have memory.

In today's world, meditation and self-consciousness practices are very popular among people. In most of these practices you are encouraged to do hours of meditation by sitting in a quiet place and doing nothing but being present at the moment. The purpose is that you become self-conscious and experience "the Reality" as they claim. You are asked to forget every problem or memory that comes to your mind at that moment, and reach a point that you feel a sense of unity with the world with no memory of the past, no obsession for the

future, but being present at the moment.

The writer thinks that this lifestyle is, in a way, a return to the "Real stage", to the very first months of our lives, because it has almost all the criteria mentioned for this stage. Now, is it an efficient way of living? The writer does not think so. If we look at the human race history, we can approve that the human race has tolerated a lot of difficulties to reach a point where he is now. And this would not be achieved if our ancestors evaded the main problems of their time and practiced self-consciousness.

Nobody can deny the positive effects of meditation on depression and anxiety, but are we not sweeping the real problem under the rug? If you look at anxiety and depression through an evolutionary approach, you will realize that they can be even useful states since they tell you that you need to change your way of conducting yourself in the world so that you can survive. Instead of doing hours of meditation, a thoughtful person can look for a problem and fix it! Even a very small change means that you have made the world a better place than it was before. At the end, the writer believes that regardless of any religion one can have, he has a lot of reasons to make the world a better place, and that means he needs to engage himself with the real issues in life rather than just living for his own peace.
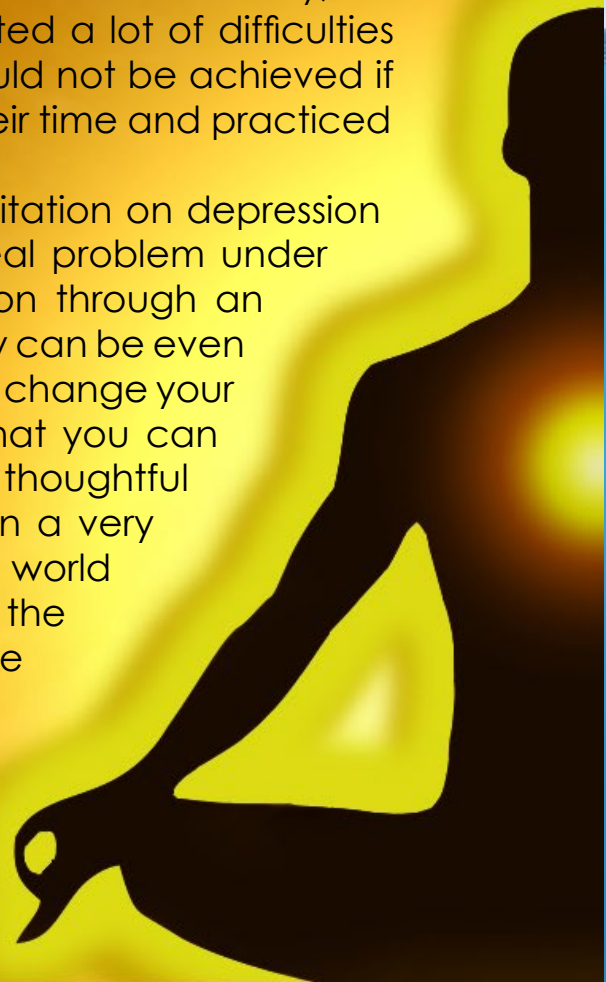
Yasaman Almasi

THE POWER OF THE

UNCONSCIOUS

Let your thoughts grow faster than your body. Psychological history begins in childhood experiences in the family behaviour between parents and adults which result in psyche; it also affects psychological problems which are shown in making decisions. If we do not consider those effects, we will be unconsciously affected by them. By considering all these consequences, I decided to talk about the existence of the unconsciousness; I'm making an elaboration on some parts of it and its control over human decision.

When I look into a person's eyes, I sometimes can find or guess at some attitudes that we both share. They can be about life and things we respect or hate. Even now I try to fight for what I believe in; I do not care if I fail. Because it is more precious than imitating others, and this would finally let your thoughts grow faster than your body and that's success. We are busy coping; we live in a world that consists of imitation; we just act the way others do, this includes even the way we dress, and the way we eat. Others' behaviours and finally their thoughts become the bacons for our lives without any independent analyses attempted on our side; do not make decisions based on them.

More than often, it happens automatically and spontaneously or unconsciously. If you consider the influence of the unconscious and our decisions, you can go further than you think in realising how deep it is. According to the literary criticism of Plato and Aristotle, page 7; for Plato, it is natural to imitate and to get pleasure from imitation, but it could be dangerous and undermine virtue; in following Plato, Aristotle also expressed the pleasure that comes from the quality of imitation regardless of the object imitated. Actually, this imitation comes from our childhood; from the very first days we were born; family is prominent because we are products of family complex. The question here is, does it necessarily last till the end of our lives? And should we make our decision based and our differences in logic and thinking that the active copying never ends.

The Unconscious

According to Sigmund Freud's analyses and his theories, unconsciousness plays an important role in human's mentality which is considered a dynamic entitle that engages us on the deepest level of our being. For Freud, we are each a product of the role we are given in the family. We have formed our identities around our conscious desires, and because we are afraid of examining what we will, those are served by our defences. Defences are kept in the unconscious, in other words, they are repressed due to the intensity. Some people misconstrue this issue; for example, they acquire a weird lifestyle and by doing that they feel more confident and independent.

Finally, by the same token, these people think they are not a part of others' choices, and they feel separated from others. However, even in this position, they are imitating people who are like them. Worse than that, when we make wrong decisions that

can affect others in destructive ways; we think that is going to end with a good result, but if we respect popular ideas, we do not respect ourselves. Unfortunately, in our Society this becomes part of everybody's routine. I know it is complex to rely on your own thoughts, (according to many philosophers, in contrast imitation is an easy way, and the greatest lesson of life is if you want to grow, you have to pass difficulties in your life).

In "The unconscious" by Freud, unacceptable thoughts and feelings are repressed into unconsciousness which is out of our control. If we search for ourselves in detail, who can see a halo of awareness. We should listen to the purest part of our being, the region of emotion, and the invincible power of spiritual communication. Finding something that gives meaning to life.

This precious thing is LOVE. We are born with love; love of mother and father, presents gave birth to us. And if we consider this endless pure feeling, which is beyond time and space, we can make better decisions; because there is no limitation for that. So, close your eyes and listen to your own inner voice. I want to end it by Freud's quotation: "You can't always get what you consciously want, but you will get what you unconsciously need."

Resources:
Critical theory today, by Tyson
A short history of literary criticism, by Hall

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light your way...