From Knowledge to Wisdom

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A Plea for Commonality Without Common Points
—With Reference to *The Planet of the Apes*[1]

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In the science fiction novel titled *The Planet of the Apes* (1963), Pierre Boulle tells a story about a completely reversed world where the apes dominate the humans. Coming from the normal world that is ours, a small group of people is totally embarrassed and confused by observing this strange world. On the planet of the apes that they have discovered, it is the apes that are more intelligent than the humans. On the earth, it was the other way around. That observation results in their perplexity. The two communities, human and simian, bear with one another the relationship that corresponds to what Lotman calls "enantiomorphic pairings". In this context, a series of questions deserves to be raised: Is a "common language" possible between the two communities in the enantiomorphic pairings? If the answer is yes, under what conditions could they succeed in opening up a space where they can have something in common? In rereading *The Planet of the Apes* with reference to Lotman's semiotics of culture, we would like to formulate a response to those questions. Our claim is that the experience of finitude of one's own language can make possible an access to the new form of universality requisite for the cross-cultural communication: commonality without common points.

Keywords: The Planet of the Apes, enantiomorphism, semiotics of culture, commonality without common points, frontier, communautarism, universalism

Introduction

What kind of community can we hope for in an era where the common sense is gravely at risk of collapse? How can we still imagine the community to come in that situation? Should a community be absolutely constructed on the basis of common points between community members? In this paper, we suggest undertaking a thought experiment the purpose of which is to explore possibilities for understanding basic conditions through which a form of commonality is constructed without any common point. In order to tackle this question, we would like to reread *The Plant of the Apes* by Pierre Boulle from a semiotic point of view in the following order: (1) the paradox of enantiomorphism; (2) in search of common language; (3) commonality without common points.

The Paradox of Enantiomorphism

Imagine that two cultural communities or semiospheres are in perpetual conflict with one another for some reasons. In other words, they are all intransigent about their positions. Semiotically speaking, a solid code of conduct is at work inside each of them. It functions as a very strong organizing center, which perpetually hinders one party from coming to an eventual compromise with its opposite party. In the science fiction novel titled *The Planet of the Apes* (1963), Pierre Boulle tells a story about the completely reversed world where the apes dominate the humans. Coming from a normal world that is like ours, a small group of people are totally embarrassed from observing this strange, i.e., abnormal world. On the planet of the apes that they have just discovered, the apes look more intelligent than the humans. On Earth, it was the other way around, of course. Their perplexity is of an essentially anthropological order. Let us say at the outset that the two societies, human and simian, hold here a relation with each other, which corresponds to what Lotman calls "enantiomorphic pairing" (Lotman, 2005, p. 225). This situation is very particular in the sense that there is no third way to fully objectify one's axiological stance vis-à-vis its opposite. The space travelers are faced with this situation on the planet of the apes.

This very particular situation can be generalized from the point of view of cultural anthropology. In his paper intitled "The Spatial Representation of Cultural Otherness", Winfried Nöth argues "What the allegedly dangerous and admirable cultures have in common", according to Todorov (Todorov, 1989, pp. 297-298) and Lotman (Lotman, 1990, pp. 132, 142), is that both appear as the inverted mirror image of one's own: "the despised carnivals are those who do things that we are not allowed to do, that the noble savages are those in whose culture things appear simple that are complex in our civilized culture" (Nöth, 2007, p. 10). What is at stake in our globalized society becoming more and more multicultural is that paradoxical logic, capable of leaving us finally trapped in an inextricable conflict. According to this logic based on enantiomorphism, what is considered to be true on one side, for instance, tends to be interpreted as being false on the other side, and vice versa. Within this context, a series of questions deserves to be raised: Is a "common language" (Lotman, 2000, p. 38) between enantiomorphic pairings possible? If the answer is yes, how can it be constructed? What might the two opposite parties have in common? In short, is commonality possible even without common points?

To deal with those questions from a culturalogical point of view, we would like to refer especially to Yuri M. Lotman who argues that:

> Toute culture commence par diviser le monde en «mon» espace interne et «leur» espace externe. La manière dont cette division binaire est interprétée dépend de la typologie de la culture concernée. Mais la division véritable est celle qui provient des universaux culturels humains. (All culture begins by dividing the world into my internal space and their external space. The way this division is interpreted depends on the typology of the culture concerned. But the real division is that which comes from human cultural universals.). (Lotman, 2000, p. 38)

Enantiomorphism radicalizes this binary division to the point that all the quests for "human cultural universals" fall into impasse. In the following discussion, we would like to make a plea for what we like to call "commonality without common points" to the benefit of the possibility of a new type of universality under the context of enantiomorphism.

In Search of a Common Language

Within the framework of semiotics of culture, Lotman and Uspensky argue that "culture is never a universal set, but always a subset organized in a specific manner" (Lotman & Uspensky, 1978, p. 211). In the

field of culturalogy, what is universal doesn't consist of a set of characteristics that are supposed to be shared by all human cultures, simply because a culture could not but be described only in specific terms. To speak like Lacan, human culture is always constructed in the form of "pas-tout". This is to say that it can be considered as a valuable heritage only when it is limited, or specific, in other words, delimited by a certain boundary.

Semiosphere is a delimited space where the boundary plays an important role to translate unfamiliar elements coming from the outside into familiar language. The existence of a translation system supposes two types of division available in a given semiosphere: a division between the inside and the outside, on the one hand and a division between the core and the peripheries, on the other hand. If the former supposing the plurality of semiosphere is concerned with what Roman Jakobson calls "interlinguistic translation", the latter is tied to what he calls "intralinguistic translation" inasmuch as it results in different levels of translability: at the core translability reaches a high level; at the peripheries its degree remarkably diminishes. What is interesting is that enantiomorphism transforms the interlinguistic translation problem into an intralinguistic translation by excluding the possibility of an exterior.

In that paradoxical situation described in terms of enantiomorphism, all efforts to find a common language are likely to end in failure. The reason for this is pure and simple. In the system of enantiomorphic pairings, there is no room for the first type of division, i.e., a division between the inside and the outside. Enantiomorphism is a closed system that denies the existence of an exterior. In other words, any possibility of mediation does not exist between the two semiospheres concerned. For the sake of clarification, take a look at the following schema (see Figure 1):
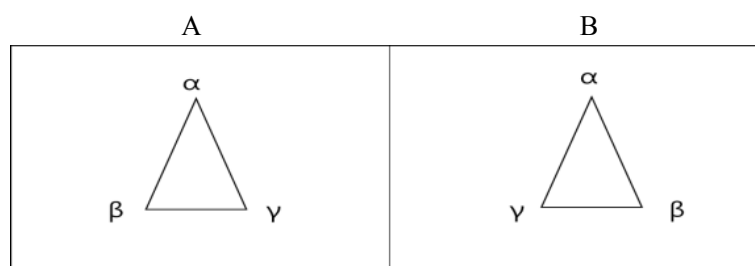
Figure 1. Enantiomorphism.

Inside a semiosphere called "A" there exists a core, represented above in the form of a triangle α, β, γ. Different ways of living, judging, behaving, in short. All "forms of life" (Fontanille, 2008) are regulated here by that interpreting system playing the role to centralize the semiosphere, i.e., a semiotic action which Ch. S. Peirce (1978) baptized "semiosis". In the semiophere "B", one can observe exactly the same idealogical, pragmatical, axiological structure as in the former, except that it functions in the opposite direction. Enantiomorphic pairing is thus set up between the two semiospheres "A" and "B" in such a way that the truth claim being made on one side, for instance, is translated into the falsehood on its opposite side, and vice versa. Under these conditions, how is it possible that a common language is created between the two semiotic systems? How to succeed in overcoming the limits of communitarianism? In other words, is it possible to go in search of universality? The key question is "how humanity can be constructed on the basis of the diversity of humanities" (comment construire l'humanité à partir des humanités) (Rastier & Bouquet, 2002, p. 245).

In the story of *The Planet of the Apes*, what brings painful perplexity to the space travelers is a particular situation caused by enantiomorphism. In my view, attempting to give an account of their confusion exclusively

from an evolutionary point of view prevailing all along the story seems to be beside the point, because the main reason why Ulysse's family has to escape from the planet of the apes has mainly to do with a cultural as well as political bias. This type of bias is quite common to anthropological experiences. In his book intitled *Nous et les autres*, Todorov clearly shows how that cultural bias can be successfully dealt with through a process of translation.

> Mes deux moitiés communiquent entre elles, elles cherchent un terrain d'entente, elles traduisent l'une pour l'autre jusqu'à ce qu'elles se comprennent. L'ethnologue ne sombre pas dans le délire schizoïde parce qu'il reste à la recherche d'un sens commun, et, à la limite, universel. (My two halves are communicating with one another, looking for a common ground and translating for one another to the point that they could understand each other. The ethnologue doesn't fall into schizoid personality disorder, because he is being in quest of a common sense, further universal one.). (Todorov, 1989, p. 123)

In the above passage, Todorov comes up with a model of intercultural translability, on the basis of which all his universalist project aimed at finding a "common ground" is established. In the matter of enantiomorphism, however, this position is hardly defendable. When referring to *The Planet of the Apes*, there is no doubt that the humans feel uncomfortable about the idea that the apes might be more intelligent than them not just on the planet of the apes. In other words, this awful idea can never be translated into their anthropocentric language. In short, the human being must be at the center of the universe for good. Unfortunately, the same is the case with the simian semiosphere. Now the apes feel shame about the idea that the humans have a disposition toward behaving intelligently as much as they do, even though this bizarre idea is proven to be true scientifically. For instance, in view of Zaïus, an orangutan, the human being is not but a wild animal deprived of inspiring spirituality as well as rationality. The two semiospheres, human and simian, are completely incapable of translating "for one another to the point that they could understand each other". The semiotic structure of that enantiomorphic pairing can be represented in the form of a tree as follows (see Figure 2).
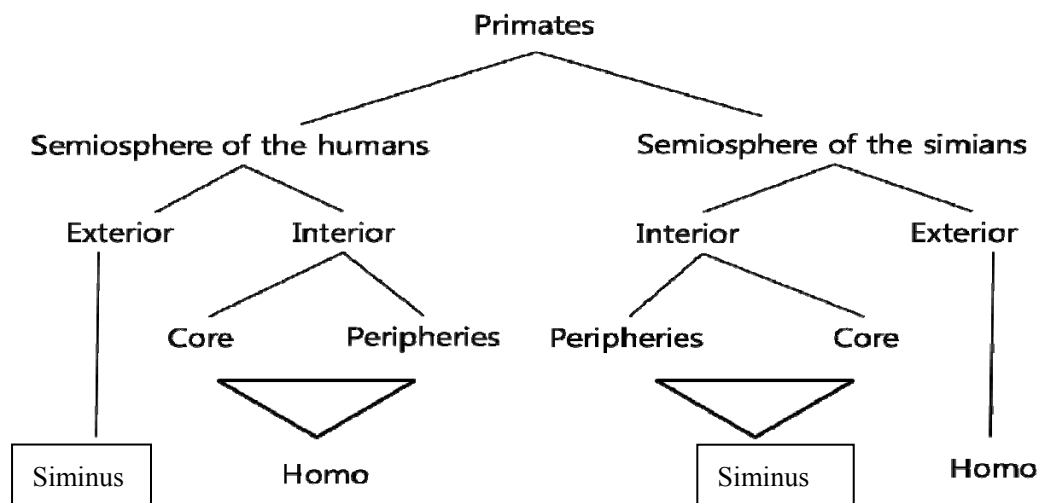
Figure 2. Primates tree diagram.

Given this situation, the possibility to find a "common ground" between the two opposite parties, i.e., *Homo* and *Siminus*, is schematically closed up. In this regard, it is interesting to see that the novel ends up in the complete disappearance of the human civilization as well as in the simian domination of the whole universe.

The conflict between the two semiospheres fades away as the humans give way to the apes. As a consequence, the only one semiosphere prevails all over the universe. The picture of this state of affairs can be drawn as follows (see Figure 3):
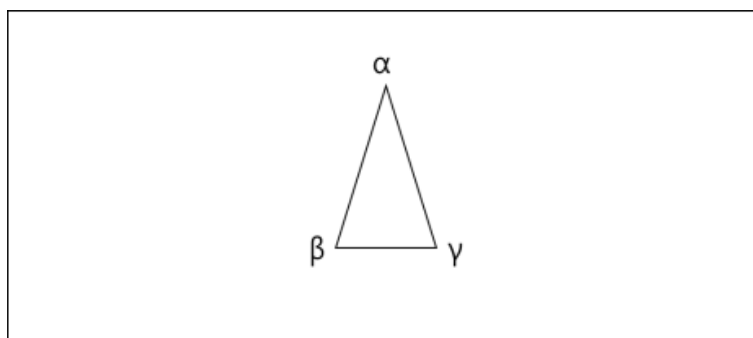
Figure 3. The semiosphere.

Notice that the above schema shows only one semiosphere, i.e., the semiosphere where there is only one core. The two types of division are thus totally neutralized. If one can speak of universality in that situation, it's only a universality imposed by the logic of natural selection, i.e., a logic of power.

As seen above, it is due to the fundamental incompatibility constitutive of the enantiomorphism that all efforts to discover a "common ground" between the two semiospheres in conflict bump into a barrier as long as enantiomorphic pairings persist. A question arises imperatively how to break up this vicious circle without having recourse to the logic of power. In my view, there seems to be only one solution. To make a long story short, the solution of that question consists in disclosing the exterior excluded by the enantiomorphic system. Hence the following schema (see Figure 4).
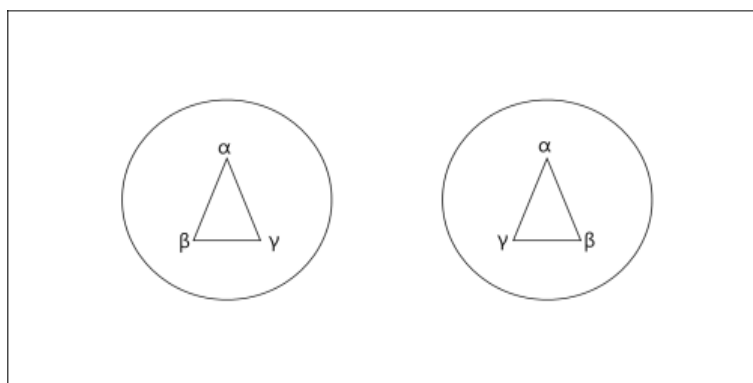
Figure 4. Enantiomorphic semiotic system.

Take an example, the novel begins with a letter of plea, Ulysse sends out in outer space to sound an alarm, crying out that the whole of humanity is being at risk of extinction. This is to say that the totality of the human semiosphere is exposed to its extreme limits.

> I am confiding this manuscript to space not with the intention of saving myself, but to help, perhaps, to avert the appalling scourge that is menacing the human race. Lord have pity on us! … (Boulle, 1963/1993, p. 9)

Interestingly, the same thing happens on the planet of the apes. When the apes find out that Ulysse has incredible capabilities of reasoning as well as speaking, the solid faith in the totality of their semiosphere begins

to be cracked. Hence the following reaction from the apes:

> The orangutans hate you because you are the living proof of their scientific aberrations, and the gorillas consider you too dangerous to be allowed at liberty much longer. They are frightened you might found a new race on this planet. But apart from this eventuality, they are frightened that your mere example might sow unrest among the men. Unusual nervousness has been reported among the ones with whom you are dealing. (Boulle, 1963/1993, p. 256)

For the sake of clarification, take a look at the following semiotic square based on the logico-semantic relations of contrariness (Homo vs. Siminus) and contradiction (Homo vs. − Homo; Siminus vs. − Siminus) (see Figure 5).
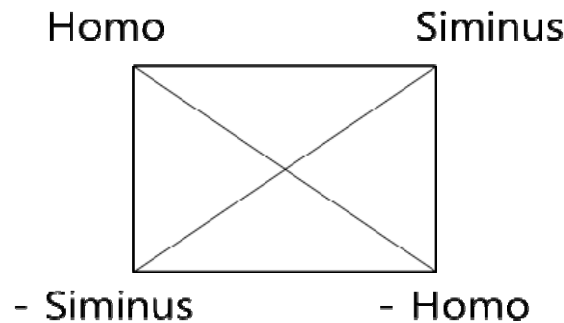
Figure 5. Semiotic square of Sapiens.

According to a structural tenet, all semiotic systems are firmly established due to the oppositional relationship between at least two terms A and B, for instance. If Ulysse's family has to escape from the planet of the apes, it is because the complex term combining A (Homo) and B (Siminus) is not possible in the enantiomorphic system. However, notice that when those two terms are denied at the same time, surprisingly, the systematicity of the opposition-based semiotic system is radically called into doubt so that this system cannot sustain itself anymore. It is at this critical moment defined by the complex term linking − B (− Siminus) with − A (− Homo) that the emantiomorphic system begins to crack down. Let me represent that process of collapsing with the dotted line as follows (see Figure 6).
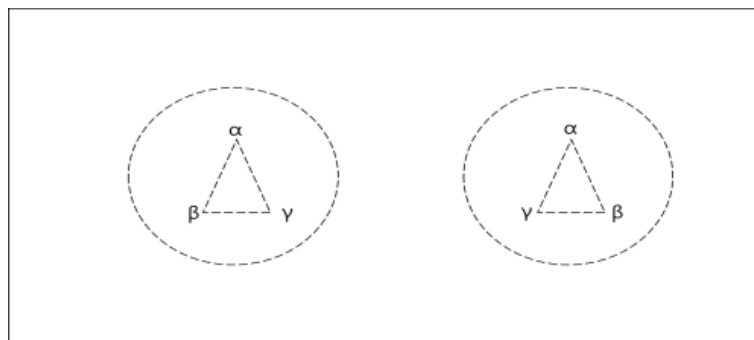
Figure 6. Enantiomorphic semiotic system collapse.

The limits of enantiomorphism happens to be unveiled little by little through a process we would like to call double crossed contradiction, characterized in terms of neither A nor B. It is interesting to observe how Ulysse goes through this critical moment. Just after the congress where he has successfully demonstrated his capability as a rational being, he has this bizarre feeling at a party organized by his ape friends in order to

launch him into simian society.

> The confusion was caused by the alcohol that I started swilling as soon as I arrived, and to which my system was no longer accustomed. The disturbing effect was an odd sensation that was to come over me on many other occasions. I can only describe it by saying that the nature of the figures around me became progressively less simian, whereas their function or the position they held in society became dominant. The head waiter, for instance, who came up obsequiously to show us our table, I saw only as the *head waiter*, and the fact that he was a gorilla tended to be obscured. The figure of an elderly she-ape with an outrageously painted face was replaced by that of an *old coquette*, and when I dance with Zira I forgot her condition completely, and my arm merely encircled the waist of a dancer. The chimpanzee orchestra was nothing more than an orchestra, and the elegant apes exchanging witticisms all around me were simply men about town. (Boulle, 1963/1993, p. 183)

The illusion described above is not simply caused by the alcohol. Being part of simian community, Ulysse begins to focus not on the race of those he meets but on their social function or position. It seems that neither human nor simian makes any sense to him.

Alain Badiou attempts to account for the foundation of a Christian discourse, relying on such a double crossed contradiction as neither Greek discourse nor Jewish discourse. According to him, it is only through this gesture of double rejection that Saint Paul makes a claim for universal truth, which can be summed up as follows: "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither female nor male". Let me just add to this adage "neither Homo nor Siminus".

Commonality Without Common Points

Our working hypothesis is that when the two semiospheres in conflict are deterritorialized at the same time, an opportunity opens up to create a common ground. The type of universality we would like to defend here does not reside in the intersection space between those two semiospheres. It resides rather in the space of complementariness where one cannot claim its own validity vis-à-vis its opposite. It is interesting to note that where the two semiotic systems based on enantiomorphism are suspended at the same time, the part which has been invisible in the background begins to make itself visible, as illustrated in the above schema. Our claim is that this is just what happens when Ulysse moves from the earth to the planet of the apes, from one semiosphere to another. In other words, he cannot cross over the borderline between the two semiospheres without casting doubt at the same time on the consistency of each of the semiotic systems he refers to for the sake of understanding the world he is traveling around. In the course of this so-called inter-semiospheric movement, a background, which has been dissimulated until then, is open. It is in this background that we would like to spot the possibility of a new type of universality. By the latter, we mean "commonality without common points".

According to Kant, all forms of value judgment are based on *sensus communis*. The interpretation system in a given semiosphere functions with reference to this sense of community. To successfully establish a universal community in the Kantian sense of the word, this *sensus communis*, in my view, must be among the first to be questioned. From that moment on, it becomes possible to go beyond the limits of communitarianism in search of another sense of community aimed at universality. For instance, in *The Planet of the Apes*, a female monkey called Zira and a male human called Ulysse develop feelings for each other. And a significant change occurs with respect to their *sensus communis*. That is to say, they attempt to exceed altogether the limits of communitarianism. Knowing that if she helps Ulysee to escape from the planet, she has to pay a huge price for her disobedience, Zira takes a risk. She has the courage to transgress the *sensus communis* of the simian

semiosphere she belongs to. As for Ulysse, he expresses his heart felt gratitude for Zira as he is little by little attracted to her personality. This change is well illustrated by the scene where they learn each other's language. Zira teaches Ulysse the Simian language and Ulysse teaches Zira the French language.

> From then on, thanks to Zira, my knowledge of the simian world and language increased rapidly. She contrived to see me alone almost every day on the pretext of some test and undertook my education, instructing me in the language and at the same time learning mine with a rapidity that amazed me. In less than two months we were capable of holding a conversation on a variety of subjects. (Boulle, 1963/1993, p. 125)

However, they have some difficulties understanding, for instance, two words, i.e., "ape" and "man". These two words refer to the same things but mean different things. But they overcome those difficulties by opening up a very specific translation space of neither Simian language nor French language. At the end of the story, their kiss scene dramatically shows how a universal community between them can be established even for a short period of time.

> I stop and take her in my arms. She is as upset as I am. I see a tear coursing down her muzzle while we stand locked in a tight embrace. Ah, what matter this horrid material exterior! It is her soul that communes with mine. I shut my eyes so as not to see her grotesque face, made uglier still by emotion. I feel her shapeless body tremble against mine. I force myself to rub my cheek against hers. We are about to kiss like lovers when she gives an instinctive start and thrusts me away violently. (Boulle, 1963/1993, p. 260)

Of course, there is nothing that a female ape has to share with a male man. But the *Siminus Sapiens* called "Zira" has a desire to get close to the *Homo Sapiens* called "Ulysse" and to share something with him. So they have learnt each other's languages. They feel together a sense of belonging without actually belonging to any community, neither *Homo* nor *Siminus*. At this moment, what we would like to propose calling *communality without common points* begins to take form and shape between the two *Sapiens*. In this community the *sensus communis* doesn't cease to be questioned to the benefit of a new form of life. That's why we have to start again where the story ends.

Conclusion

Our conclusion can be summed up as follows:

(1) The world system becomes more and more enantiomorphic, which means that a semiotic system (or a semiosphere) is being closed up without there being any further need to communicate with others;

(2) In that situation, the double deterritorialization, which, according to Badiou, can be expressed in terms of "neither… nor" can open up a space where the closed system breaks down and the quest for a new commonality can be started off;

(3) That space can be characterized as a "political" space of our era.

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A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Animal Images
in *The Wind Among the Reeds*

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The Wind Among the Reeds, written from 1889 to 1939, is regarded as one of the most remarkable poetry collections of William Butler Yeats. It altogether includes 80 poems touching upon several themes such as love, religion, dignity, and life. Yeats is one of the most distinguished Irish poets throughout the world, whose works perfectly embody the incorporation of romanticism, modernism, and occultism. It is noteworthy that in some of his poems, animals are portrayed frequently or even taken as the title of a poem, such as bird, fish, swan and so on. Therefore, this essay attempts to study the meaning of animal images of this poetry anthology in terms of different writing phases of Yeats. Firstly, the author builds the corpus of *The Wind Among the Reeds* and employs corpus search software Ant Conc to check the number and distribution of the animal image. Next, the author focuses on certain prominent images and investigates them further by analyzing the concordance lines of them. Thirdly, according to the result of distribution information, the author also attaches importance to the phenomenon of image combination in the poetry and then explores its function and effect. To conclude, by exploring the animal image in *The Wind Among the Reeds*, a deeper understanding of the poetry and the writing style of the poet will be gained on another level. What is more, a more direct and objective data is provided through the method of corpus and its relevant software, thereupon a new research approach is introduced.

Keywords: corpus, animal images, *The Wind Among the Reeds*

Introduction

Introduction of William Butler Yeats

William Butler Yeats was one of the most distinguished Irish poets, playwrights, and essayists, as well as one of the foremost figures of literary world in 20th century. Born in Dublin, Yeats spent his childhood holidays in County Sligo and studied poetry in his youth. In his later life, he wrote a considerable number of poems which exerted far-reaching impacts on the whole world. Firstly influenced by Shelly, John Butler Yeats as well as the Romantic background, Yeats began to take interest in aestheticism and romanticism. Afterwards, he incorporated the Irish tales and folklore into his writing of love poems. Later at the beginning of 20th century, due to the tremendous change of social situation and world pattern, Yeats began to turn to modernism by using symbolism to reflect the unsatisfactory and brutal life. In his later years, Yeats was obsessed with occultism and became objective about his personal feelings and social reality, thus his individual writing style was finally formed.

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Therefore, his work is an ideal combination of profound thoughts, rich contents, and universal influence. In December 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature as the first Irishman so honoured for what the Nobel Committee described as "inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation".[1]

Introduction to *The Wind Among the Reeds*

The Wind Among the Reeds, being considered as one of the most renowned collection of poems of Yeats, has aroused extensive attention of experts at home and abroad. It is selected from twelve poetry anthologies includes *Crossways*, *The Rose*, *The Wind Among the Reeds*, *The Seven Woods*, *The Green Helmet and Other Poems*, *Responsibilities*, *The Wild Swans at Coole*, *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, *The Tower*, *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*, *New Poems*, and *Last Poems*. As is written from 1889 to 1939, those poems could be deemed as a collection of works of Yeats written at different periods. Thus, this paper will explore the meaning of animal images at different stages as well as trace the change of writing style of the poet under the assistance of the corpus search software. By employing Ant Conc, the data details of animal images will be gained and the categories of them will also be divided.

What calls for special attention is that the study object of this essay, *The Wind Among the Reeds*, uses the Chinese translation version by Ai Mei as standard, which is different from the original version to some extent.

Literature Review

Up to now, several scholars and experts spare no efforts to study the images of Yeats's poems. Broadly speaking, the research mainly focuses on the nature image or the image of certain plant in the poetry. For example, YANG Sheng-hua writes *Natural Images and View of Time in Yeats's Poetry* where he studies the natural images which embody Yeats's special view of time and then explains the mystification, sanctification and spatialization of time. Similarly, in *The Nature Images in William Butler Yeats' Poetry*, GAO Yuan tries to reveal the pursuit of nationalism, love, and art of Yeats through interpreting the meaning of nature images at different periods. What is more, DENG Shu-zhen explores the symbolic meanings of the image of dew while GAN Wen-ting investigates the image of swan which reflects the change of the poet's value of love. The image of rose in particular, there are numerous studies focus on it. However, there are few systematic researches about the animal image in Yeats's poetry currently. Therefore, the author attempts to make a general research about the image of animals through which a new study perspective will be gained. Nonetheless, this essay is just a primary analysis of one collection of Yeats's poetry. It only chooses eighty poems for investigation and lacks a solid theoretical framework. Therefore, more works are expected to be explored and further researches are expected to be carried out.

The Animal Image: Another Key to the Poetry

The Definition of Animal Image

Image is a special category of artistic imagination as well as a unique kind of rhetoric devices which is widely used in poetry, fiction, and prose. In China, image is deemed as the combination of outer concrete entity and inner abstract feelings. LIU Xie firstly used "image" as a concept of literature theory in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, signaling the creation of "image" in Chinese classical poetics. While in the western world, image refers to the replica before the Renaissance. Later, the poet Pound (1913) defined that "an

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1 See from http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1923/.

image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time".

While animal image, a special category of image, occupies a crucial status for conveying emotions and feelings in poetry. It is the fusion of human mind and zoomorphism through which man could express his ideas, beliefs, or thoughts. Since ancient times, animal image, especially those related with myth, has been worshiped by the human. As animals not only provide coats and food for human, but also become friends and companions of human. With the development of human civilization, the animal image has transferred from simple totem symbols to the tool of cultural belief and carrier of ancient tradition. Therefore, it can be seen that the animal image is a miniature of alien civilization as well as a bridge to exotic culture.

The Category of Animal Image

In terms of different standards of classification, image can be divided into different categories. For example, according to the property, images can be divided into (1) natural images, such as flowers, grass and trees; (2) personal images, such as drinking down sorrow, admiring the beauty of flowers, and yelling to the sky; (3) fantasy images, such as mythical creatures and mythological figures. Based on the classification of sensory perception, the image can be divided into: (1) visual images; (2) auditory image; (3) tactile images; (4) the image of synesthesia.

It is the same case with the classification of animal image. Based on the artistic method, the animal image could briefly be divided into (1) descriptive imagery; (2) figurative imagery; (3) symbolic imagery; and (4) lyrical imagery. Due to the change of writing style of Yeats, the meaning of images will alter correspondingly in the poem thus it will be difficult to analyze the animal images from their artistic functions as a whole. In consequence, the taxonomy of animals in this paper will base on the species of animals in this essay, namely, birds, beasts, insects, fish, and virtual animals.

The Animal Images in *The Wind Among the Reeds*

In *The Wind Among the Reeds*, there are altogether 43 different kinds of animals. According to the general division standard, those animals can roughly be divided into five kinds. By labeling those animals in the text, their categories and frequencies are obtained through the regular expression of Ant Conc (see Table 1).

Table 1

The Categories of Animals and Their Frequencies

Category	Number
Birds	17
Beats	13
Insects	5
Fish	4
Virtual animals	4

Based on the data above, we could make a rough assumption that birds and fish are usually lovely, favorable, and energetic, which will mostly be used to create a romantic atmosphere. Moreover, beats are mighty and strong and the insects are insignificant which could stand for the contrast between the weak countrymen and powerful political forces at that time. In addition, virtual animals could be employed to add the color of occultism in the late poems of Yeats. Anyway, it is just a primary presumption from solely one table. The more reliable and detailed analysis will be made in the following paragraphs.

Moreover, the author also chooses some animals which are of high frequency and makes the table below. Since the investigated poetry is a collection of small quantity, only eighty poems, so any animal which appears prominently should be drawn attention to.

Table 2

The Animals of High Frequency in The Wind Among the Reeds

Category	Frequency
Bird	9
Hare	7
Horse	4
Swan	4
Fly	3
Mice	3

It can be seen that "bird" and "hare" appear most frequently in the poems of Yeats. Besides, horse, swan, fly and ice are also important images among all the animal images. Therefore, a detailed analysis about them will be made in the next sections.

The Animal Images in the Early Period

This period started from 1883 to 1899 during which the author was deeply influenced by romanticism and aestheticism. At that time, Yeats made a thorough study about the Irish legends and folklores and included them in his poems and proses through recomposition or adaptation. It was during such times that Yeats gradually became a romanticist and aestheticist.

From the collected data, the category of bird image appears most frequently in this period, including peahens, parrot, linnet, sparrow, bird, and heron. Moreover, it is also found that "bird" and "sparrow" appear as independent images and the rest all show up as combination images. Below the author will choose one example from each one for detailed analysis.

To make clear here, the independent image refers to the image which can form or symbolize one meaning all by itself. In this case, the author selects to analyze the image "bird" which is used prominently during the early writing stage of Yeats. According to this situation, the author uses Ant Conc to obtain the concordance lines of "bird" in order to trace its distribution in the poetry.

Table 3

The Concordance Lines of "Bird"

Hit	KWIC
1	The White **Birds** (the title)
2	my beloved, white **birds** on the foam of the sea!
3	For I would we were changed to white **birds** on the wandering foam:
4	Were we only white **birds**, my beloved, buoyed out on the foam of the sea!

From the table above, it is evident that the "birds" are closely linked with the "beloved" in the poem. To be more specific, the white birds could stand for the poet and his lover. In addition, Yeats expressed his love to Maud Gonne and expected the eternal and pure love. Meanwhile he wished that he could stay with his lover and they could live happily forever seclude form the world. Therefore, birds symbolize love and create a romantic atmosphere along with other images. As there are several researches about this poem, it would be superfluous to dwell on its connotation any more.

On the other side, some images occur with other images together to express meanings. In other words, only one of them does not stand for any sense. For example, in *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, the honeybee, cricket, and linnet appear together. They work together to draw a natural, gorgeous, and peaceful picture. At this point, the elements of romance are quite obvious here. Moreover, the poet here attempts to create a natural and comfortable atmosphere, expressing his yearning for the simple life and unsophisticated world. While the honeybee, cricket, and linnet are all the products of the nature which are lovely, adorable, energetic, and vigorous. Therefore, they have taken on the directors of romance gradually in this film.

To conclude, either independent image or combined image, bird image or insect image, those animal images in this period were mainly closely related with romance. They were employed by the poet to reach his romantic goal.

The Animal Images in the Middle Period

This phase lasted from the beginning of the 20th Century to the end of the First World War. At that time, the poet was confronted with the non-ideal and brutal social facts. Then he began to change from romanticism to modernism with symbolic techniques, his new mighty tool. As time went by, the poet gradually abandoned the traditional writing style and his language became more straightforward. During this period of time, occultism played an indispensable part in his transformation of the style of poetry.

As mentioned previously, the phenomenon of combination of images is found in the poetry. In this case, it is two kinds of birds, peewit and curlew that occur at the same time in the poetry twice. See *The Withering of the Boughs*:

> I cried when the moon was murmuring to the birds:
> "Let **peewit** call and **curlew** cry where they will, peewit:
> I long for your merry and tender and pitiful words,
> For the roads are unending, and there is no place to my mind."
> The honey-pale moon lay low on the sleepy hill,
> And I fell asleep upon lonely Echtge of streams.
> …
> I know of the sleepy country, where swans fly round
> Coupled with golden chains, and sing as they fly.
> A king and a queen are wandering there, and the sound
> Has made them so happy and hopeless, so deaf and so blind
> With wisdom, they wander till all the years have gone by;
> I know, and the **curlew** and **peewit** on Echtge of streams.
> No boughs have withered because of the wintry wind;
> The boughs have withered because I have told them my dreams. (Yeats, 2004, p. 72)

Therefore, it can be concluded that the "peewit" and "curlew" are the combination of images in this poem. They appear together in order to be in contrast with the situation of the poet. They stand for merry, tender, and carefreeness. Furthermore, their combination can also be interpreted as the beautiful love which the poet purses for all his life time. Through this technique, the poet bonds the images together so as to provide a vivid picture to the readers. They are arranged based on the aesthetic principles of the poet and thus the feelings of the poet are pervaded. Through the effect of contrast, symbolism, or analogy they achieve, these images become the re-creation of the poet.

As is mentioned in the introduction part, influenced by Eastern methodologies and occultism, the writing style of Yeats started to change since 1885 when he and his friends founded the Dublin Hermetic Order. That was why during that period, a special kind of animal image appeared in the poems of Yeats, that was, the virtual animals. Normally they are products of fairy tales or religious legends. By employing these characters, the poet takes aim at putting on the mysterious coat for his poems. To be more concrete, the virtual animal serves as a prophet, supernaturalist, god or demigod. It is found that there are two virtual animals that occur three times in this poetry. One is the centaur, and the other is the dragon. Take the "centaur" in the poem for instance. In *Lines Written in Dejection*, it says:

> All the wild witches, those most noble ladies,
> For all their broom-sticks and their tears,
> Their angry tears, are gone.
> The holy **centaurs** of the hills are vanished;
> I have nothing but the embittered sun;
> Banished heroic mother moon and vanished,
> And now that I have come to fifty years
> I must endure the timid sun. (Yeats, 2004, p. 126)

The centaur in the poem refers to a mythological creature with the upper body of a human and the lower body of a horse. By complaining the non-existent witch and centaur, the poet expressed his boredom of the routine life. Or on the other hand, he is just lamenting that the beauty of past is gone. Thus it may inspire the reader to trace back to the ancient times or envision the mythical stuff. Anyway, by putting the witch and centaur together and comparing them with the sun, the amazing imagination of the poet is quite obvious. Furthermore, these images also prove that the poet has realized his wish for a pure and peaceful world is unreal.

To sum up, in the middle writing stage of Yeats, the images, especially the animal images, are tinted with the color of symbolism and occultism. They indicate that the poet is no longer intoxicated with his fantasy dreams and the poet begins to confront the real life with courage and bravery.

The Animal Images in the Late Period

This stage began from 1919 to the late 30s when Yeats finally formed his individual style and reached a union of life wisdom and personal feelings, symbolic technique and realistic approach. The state of mind was rather detached, so the poems were endowed with philosophical significance.

Starting from the combination of image, it is found that several animal images flock together in one section of the poem, namely, Easter 1916:

> A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
> And a horse plashes within it;
> The long-legged moor-hens dive,
> And hens to moor-cocks call;
> Minute by minute they live:
> The stone's in the midst of all. (Yeats, 2004, p. 146)

In this stanza, horse, moor-hen, hen, and moor-cock altogether compose a picture which is attractive and appealing. Related with the historical background, this poem was written three months after the leaders of the uprising were executed. The picture the poet drew here is used to convey his exclamation and lament. On one side, he extolled the heroes who fought for the freedom of the Irish people and admired their bravery and

perseverance. On the other side, he was also doubt about the bloody way to carry on the cause. Therefore, the attitude of the poet here actually was contradictory and ambivalent. Furthermore, while depicting a natural picture, the poet also put a disharmonious stone here, midst of all. The risers could be as unflinching as the stone or as cold as the stone. It turned out that the shadow of contract, uncertainty and aloofness was clearly reflected in this poem.

Meanwhile, there is also a tiny but intriguing animal image that appears frequently in the last stage, namely, the fly. By employing Ant Conc again, the concordance lines of the "fly" are obtained.

Table 4

The Concordance Lines of "Fly"

Hit	KWIC
1	Long-Legged **Fly**
2	Like a long-legged **fly** upon the stream
3	Like a long-legged **fly** upon the stream
4	Like a long-legged **fly** upon the stream

It is discovered d that the poet used the "fly" as the title of the poem and then used repetition about "fly" to make a conclusion of each stanza. Take the first paragraph for example, it says that:

> That civilisation may not sink,
> Its great battle lost,
> Quiet the dog, tether the pony
> To a distant post;
> Our master Caesar is in the tent
> Where the maps are spread,
> His eyes fixed upon nothing,
> A hand under his head.
>
> Like a long-legged fly upon the stream
> His mind moves upon silence. (Yeats, 2004, p. 226)

Generally speaking, the fly is an annoying and unimpressive animal for the common people. However, the poet here regarded it as noble as the apple blossom and used it to refer to the most delicate image. In the stanza above, the poet skillfully linked Caesar with the fly by using a metaphor. First of all, the fly had a symbolic meaning itself, which stood for a tranquil and clear state of mind. Then the poet compared the situation that Caesar was in meditation with the picture that the fly was lingering on the stream. Finally, the status and position of the fly were greatly improved through an analogy.

In the selected poem above, the mighty power of imagination of the poet is beyond doubt. Meanwhile, the individual style of Yeats is also manifested here. It seems that he has reached the ideological level of detachment: everything is important while nothing is significant. Tiny things could be lofty while major stuff could be insignificant. Lastly, the poet is able to use the techniques (such as symbolism and contrast) proficiently and compound them together harmoniously.

Conclusion

To sum up, this paper chooses the animal images of *The Wind Among the Reeds* as the study objet and uses corpus as research tool. By studying the meanings of animal images at different times, the distribution of

the animal images is revealed and the preference for using the image of birds and beats of the poet in writing is also found. Moreover, it turns out that Yeats is also fond of use combination of images for expression or description. In short, this paper attempts to analyze the poetry from the angel of animal images and explores its connotation on another side. It helps readers form an intuitional impression of the text through the method of corpus and paves the way for the further study of animal image in *The Wind Among the Reeds*.

However, this research only makes a general study about the animal images of one poetry collection of Yeats. In addition, it just analyzes some simple data obtained directly from Ant Conc. Therefore, numerous researches about the animal images in Yeats's poetry are remained to be done. To be more specific, the relevant study could include all the poems of Yeats as study object, so a more macroscopic and objective view of the animal images will be gained. Besides, the classification of animal images in Yeats's poetry is expected to be divided more accurately and scientifically. Lastly, more scientific research methods and advanced research theories are remained to be employed for any further study of this poetry.

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London Poems and History

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In this article, I read different poems of London through the perspectives of time and the self. The city of London, as a physical space, a world in the globe, is changing through both inner time and outer time. Firstly, in Lord Alfred Tennyson's *Cleopatra's Needle*, the flow of tide symbolises the passing time, through the long Egyptian history to Tennyson's Victorian London. The Needle has been through different seas and places. The sense of history, a fusion of inner time and outer time, is claimed by the Needle's subjective self, seeing London as a "monster town". Secondly, Ahren Warner's Greek titled poem is trying to locate the one in London, which cannot be localized, in the trend of globalization, as the gazer observed on the bus. Struggling between the self and the other, inner and outer existences, happiness and being unhappy, W. B. Yeats' from *Vacillation* comes to show the reader that through reflection and memory, the sense of one's own self can be reinforced and affirmed, while creating one's own personal history. Last but not the least, I read a part from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. As the dialectic of light and shadow plays a sense of Beauty, the soul is aware of all fancy things, but only without any meanings. The question of the self and tradition, the poet and the world, somehow, is a timeless one.

Keywords: London, self, time, history, tradition

Introduction

It does not come easily at all, when one tries to define what history is. Sometime it becomes more difficult, when one tries further, to re-discover the meaning of history. Although my initial aim of reading these London poems was to find out something else, magically, the definition of History in these poems somehow comes together as quite a self-fulfillment.

History, in these London poems I chose to read, can be seen as small as a personal event—as Yeats' own birthday reflection and memory, in a way which is totally self-centered and is referring to a completely personal experience. And yet, in these London poems, the readers can see that anything big, such as tradition, time, or the term History with a capitalised "H", must come from something as small as one's own self. The definition of the term History can be varied. As in Tennyson's poem, *Cleopatra's Needle*, the Needle sees the ups and the downs of the empires. The memory comes to the viewing subject, while standing by the River Thames. The fusion of the past and the present comes, as the Needle concludes to himself—"I was when London was not. / I am here" (Ford, 2012, p. 387).

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The history of globalization can be seen in London, when the viewing subject is trying to define, or, to be more precise, to localise the happy outsider in Ahren Warner's poem. History comes to a point, when people come together on the London bus, and go to their own different destinations. History seems to be a joint fate, when in London. It does not matter one is happy or not. In my reading of Eliot's London poem, I somehow feel that the emptiness and the meaningless of the self and of History can be regained through an embracement of tradition and intellectual labour, as Eliot himself implied in his essay.

Subject, Object, and History

Cleopatra's Needle

Here, I that stood in On beside the flow
Of sacred Nile, three thousand years ago!—
A Pharaoh, kingliest of his kingly race,
First shaped, and carved, and set me in my place.
A Caesar of a punier dynasty
Thence haled me toward the Mediterranean sea,
Whence your own citizens, for their own renown,
Through strange seas drew me to your monster town.
I have seen the four great empires disappear.
I was when London was not. I am here. (Ford, 2012, p. 387)

In Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Cleopatra's Needle*, the sense of history is extremely strong. In the past, Cleopatra's Needle "stood in On beside the flow / Of sacred Nile". But now (including Tennyson's and our presents), Cleopatra's Needle is standing "beside the flow" of the Thames River in London. In between, there is at least a time difference of "three thousand years". During these years, the subjective "I" of Cleopatra's Needle had travelled and had moved among the seas. Through the changing tide of different seas, history is created in the form of "four great empires", explaining the way in which the Needle was built, and who put it in the place. Now the Needle is in London—a place which is addressed as a "monster town", where everything is possible, especially "darkness" (Agathocleous, 2011, p. 185) as in Charles Dickens's novels. And yet, the Needle's existence expresses something beyond the measurement of time, simply as one can see in the subjective claim of Cleopatra's Needle, "when London was not, I am here".

For a global city like London, it is really difficult to say what is local and what is not, with all kinds of people, culture and things coming to exist together, in the same place, and yet passing through different time. In Cleopatra's Needle's eye, the "I" certainly define London as a "monster town"—big, strange, not necessarily beautiful. However, in Ahren Warner's Greek titled poem, the reader can also see again, this kind of time and space complicity and confusion:

Girl with ridiculous earrings why do you bother
to slap the boy we all assume is your boyfriend
and is lolling over that bus seat shouting

it's a London thing. He is obviously a knob
but a happy one and that it seems to me
is the important though not localisable thing. (Ford, 2012, p. 726)

Many elements mentioned in the poem are "not localisable", for many reasons. For instance, why the girl's earrings are "ridiculous"—compare to what (other objects), to where (other cities and places), to whom (everyone else, or someone specific), to when (her present time, or some other historical time)? Why the girl even bothers to "slap" the boy, as if "shouting" in the bus and "lolling over" the bus seat are totally foreign to Londoners. What if he is not her boyfriend? Can she still slap him? Will the whole thing feel different? Why it is "*a London thing*"? How can he be "a knob" and yet very happy? Which one is "not localisable"—the knob or the happy one?

The sense of history is also in the inner self, as a kind of personal history, reflection, and memory. Through reflection and memory, the sense of one's "self" can be reinforced and affirmed, while creating one's own personal history. W. B. Yeats' poem shows the reader such a significant moment of solitude and reflection.

Vacillation

My fiftieth year had come and gone,
I sat, a solitary man,
In a crowded London shop,
An open book and empty cup
On the marble table-top.
While on the shop and street I gazed
My body of a sudden blazed;
And twenty minutes more or less
It seemed, so great my happiness,
That I was blessed and could bless. (Ford, 2012, p. 482)

The poet sat in the crowd, in a London coffee shop, reflecting his past fifty years. On the marble coffee table, there are a book and an empty cup. The cup is empty, showing that he has been there for some time, done some reading and drinking. While he looked around, for about twenty minutes, he felt a great joy, as if his body was on fire, burning, feeling happy, and feeling blessed and was able to give bless to other people.

Poet, Tradition, and the Globe

Time is a significant issue, in the city of London. In T. S. Eliot's poem, the relation between time and space comes to show the essence of London, in a way which London is a place "in a dim light", expressing a feeling of "lucid stillness" from *Four Quartets* (from *Burnt Norton III*).

Here is a place of disaffection
Time before and time after
In a dim light: neither daylight
Investing form with lucid stillness
Turning shadow into transient beauty
With slow rotation suggesting permanence
Nor darkness to purify the soul
Emptying the sensual with deprivation
Cleansing affection from the temporal.
Neither plentitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker
Over the strained time-ridden faces
Distracted from distraction by distraction

Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
Tumid apathy with no concentration
Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind
That blows before and after time,
Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs
Time before and time after.
Eructation of unhealthy souls
Into the faded air, the torpid
Driven on the wind that sweeps the gloomy hills of London.
Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney,
Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate. Not here
Not here the darkness, in this twittering world.
  Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of sense,
Evacuation of the world of fancy,
Inoperancy of the world of spirit;
This is the one way, and the other
Is the same, not in movement
But abstention from movement; while the world moves
In appetency, on its metalled ways
Of time past and time future. (Ford, 2012, pp. 517-518)

The dialectic of light and shadow indicates a kind of "transient beauty". Somehow the temporal signs are on the poets' faces ("men and bits of paper"). They are faces of "time-ridden", like souls which "nor darkness to purify"—profound and complicated. The status of standstill, as something is "distracted from distraction by distraction / filled with fancies and empty of meaning". Everything seems to be changing, and yet, to a status of changing same. It does not matter "time before and time after", or "time past and time future", the wind "sweeps the gloomy hills of London / Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney, / Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate". The centre of the soul is solitude and dark, even if the external world is unsettle and "twittering".

Without the self and his or her own identity, history, either personal or non-personal, will be merely like a very dry story—just as an "empty space" (Eagleton, 1994, p. 46), showing an image of "whorelike" "emptiness" (Eagleton, 1994, p. 45)—as the self and the soul are detached, in T. S. Eliot's poem, from "the world of sense", "the world of fancy", and "the world of spirit" (Ford, 2012, pp. 517-518). Although human faces are "time-ridden" (Ford, 2012, p. 517), still, those faces only represent something which are "distracted from distraction by distraction" (Ford, 2012, p. 517), totally meaningless, without any sense of cultural root or centre. Everything is up in the air—no order, "no concentration" (Ford , 2012, p. 517)—just like poets and their papers—blowing. As "the cold wind" (Ford, 2012, p. 517) blows in and out of people's lungs, their "unhealthy souls" (Ford, 2012, p. 517) seem to be fading away, together with the sweeping wind that blows "the gloomy hills of London"—from "Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney", all the way to "Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate" (Ford, 2012, p. 517).

Through "a feeling" (Eliot, 2006, p. 2320) of having the literary tradition in mind, the poet "has a simultaneous existence" with "his own contemporaneity", as "the historical sense" is somehow a feeling of timelessness, which comes to against the physical movement of the external world—the whole temporal and spatial existence. As Eliot himself stated in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent", the sense of history is a perception, in a way which the self is in his contemporary, while showing his awareness of the past, the tradition. It is worth it to quote the whole paragraph:

> Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down,
> consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation
> before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes,
> "tradition" should positively be discouraged. We have seen
> many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty
> is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider
> significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you
> must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place,
> the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable
> to any one who would continue to be a poet beyond his
> twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a
> perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its
> presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not
> merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a
> feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer
> and within it the whole of the literature of his own country
> has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous
> order. This historical sense, which is a sense of timeless as
> well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the
> temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it
> is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely
> conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity. (Eliot, 2006, p. 2320)

Again, in this paragraph, one can see many binary oppositions coming together as dialectics, as in Eliot's poem—such as timeless verses the temporal, tradition verses contemporaneity. A poet's historical sense means not only a "perception", but also "a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (Eliot, 2006, p. 2320). And yet, a poet, together with the tradition (the whole literature of Europe and his own country), there is a "contemporaneity" can be formed, and to be called, as his own. This literature of one's own does not come easily at all. A poet needs to work hard to read through the tradition, not only in a sense of its "pastness", but also with his own perception in his present, Without doing that, all so-called "new" ideas would be like "simple currents", worthless and easy to fade away.

Without tradition, the self and anything which can be called "new", is easy to be "lost in the sand" (Eliot , 2006, p. 2320). As the wave of time comes, if there is no centre, no tradition, no identity, no root to hold on to, the so-called "present" will not be meaningful. I would suggest that in Eliot's poem, all will be representing nothing but a "whorelike" "emptiness" (Eagleton, 1994, p. 45), because this feeling of emptiness and meaningless comes from a humanity, which is in pain for all kinds of reasons: war, poverty, psychological disorder, and so on, and so forth, as Brunet feels and sees in Jean-Paul Sartre's *Iron in the Soul*, "a

machine-gun" has twisted the world, made his head empty, for the very reason that humanity is suffering—"Suffering humanity—[…] like dogs!" (Sartre, 1963, p. 256).

This kind of humanity, in pain, suffering, could be one of the most shocking awareness of "contemporary emptiness", as Frank Lentricchia once phrased it in his *Modernist Quartet* (Lentricchia, 1994, p. 246). The feeling of emptiness can be read as a situation of being lost, as human faces are "time-ridden", "Distracted from distraction by distraction / Filled with fancies and empty of meaning" (Ford, 2012, p. 517). And yet, the feeling of emptiness can also be read as a sign, in a way which the self somehow loses his or her contact with tradition, as the concept of tradition can be interpreted as the representation of history and cultural heritage. Without a literary and a historical point of view, the self will not be able to "remake history on his own terms" (Bann, 1989, p. 103). In other words, the self will need to remake tradition, so that it can be of his own.

Conclusion

The meaning of life, in London, somehow is a representation of a unity. The dialectic of the opposite poles, such as emptiness and hope, memory, and the present, local and the "not localisable", "time before and time after"—becomes a kind of realization of humanity. Instead of merely looking at "une passante" in a poetic sense of Baudelaire's, as if taking snapshots of each present moment, the London selves are doing something different. The London poems I read in this research show the readers the importance of thinking: either remembering of one's own past, or obtaining the tradition to the contemporary self, or thinking about Londoners in a global context, or looking at the city and being aware of one's own existence—in reading some aspects of London poems, one can start to be sure that "only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past—which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments" (Benjamin, 1968, p. 254). The self, and his or her own memory and reflection, are not historically determined or labelled. They are, on the contrary, in a process of writing a history, of London and the globe.

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Same Plight, Different Struggle: A Comparison of Female Protagonists in *Hamlet* and "The Yellow Wallpaper"

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Approaching from the perspective of feminist criticism, this paper compares the female protagonists in Shakespeare's well-known tragedy *Hamlet* and Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper". While the first person narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a modern signifier of the archetypal Ophelia as the sacrificial lamb of the patriarchal oppression, the two differ in their manifestations of madness, which could be accounted for by their respective historical and social environment with women's awakening consciousness of self-identity.

Keywords: feminist criticism, *Hamlet*, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Introduction

Hamlet, a masterpiece of the Renaissance tragedy and "the world's most quoted play" (Fiero, 2006, p. 147), attracted the attention of many Shakespearean scholars over the history. But compared to numerous critical texts on Hamlet and his feigned insanity to seek revenge, the overriding theme of the play, the analysis of Ophelia was seldom in the spotlight. In an attempt to better understand the reasons behind the madness of Ophelia and her final demise, this paper compares Ophelia with the narrator protagonist "I" in Gilman's unconventional short story "The Yellow Wallpaper", which describes how a woman undergoes mental deterioration and finally loses her rationality in the course of a "rest cure" prescribed for her depression. Considering the fact that both Ophelia and "I" turned mad as a result of the unbearable pressure from the patriarchal world they were exposed to, the paper resorts to feminist criticism while comparing the fate of the two female protagonists. To denote the diverging approaches of revolt by Ophelia and "I" when confronted with the same plight, the author also applies historical analysis, comparing the historical and social backgrounds of the seventeenth century Elizabethan period and the American society during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.

From Feminism to Feminist Criticism

Feminism, which could be defined as "a belief in sexual equality combined with a commitment to eradicate sexist domination and to transform society" (Humm, 1992, p. 1), has experienced three waves of development in its historical evolution from a political movement to an interdisciplinary theory drawing upon and giving reference to various fields of studies including literacy criticism. With its revolutionary spirit originating from Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, the first wave of feminism surged from mid

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nineteenth century to 1920s in the form of women seeking suffrage and equal rights in education, work, and family. The second wave during 1960s and 1970s mainly focused on the prioritization of gender difference between men and women over biological difference and the "collective consciousness" of women as a group to promote social change (Wright, 1992, p. XV). While the third wave from early to mid 1980s witnessed a reoriented focus on historical and cross-cultural differences among women and experimental writings by feminist writers to subvert the dominant patriarchal language system through women's talk.

When applied to critical theory, the school of feminist criticism seeks to examine "the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women" (Tyson, 1999, p. 81). Feminist criticism provides a brand-new perspective of highlighting the suppressed experience of women in a male-dominant society, calling upon women to abandon their traditional gender roles as being "emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing and submissive" (Tyson, 1999, p. 83). According to feminist critics, the male camera eye as exhibited in many literary works was blind to female experience and encouraged women to "tolerate familial abuse, wait patiently to be rescued by a man, and view marriage as the only desirable reward for 'right' conduct" (Tyson, 1999, p. 87). Any attempt by women to revolt against such a fate in search of their own desires would be deemed as behaviors of insanity. Since feminist criticism highlights the subjugated fate of women in the patriarchal society with an aim to enhance women's self-consciousness for their own voice and freedom against male dominance, the theory could serve as a powerful tool in digging out the predicament of Ophelia and "I" in focus, the different reasons behind their madness and their respective choice in the revolt against the patriarchal ideology.

A Feminist Interpretation of Ophelia and "I"

From the perspective of feminist criticism, it is not difficult to find out that both Ophelia and "I" suffered from the same plight as a materialized woman in a world of male dominance. It is deep-rooted in the patriarchal society that a woman is born to be ruled by a man; they should remain faithful to men and be contented about their submission as a servant, deprived of all their desires as a subjective being. Only in this way can they be "entitled to the most splendid deification" (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 172).

As described in the beginning of *Hamlet* and "The Yellow Wallpaper", both Ophelia and the first person narrator enjoyed an effluent life under the careful protection of men. The beautiful Ophelia was an obedient girl to her father. Although admired and deeply attracted by Prince Hamlet, Ophelia was ready to accept her father's advice to constrain her inner feelings by keeping a distance from the Prince. Deprived of her voice and thought, Ophelia became a tool of her father to test out the real intention of Hamlet. Similarly, the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" was taken good care of by her loving husband, who rented a mansion in the countryside for her to recover form illness. She was not allowed to work until she was well again and had to follow the "schedule prescription for each hour in the day" (Gilman, 1998, p. 641). According to the patriarchal understanding, such a life shouldn't be complained about, free from the pressure of work to support the family and the worry to make the decisions of life. The only thing left for women is to remain obedient to men's desires and conform to their stereotyped roles as "angel in the house" (Selden, 1989, p. 145). Therefore, Ophelia sacrificed her true love in exchange for the "protection" from her father, and "I" stopped writing except in privacy in order to please "my" husband for his love.

But underneath the placid sea, a violent torrent was being fermented. Both Ophelia and "I" experienced the intensifying conflict between male expectation and their own desires, which finally resulted in their mental breakdown. Although both Ophelia and "I" went mad in the end, a deeper reading of the two works might reveal different reasons behind their insanity.

In the case of Ophelia, the reason lies in her gradual loss of self-consciousness as a woman and her inability to adapt to the conflict between the idealized dream and the harsh reality. Under the "protection" of a patriarchal world symbolized by her authoritative father, caring brother and passionate lover, Ophelia blindly accepted her fate as an obedient daughter, a docile sister, and a faithful worshipper. In the process of conforming to social expectations, Ophelia gradually lost her charm and self-consciousness. Unable to think, she would report everything to her father for instruction; unable to love, she was no longer attracted and trustworthy to Hamlet. Deprived of her own thought and female identity, it was no wonder that Ophelia would be driven out of her mind when her father died, her brother was far away and Hamlet's harsh words broke all her dream of marriage, the last safe haven for her to hide from the dangers of the world beyond her own control. Madness was the only way out for her to release the long-suppressed female desires in face of the nightmarish discrepancy between her dream and reality.

The narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper", on the other hand, chose to become mad to pursue her subjectivity and female voice submerged by the patriarchal world order. Although placed in a comfortable environment by her affectionate husband, the narrator was not treated as one with equal status, but a private property at the full disposal of men. When she deemed it beneficial to take appropriate amount of work, her husband forbade her to work at all; when she felt weirdly about the fence and the locked iron door, her husband insisted that such feelings were nothing but illusions caused by the current; when she wanted to move to the room downstairs with blossoming roses at the window, her husband turned down such a request with all kinds of excuses; when she hoped to have the smelly yellow wallpaper replaced, she again met the rebuff without room for further negotiation. But unlike Ophelia who stayed obedient to men's will by sacrificing that of her own, the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" never ceased the effort to fight for her own voice and the power of decision-making. Against her husband's warning not to write, she seized all possible opportunities to express her inner feelings on paper. Although her husband asked her to rest in bed and not to trouble her mind with fancy ideas, she sneaked to observe the patterns on the yellow wallpaper. It was just the narrator's refusal to stop writing and thinking that helped her gradually come to the fact that she was imprisoned in a nursery with bars and a bed nailed onto the floor. The yellow wallpaper became a symbol of the patriarchal rule over the subjectless female identity. With enhanced awareness for her husband's attempt to control her voice and thought, the narrator gradually identified herself with the woman shaking the bars, the figure she finally made out according to the pattern of the yellow wallpaper. In a patriarchal world where women were imprisoned as physical and mental slaves of men with no one to depend upon except themselves, the only way to break the shackle was through insanity, or total subversion of socially-accepted norms.

From the above analysis, it is clear to see that both Ophelia and "I" in "The Yellow Wallpaper" suffer from the same plight of being materialized by male desires, though in disguise of care and protection. But the two differed dramatically in their responses to the male oppression. Ophelia relied her entire world on the males around her and became an idealized angel living in her dreams without any sense of self-identity. Therefore,

when left alone and suddenly exposed to the harsh reality, she resorted to madness. Compared to Ophelia, who gave up her precious life to maintain the image of a "good girl" according to the male standard, the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" demonstrated great courage and determination to change from a "good girl" to a "bad girl", an image frightened by the male world. The act to peel off the paper to let out the woman was just the narrator's attempt of discovering her true self and regaining the lost voice. Her madness was not a tragedy, but a victory over male dominance, symbolized by the fainting of her husband at the end of the story. Therefore, Ophelia's self-destruction strengthened the patriarchal agenda, while the self-salvation of the narrator constituted a frontal assault on the male domination.

Socio-historical Analysis of Different Struggling Forms

Feminist criticism, as mentioned above, could help us better understand the tragic fate of Ophelia and "I" from literary angles, the different responses of the two heroines could also be explained from the perspective of historical analysis by comparing the historical and social backgrounds of the seventeenth century Elizabethan period and the American society during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.

The Elizabethan period had strict moral requirements for women, advocating obedience to male power and suppressing the expression of passion and erotic love. As a result, Elizabethan women were defined by purity, piety, domesticity, and docility, being considered vulnerable and in need of protection from men. From this sense, Ophelia's choice to retreat to her own dream in maniac and her final fate of being drowned accidentally, remaining chaste and loyal to her love, were readily acceptable by the readers of the time. The Elizabethans, still influenced by the patriarchal ideology, "would have been prepared to accept Ophelia as a girl suffering from the effects of love, erotic melancholy" (Camden, 1964, p. 254). However, with the development of feminist movement, the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century witnessed an advocation for women's economic independence. Women had a greater voice in the society and their domestic lives. In addition, before the nineteenth century, writing was not regarded as a decent profession. In an era when women were not even granted the right to education, it was generally believed that writing would corrupt the mind of women, who might cause social instability. But with the budding of feminist movement, the traditional discrimination against women writers was overthrown by feminists in an attempt to regain women's voice lost in the patriarchal history. Women not only picked up their pens to usher their own voice, but also experimented in writing through "new words, new spellings, new grammatical constructions, new images and metaphors" (Flotow, 2004, p. 15). For feminist writers like Gilman who were independent economically and mentally, their shared purpose was to break away from the patriarchal discourse, "making women visible and resident in language and society" (Flotow, 2004, p. 28). From this perspective, it might be easier to understand the radical reaction of the narrator in her revolt against the potential lost of self-control.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from the perspectives of feminist criticism and historical analysis, the paper attempts to argue that the first person narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a modern signifier of the archetypal Ophelia as the sacrificial lamb of the patriarchal oppression, but Ophelia and "I" differed from each other in their madness and struggle. Unlike Ophelia's submission to her gendered roles assigned by the male order, which doomed her

self-destruction and loss of female subjectivity, the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" went mad as a form of radical revolt against the patriarchal deprivation of her female identity. Such a difference, when explored within the framework of historical analysis, could be better understood from the specific historical and social backgrounds of the seventeenth century Elizabethan period and the American society during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.

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Merlin and Stonehenge in Daina Chaviano's *Fables of an Extraterrestrial Grandmother*

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When Merlin first appears in Chaviano's *Fables of an Extraterrestrial Grandmother* as the wizard Soio, he reflects the imagination of Ana, the adolescent protagonist of the science fiction novel as she is in the process of writing the very novel the reader is reading. Later she will discover that her fictional creations are not the invention of her imagination but exist autonomously in parallel universes and are using her as a vehicle of inter-dimensional travel through time and space. Soio/Merlin gazes into his crystal ball, a microcosm that gathers the space-time energy fields of the parallel universes, and sees visions of the protagonists whose modes of existence are real in one and fictional in another parallel universe. Merlin is a Druid in exile from the Neolithic world of Celtic Britain who has crossed over from earthly life to existence in Rybel, a parallel universe. He had crossed over by lining up the Stone of the Past and the Mirror of the Future at the great circle of Stonehenge. The stone circle functioned as an astronomical observatory. Stonehenge is a microcosm, a circle that reflects and coordinates the larger circle of the universe, symbolized and embodied in the sphere or crystal ball that Merlin transmits to Ana in the form of the novel being read. All the characters are trying to coordinate dimensions of space and time in order to fly from one parallel universe to another. Chaviano emphasizes crossing boundaries of time and space. Her characters live in one world but belonging to another, yearn to make contact with the forces of the universe that will bring them home. Chaviano's use of the Merlin legend is original and takes into account archaeological evidence about the Celts, Druids, and Stonehenge.

Keywords: Daina Chaviano, science fiction, Merlin, Stonehenge

Introduction

When Merlin first appears in Cuban science fiction writer, Daina Chaviano's *Fables of an Extraterrestrial Grandmother* as the wizard Soio, he reflects the imagination of Ana, the adolescent protagonist of the novel. Ana is writing the very novel we are in the process of reading. Only later she will discover that her fictional creations are not the invention of her imagination but exist autonomously in parallel universes and are using her as a vehicle of inter-dimensional travel through time and space.

Merlin in Exile in Parallel Dimensions of Time and Space

Merlin first appears to us as Soio, the archetypal wizard with his crystal ball:

> Soio opened his eyes, and still half-asleep, believed he was dreaming. The images that had awakened him continued floating in his mind, though already they were starting to fade away. A simple dream? Or a pre-vision?

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He remained a few moments without moving on the cold cot. A soft clarity was insinuating itself in the horizon that he could look out on from his room situated on the summit of a mountain. He got up slowly and the nails creaked sorrowfully. Then he walked to disperse the remnants of the dream, but visions kept flitting within his mind.

He turned his face toward the wide bay window that opened to the wind of the east. The stars shown with almost unnatural splendor: their light was clear and deep. He believed he could feel how their rays arrived from remote places and penetrated to the depths of his bones. Acting on impulse he stuck his body half out of the orifice open in the rock. It was the very best experience in the world to waken when the night was dying and breathe the morning air under the purest shining of the stars. In moments like this he was happy. He remained in that position several minutes because, despite the dampness, it was good for his old senses to perceive the energy coming to him from the universe. Afterwards he abandoned the window to find a seat by the coals of the fire. It was so dark he let himself be guided by the red pupils that winked at him from the corner. While he watched the logs in the fire, he felt anew a pressing disquietude.

He looked for a candle that rested on a disordered shelf and lit it. After setting it close, he sat down in front of a table where there was a ball covered with a cloth. Upon uncovering it, he observed weak reflections over its polished surface.

The ancient one caressed the sphere, and something moved in its interior, but he did not let himself be deceived. He knew well that which he had before him: its smooth, opaque sides, whose coldness would start yielding through the constant warmth of his hands; and the first shadows that would not be shadows, but the simple reflection of the candle…until the nexus between his mind and the object was established. With his gaze fixed in the sphere, he rubbed again and again, again and again…The frozen surface accumulated the heat emanating from his body; the opaque shell acted like a magnet that attracted and distributed forces; the object transformed itself into a warm fruit that absorbed the energy of the living person who touched it. Little by little it illuminated itself as if a hidden fountain had begun to operate in its interior.

Outside the darkness persisted over the landscape that surrounded the mountain: the enormous valley circled by woods and, in the distance, other valleys and other woods.

The glow of the sphere augmented and diminished at various times. Certain silhouettes undulated in its depths; various hisses, murmurs, chirps let themselves be heard from various parts of the room. And finally the luminosity established itself, converting the sphere into a lamp that radiated light over the face of the man. The shadows were displaced. Soio followed with his gaze the movement of monstrous figures with indefinable contours. Almost imperceptibly the silhouettes were replaced by the face of a girl.

The old man's hands rubbed more anxiously, there was more energy, and the image cleared up. She appeared pale and tired. Enormous eyes. Long, dark hair. She seemed beautiful, but her exhausted appearance prevented verifying it. The colors of the image were tenuous although precise. Soio observed the dense underbrush of wild, green vines that made her steps difficult; the abundance of rocks on the ground; the blue dress with striped hem which caught on anything sticking over the trail. She stopped for a moment, examined the terrain, and then continued her way. A moment later she repeated the operation. Soio realized that she felt spied upon, and without knowing why, he closed his eyes. When he opened them anew, the girl had disappeared and the vision of the woods disappeared like mist.

He tried to reestablish the flow of energy by rubbing with force, but the connection had broken at some point. Nevertheless he continued to caress the crystal. His hands came and went as if they wanted to make that improvised mirror shine; finally some shadows transformed themselves into silhouettes, and those into defined figures.

The ancient one contemplated the room sketched out in the very heart of the sphere: the narrow bed, the pictures on the wall, and a table full of papers and books over which someone bent. A woman? No, scarcely a girl. He was able to verify it when she turned toward him with a thoughtful expression…The room and its furnishings were all strange to him, but not she: she was the same young girl that he had just seen a few minutes before trying to cross the undergrowth of vines. He studied her attentively. Every sign of fatigue or fear had disappeared from her face, and she was dressed differently: instead of the vaporous dress, from her waist to her ankles she had on something that tightly circled both her legs, and from the waist to her neck she wore a blouse with wide sleeves.

When she bent over the papers, Soio called up the memory of the previous wanderer in the woods comparing that image with this one. The girl parted the hair that fell over her shoulders, and the ancient one shivered. She was the same woman. And she was not.

For some moments his thoughts went off to some remote place. When he returned to himself, the image had disappeared from the sphere that now turned into a cold, dark ball, insensible to the heat of the hands that tried to revive it. He knew every effort would be futile since he had exhausted the energy of that day in visions.

He got up and covered the object up again with the cloth. Then he looked in the direction of the eastern window. Agoy slowly rose up on the horizon.

Soio remained for a certain time sunk in profound thoughts, and then he knew without room for doubt, that the beginning had arrived. It would be fair to say he had no fear even though in that beginning he could encounter his end, and he knew it. (Chaviano, 1988, pp. 29-31)

Soio/Merlin gazing into the crystal ball, a microcosm that gathers the space-time energy fields of the universe, is able to see into parallel universes and evokes visions of the protagonists in those universes whose modes of existence are real in one and fictional in another. Arlena and Ana are the same person in two distinct universes, parallel worlds. Whoever has the sphere can travel in time and space.

Merlin is a Druid in exile from the Neolithic world of Celtic Britain in the parallel universe of Faidir, awaiting the messengers who will help him coordinate the Stone of the Past and the Mirror of the Future to open up the trans-dimensional frontiers of the universe so that he can return to earth. The last time Merlin had lined up the Stone and Mirror at the Great Circle of Stonehenge, he had suddenly crossed over from earthly life to existence on Rybel, a parallel universe.

Soio/Merlin remembers the moment in which he crossed over from earth to the parallel universe of Rybel:

He drew near to the window and began again to recall all that he had lived: from the terrible feeling of dizziness that had struck him the first time in childhood, when he had tried to cross a river, to the occasion when he had looked down on himself, as if he had abandoned his own body. Again he heard the stories of those beings called magi, magicians, who had visions of past and future events, unable to travel over flowing water, obliged to remain virgins, unless they wanted to lose their powers…then he knew why the visions struck him, he understood the cause of the stupor that paralyzed him, and of the strange awakening surrounded by people who asked for more details of the prediction he had just formulated—a prediction he never succeeded in remembering, to the astonishment and distrust of those who had listened to it moments before…For some reason he was different, apart, from the men of his village. Any yet, on the surface nothing differentiated him from the rest: he ate, slept, dreamed, believed in the pleasure of laughter, and loved his country with profound nostalgia, that place, almost forgotten, that still existed in another dimension of space.

He had been born a magus. And his first name had been that of the falcon, Merlin. For years he lived in the cave he had inherited from his master, a spacious, comfortable grotto that guarded a mirror and stone, *the* Mirror and *the* Stone in which you could read time. Where had his master gotten them? Soio/Merlin did not know. The ancient one had told him a story about lightening, wind, and a creature with wings who opened a path in the invisible turbulence of the air in order to leave him those objects. Struck by the terror, blinded by the splendor, the master kept both objects in a nearby cave, which he visited frequently, until they began to reveal their hidden powers.

His master was a wise man, but the wisdom of the objects given to him by the gods of another universe was greater because it was born from a knowledge more ancient than man. And that power contained in the Stone and Mirror instructed his capacities better than any cult mystery in which he participated.

Much later Merlin arrived, a nubile pup hiding a visionary spirit. The ancient one adopted him as a disciple and taught him the secrets of the grotto. When he died, Merlin occupied his dwelling. For years and years. Kings and kingdoms followed one another with which Merlin maintained a close and influential relationship…

Soio stepped back from the window. For a moment he wanted to forget all his former life that struck him now as the life of someone else, since even his name was different. The forces that governed the objects had also transformed his existence.

One afternoon of late autumn, when the plain of the estuary filled with a dry yellow straw that months before had been a brilliant green under the sun, Merlin felt the familiar sensation of nausea that preceded the arrival of the visions. He went into the cave to set up the Stone in a straight line with the Mirror and, in this way, attract the images that emerged incoherently from his mind. That was the last thing he did in his world. The terrible voice of a hurricane struck his beard, the sky seemed to open like a well of light, and more dizziness and nausea made him double over and fall on a different world. He was on Rybel, but would not know it for weeks. A new language and a foreign sky were insufficient to make him understand that that place was not his own. (Chaviano, 1988, pp. 72-73)

Stonehenge

Later we find the reason Merlin has crossed from one existence to another. Ana has resorted to the Ouija board to put herself in contact with subconscious images from her genetic memory. All images are real, Ana explains, because the universe with its worlds and its realities is infinite. A character of my imagination, she tells a friend, can also exist in real life. Merlin had adored the stones of the Great Circle, his name for Stonehenge. The stone circle functioned as an astronomical observatory. The dancing or revolution of the stones refers to their apparent motion in relation to the stars. The Great Circle wheeled and wheeled under the Celtic sky. A hole opened in time and space, and Merlin fell into it. Something in the arrangement of the stars caused him to disappear. The magician was lost. Only the stone circle remained.

Stonehenge is a microcosm, a circle that reflects and coordinates the larger circle of the universe, symbolized and embodied in the sphere or crystal ball that Merlin transmits to Ana in the form of the novel we are reading. Soio/Merlin later explains to Arlena:

In any case, what do I know, an ignorant druid initiated by my masters into the secrets of levitation next to the Great Circle? We also performed forbidden ceremonies there. The stones indicated punctually the arrival of the solstices and equinoxes, of eclipses and lunar phases, the position of some stars and the influence of cosmic energies. All that, joined to the force of the earth, which in that location has more power than elsewhere, provoked an amazing effect in certain marked moments in the calendar. If on an ordinary day we could elevate ourselves a finger length above the surface of the ground, in those favorable instants we succeeded in ascending twice the height of a man, and on even more propitious occasions we flew like birds…For that reason I am able to accept the enigma of the talismans. If normally they permit us to glimpse other worlds or half see the past and future, under better conditions they make possible the flight to other places. (Chaviano, 1988, pp. 274-275)

All the characters in *Fables of an Extraterrestrial Grandmother* are trying to coordinate dimensions of space and time in order to fly from one parallel universe to another across various dimensions of time. Merlin must coordinate Ana, our protagonist writer in the novel, sitting in Havana, with Arlena, Ana's "fictional" protagonist fleeing through the jungle of Rybel toward the Valley of the Sylphs and Merlin's cave, with one moment in time, when the Stone of the Past can be aligned with the Mirror of the Future, and Merlin and Arlena can cross over the open frontiers of time and space to return to their own worlds again. In Arthurian legend Merlin disappears from earth after falling in love with the beautiful enchantress Vivien, who imprisons him in a floating castle or cave, where he sleeps away eternity, but his voice is heard from time to time. Chaviano, however, returns Merlin to a pre-Celtic, Neolithic time of the original builders of Stonehenge, and we hear no more about his fate.

Chaviano's emphasis on crossing boundaries of time and space from one parallel universe to another and on characters living in one world but belonging to another, yearning to make contact with the forces of the universe that will bring them home suggests the theme of *in shamanism* (McAllister, 2014). The shaman leaves the world behind in shamanic trance and makes a spirit flight to the world of the dead where he or she encounters an ancestor who tells the shaman the myths that reveal the true nature of reality. The shaman returns to the world of the living with healing and teaching powers. Both Ana and Soio resemble shamans. The act of writing for Ana is an act of mental regression to pre-rational, subconscious shamanic trance states. Soio/Merlin resembles the ancestor spirit who reveals, and in this case enables, the true forces of the universe (symbolized by the crystal ball) to work their liberating powers.

Conclusion

Soio/Merlin represents the ancestor figure, an all-knowing, all-powerful magus or magician, whom Ana encounters in dream visions. Merlin will coordinate the flights across space and time that will conclude with his return to earth and Ana's completion of the novel we are in the process of reading. Chaviano's use of the Merlin legend is original and takes into account archaeological evidence about the Celts, Druids, and Stonehenge. The idea of trans-dimensional flight and parallel universes might be said to have its origins in Celtic mythology. In Celtic religion the Druid priest is a shaman and shift-changer, someone who can cross over the boundaries of the parallel worlds of the ancestors and the living, someone who can change into a bird and fly from one realm to the other and back. The most conspicuous element of the Merlin legend Chaviano omits from her creation of Soio/Merlin is the legend of Vivien/Nimue/Niniane and her enchantment and perpetual imprisonment of Merlin. Soio/Merlin denies he has ever heard of this girl when Ana brings up her name. He insists in an Epilogue that he returned to earth and Stonehenge, but in a Neolithic time prior to his own age with Arthur. Perhaps there is another reason. Ana is Vivien, but an Anti-Vivien who uses Soio/Merlin's magical powers not to entrap him but to liberate him across the frontiers of space and time in the magical sphere which is *Fables of an Extraterrestrial Grandmother*.

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Jacopo Tintoretto's *Female Concert*: The Realm of Venus[*]

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This study aims to visualize Giorgio Vasari's statement in discussing Jacopo Tintoretto's *Female Concert* of 1576-86, now at the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden (see Figure 1). Two conceits (*concetti*) are considered in analyzing Tintoretto's female imagery: (1) a fanciful invention of *musica* extravaganza; and (2) a Venetian allegory of *bellezza*. The first part of the essay discusses the provenance of the painting and the second part presents an iconographical interpretation of the imagery. This essay also focuses on the iconography of the painting based on viewing the subject and does not postulate on its iconography based on disappeared paintings or on a speculative decorative cycle on the theme of Hercules. Relying on well-documented research on music in Venice, on Mannerist practices, and on art theories during Tintoretto's life, some intriguing observations are made about the painting.

Keywords: beauty, music, iconography, alchemy, interpretation, mythology, muses, Neoplatonism, Venus

> "E vera cosa che la musica ha la sua propria sede in questa città"
> ("It is true that music has its own official seat in this city [Venice]")
>
> —Francesco Sansovino
>
> *Venetia città nobilissima* (Venice, 1581)[1]

Introduction

In Venice in 1566, Giorgio Vasari (1511-74), a Florentine artist and writer, met the Venetian painter and musician, Jacopo Comin Robusti, known as Tintoretto (1518-94). In his *Vite* of 1568, Vasari praised Tintoretto's musical and artistic talents in this manner:

> Tintoretto, who has delighted in all the arts, and particularly in playing various musical instruments, besides being agreeable in his every action, but in the matter of painting swift, resolute, fantastic, and extravagant, and the most extraordinary brain that the art of painting has ever produced, as may be seen from all his works and from the fantastic compositions of his scenes, executed by him in a fashion of his own and contrary to the use of other painters. Indeed, he

[1] See Francesco Sansovino (1581), *Venetia città nobilissima*, p. 380, one of the first printed guides of Venice. See also Viviana Comensoli, "Music, *The Book of the Courtier*, and Othello's Soldiership", in *The Italian World of English Renaissance Drama: Cultural Exchange and Intertextuality*, pp. 89-105, for a discussion on music theory in the Italian Renaissance as well as Neoplatonic theory on the superiority of the senses, in particular, the sense of hearing.

has surpassed even the limits of extravagance with the new and fanciful inventions and the strange vagaries of his intellect, working at haphazard and without design, as if to prove that art is but a jest.[2] (Vasari, 1568, p. 468)

This study aims to visualize Vasari's statement in discussing Tintoretto's *Female Concert* of 1576-86, now at the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden (see Figure 1). Two conceits (*concetti*) are considered in analyzing Tintoretto's female imagery: (1) a fanciful invention of *musica* extravaganza; and (2) a Venetian allegory of *bellezza*. The first part of the essay discusses the provenance of the painting and the second part presents an iconographical interpretation of the imagery. The first conceit relates to the invention of *musica*, which is associated with the Muses, Goddesses of Music, Knowledge, and Artistry. There were nine Muses (Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania, and Calliope) who invented chords and vibrations in musical instruments and developed the art and technique of combining sounds in time and space with various musical instruments. These Muses, guided by Apollo, God of Music, Light and Prophecy, inspired artists, philosophers and poets in their creations, thus ruling over the visual and performing arts.[3]

Figure 1. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Female Concert*, 1576-86. (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany; Photo credit: Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany; Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

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[2] See Giorgio Vasari (1568), "Vita di Jacopo Tintoretto", in *Giorgio Vasari Vite de' più eccellenti Pittori, Scultori e Architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi (Ed.), 6 vols. (1963–1989), V, 468, and David Rosand (1986/1997), *Painting in Cinquecento Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*, pp. 159-164.
[3] See Liana De Girolami Cheney (Spring 1994), "Giorgio Vasari's Pictorial Musing on the Muses: The Chamber of Apollo of the Casa Vasari", *Studies in Iconography,* 15, 135-77.

The second conceit, *bellezza* or *venustas* (beauty, loveliness, and goodness), originated from Vitruvius's theory of beauty. He based his theory on forms in nature and derived universal laws of proportions applied to geometrical forms such as the square and the circle as well as to proportional human forms. This complicated theory of beauty was much debated in the Renaissance.[4] The conceit of beauty consisted of two aspects: (1) the physical, which was related to measurement and human proportions; and (2) the metaphysical, which was revealed in the apprehension of the essence of the visual form.[5]

In 1984, Erasmus Weddigen wrote a stimulating article on "Jacopo Tintoretto and Music" in *Artibus et Historiae*.[6] The article addresses the complex iconography of musical symbolism in Venetian paintings of the Cinquecento, including the works of Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and, especially, Tintoretto. Weddigen's analysis also includes themes associated with musical instruments and mythology such as The Contest of Apollo and Marsyas, Apollo and the Muses, Minerva and the Muses, The Contest with the Muses, and The Muses. He further discusses the historical background of Venetian music and musicians in the Cinquecento, focusing on specific love themes, musical compositions, and musical performances.

Four years after the German article by Weddigen, H. Colin Slim wrote two related articles: "A Painting about Music at Dresden by Jacopo Tintoretto", in *Exploration in Renaissance Culture*, and "Tintoretto's Music-Making Women at Dresden", in *Imago Musicae*, in which he incorporates and expands on Weddigen's ideas in English.[7]

History of the Commission

A historical summary of what it is known about the commission of Tintoretto's *Female Concert* assists in the analysis of the painting. This painting is also referred to as *Music-Making Women*, *Women Making Music*, and *Concert with Women Making Music.* The painting was part of an art collection of more than 3,000 paintings belonging to the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II (1552-1612) at his court in Prague.[8]

In 1648, Tintoretto's biographer Carlo Ridolfi, residing in Venice, described in *Vita di Giacoppo Robusti detto il Tintoretto* (The Life of Jacob Robusti called *il Tintoretto*) and in the *Meraviglie dell' Arte* (The Wonders of Art)[9] four paintings that Tintoretto completed for Emperor Rudolph II around 1576, including: (1) Jupiter bringing the young Bacchus, born of Semele, to Juno for nursing; (2) Silenus entering Hercules's bedroom thinking that he is making love to Iole; (3) Hercules looking at a mirror ornamented with lascivious women by Iole; and (4) a fourth painting "where in a garden Muses, reduced in number, are making music with

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[4] See Anthony Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 274-275, for a discussion of Vitruvius' *venustas* applied to the Renaissance art; Anthony Blunt (1968), *Artistic theory in Italy, 1450–1600*, pp. 15-18; and André Chastel (1975), *Marsile Ficin et L'Art*, pp. 107-114, on Alberti's concept of beauty as related to music and to Renaissance Neoplatonism.

[5] See Chastel (1975), *Marsile Ficin et L'Art*, pp. 81-85, for the concept of beauty related to Renaissance Neoplatonism.

[6] See Erasmus Weddigen (1984), "Jacopo Tintoretto und die Musik", *Artibus et Historiae, 5* (10), 67-119.

[7] See Carlo Ridolfi (2006), *Le Meraviglie dell'Arte*, 2 Vols., II, p. 226. H. Colin Slim (1987), "A Painting about Music at Dresden by Jacopo Tintoretto", *Exploration in Renaissance Culture, 13*, 1-18, and "Tintoretto's Music-Making Women at Dresden", *Imago Musicae*, 4 (1988), 45-76.

[8] See Rotraud Bauer (1976), "Die Kunstkammer Kaiser Rudolfs II. In Prag: Inventar aus den Jahren 1607–1611", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 72, XIV (report from 5 March 1612); Julius Hübner (1856/1862/1868), *Verzeichnis der Königlichen Gemälde-Gallerie zu Dresden*, 121, no. 267, 150, no. 292, and 127, no. 292, respectively; no editor, *Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister Dresden: Katalog der ausgestellten Werke* (1982), 318, no. 265; and Heinrich Zimmerman (1905), "Das Inventar der Prager Schartz–und Kunstkammer vom 6. Dezember 1621", *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, XLII, no. 1036.

[9] Carlo Ridolfi (1984), *Life of Tintoretto, and His Children Domenico and Marietta,* 2 Vols., Robert Enggass (Trans.), cited in Rudolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Jacopo Tintoretto: Le opere sacre e profane* (1982), I, pp. 92, 175, no. 204.

various instruments" ("*Le Muse che, ridotte in un giardino, formano un concerto di Musica con varii strumenti*").[10] This description is usually associated with Tintoretto's *Female Concert* recorded in the collection of the Emperor's inventories of 1621 and 1648.[11] The other three paintings are lost.

Rudolph II's collection endured a cruel fate during and after the Thirty Year's War that finally ended in 1648. During the war the collection was partially pillaged by the Swedish army. A portion of the collection was moved to the palace of Queen Christina of Sweden (1626-89) in Stockholm, and the rest of the collection was kept in the Prague palace. Queen Christina further disassembled her collection by moving some of those pictures from Stockholm to Rome to form part of a new art gallery at her Roman residence.[12]

Further records show that Tintoretto's *Female Concert* remained in the collection of the Prague palace until 1744. At that time, the painting was sold to Graf Villio, a Saxon Ambassador to Venice (1733-44), by the Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa (1717-80) in order to raise money to support her battles against Frederick the Great, King of Prussia (1740-86), during the Seven Year's War (1754-63). In 1749, Tintoretto's painting was finally acquired by The Dresden Gemäldegalerie in Germany, where it is still on display.[13]

Iconographical Interpretation: Musical Sources

Several scholarly attempts have been made to understand the iconography of Tintoretto's four mythological paintings, which were commissioned by Rudolph II, Holy Roman Emperor, for his chambers in the palace at Prague. However, no clear explanation of the symbolism of these painting has yet been formulated. There are compelling arguments to incorporate the four pictures as part of a decorative cycle on the theme of Hercules based on Lilio Gregorio Giraldi's (1479-1552) *Herculis vitae*, but these are inconclusive.[14] The difficulty in these assessments arises with the past and present historical provenance of the paintings, since three of them are not traceable, thus forcing interpretation or misinterpretation that detracts from the signification of the extant painting, Tintoretto's *Female Concert*.

This essay focuses on the iconography of the painting based on viewing the subject and does not postulate on its iconography based on disappeared paintings or on a speculative decorative cycle on the theme of Hercules. Relying on well-documented research into music in Venice and Mannerist artistic practices during Tintoretto's lifetime, some intriguing observations are made about the painting.

Moreover, there are three important factors in considering Tintoretto's *Female Concert*. First, Venice had a longstanding tradition of high-quality publishing and printing, including musical texts. In Venice, the printing trade was well established and was a substantial part of Venetian trade with Antwerp, Basel, and Paris.[15] Second, Venice was a center for musical composers and musicians such as Jacques Archadelt (1507-68),

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[10] See Ridolfi, *Le Meraviglie dell'Arte*, II, pp. 226-227, description of the four paintings: "In uno le Muse che, ridotte in un giardino, formano un concerto di musica con varii strumenti. Nell'altro Giove, che reca [leca] all seno di Giunone Bacco fanciullo, nata di Semele. Il terzo era di Sileno entrato al bujo nel letto di Ercole, credendosi goder Jole. Ercole medesimo nel quarto, che si mira in uno specchio adorno di lascivie feminnile dalla medesima Jole."

[11] See H. Colin Slim (1987), "A Painting about Music at Dresden by Jacopo Tintoretto", *Exploration in Renaissance Culture,* 13, 1.

[12] See Bela Dudik (1867), "Die Rudolfinische Kunst–und Rarirätenkammer in Prag", *Mitteilungen der K. K. Central Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale* 12, XXXIX, no. 291.

[13] Folio 34 recto of 1747-50 of the museum registry lists that Tintoretto's *Female Concert* "is acquired from the Imperial Collection of Rudolph II of Prague. In 1742, King August III sold to the Gallery-Inspector Riedel and in 1749 bought by the Gallery-Inspector Guarienti"; correspondence with Dr. Judith Claus, Curatorial Staff, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany, 17 February 2014. I am grateful for the assistance and suggestions of Dr. Judith Claus.

[14] See Slim, "A Painting about Music at Dresden by Jacopo Tintoretto", p. 6.

[15] See Iain Fenlon (1994), *Music, Print and Culture in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy*, The Panizzi Lectures of 1994, pp. 56, 59.

Domenico Bianchini (1510-76), Anton Francesco Doni (1513-74), Andrea Gabrielli (1532-85), Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-90), and Giulio Zacchino (1555-84).[16] And third, the early sixteenth-century female ensemble or *concerto delle donne* was developed and organized in the courts of Italy.[17]

Figure 2. Marietta Robusti, La Tintoretta, *Self-Portrait*, 1585. (Corridoio Vasariano, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; Photo Credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY [ART 107870])

Vasari was not the only writer who acknowledged Tintoretto's musical talents and love for music. In 1548, Andrea Calmo (1510-70), a satirical poet, epistolary writer, and dramatic actor in the *Commedia dell'Arte*, praised his friend Tintoretto in a letter for "playing, laughing and singing, so as not to damage the brain".[18] And in 1648, in *Vita di Giacoppo Robusti detto il Tintoretto*, the Venetian biographer Ridolfi noted that Tintoretto in his youth enjoyed playing the lute and other musical instruments.[19] Tintoretto delighted in cultivating and socializing with Venetian musicians such as Domenico Bianchini (*Il Rosetto*, ca.1510-76), Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-90), and Giulio Zacchino (1555-84). The latter instructed his daughter, Marietta (1555-90), to play the spinet or virginal and to sing as depicted in her *Self-Portrait* of 1585 at the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence (see Figure 2).[20] Musical attributes are visible in the painting; for example, a spinet and a note score that records a madrigal of a well-known love song, "Madonna per voi ardo…" ("My lady, I burn

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[16] Fenlon, *Music, Print and Culture*, pp. 71, 80.
[17] See Karin Pendle (1991) (Ed.), *Women and Music: A History*, pp. 37-34, and Jane L. Baldauf-Berdes (1996), *Women Musicians of Venice: Musical Foundations, 1525-1855*, pp. 39-42.
[18] Citation in Weddigen, "Jacopo Tintoretto und die Music," *Artibus et Historiae,* 10, 68.
[19] Weddigen (1984), "Jacopo Tintoretto und die Music", p. 68.
[20] See Liana De Girolami Cheney, et al. (2000/2011), *Self-Portraits by Women Painters*, 64.

with love for you and you do not believe it") by Philippe Verdelot (1480-1532), known as the father of the Italian madrigal.

In their studies on Tintoretto's *Female Concert*, Weddigen and Slim identified several musical scores depicted in the painting, in particular, the two composers of the sources. These two identifications derive from Tintoretto's depiction of two musical scores, whose first legible lines can be decoded. One derives from an anonymous Neapolitan poem, *Dolc'amorose e leggiadrette ninfe* ("Sweet loving and graceful Nymphs")[21] and the other from the madrigal by Andrea Gabrieli (1533-85), "Quanto lieta ver noi sorge l'Aurora" ("How delightful is to see the rising of Aurora").[22]

The Neapolitan poem, *Dolc'amorose e leggiadrette ninfe*, became musically interpreted in Giovan Leonardo Primavera's *canzone napoletane* (secular songs) in 1565, 1566, and 1570.[23] As a composer Primavera (1540-85) performed in Venice where Tintoretto probably visually appropriated his musical conceit in his painting. Gabrielli's *Aurora* was published in a musical book, *Il primo libro di madrigal a cinque voci* ("First book of madrigals for five voices") in Venice by Antonio Gardano in 1566 and 1572. The score included the first lines of the madrigal: "Quanto lieta ver noi sorge l'Aurora" ("How delightful is to see the rising of Aurora").

Another musical source for the Venetian painting is from the music of Zarlino. He was appointed *maestro di cappella* at the church of Saint Mark in 1565, and invited Andrea Gabrielli to be his second organist in 1566.[24] Zarlino's musical theory of the six sonorous numbers, *scenario*, was likely an influence in Tintoretto's selection of six performers in the *Female Concert*.

In addition, Weddigen and Slim identified the musical instruments employed by the muses in Tintoretto's *Female Concert*. There are four string instruments in the foreground of the painting: from left to right, a bowed viola da gamba, a lira da braccio, a plucked psaltery and a cittern (probably a cithara), complemented by wind instruments including a cornet (probably a type of cornet to or recorder) and a regal. A singer accompanies these musicians.

Iconographical Interpretation: Artistic Sources

The background of Tintoretto's *Female Concert* depicts a radiant atmosphere in the sky, revealing the painting's mood. Tintoretto portrayed a sunrise of spring under the governance of Aurora, the Goddess of Dawn and Sunrise. The natural phenomenon of Aurora's lights displays the shifting of colors from red to yellow-green, as in the formation of the aurora borealis, which created a symphony of light. Perhaps this is one reason why Tintoretto's palette is predominantly red and green in the painting, alluding to a painterly aurora borealis. This astral occurrence was known in ancient times and was referred to as "blazing sky" or "flaming sky" by Hesiod in his *Theogony*.[25] This Greek text was available in the Renaissance through the printing of Aldus Manutius in 1495 in Venice. The cosmic phenomenon known as "Aurora Borealis" or "Northern Dawn",

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[21] See Slim, "A Painting about Music at Dresden by Jacopo Tintoretto", 4, notes 15 and 16.
[22] See Slim, "Tintoretto's Music-Making Women", p. 53.
[23] See Slim, "A Painting about Music at Dresden by Jacopo Tintoretto", 4, notes 15 and 16.
[24] See Slim, "Tintoretto's Music-Making Women", p. 53.
[25] See Hesiod (1832), *Theogony*, trans. and annotated by C. A. Elton, Esq., line 378ff, on Boreas and Eos (Dawn or Aurora); line 630ff, on "brazen sky"; and lines 1080-85, the four winds—north, south, east and west. See also George Siscoe (1986), "An Historical Footnote on the Origin of 'Aurora Borealis'", *History of Geophysics,* 2, 11-14, and see from http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/themis/auroras/aurora_history.html#.VBNEAEs1fE.

however, refers to a term for a morning blazing sky coined by Galileo Galilei in 1619.[26] He associated the marvel of a flaming sky with Aurora, the Roman Morning Goddess, and Borealis the northern light and Wind God, Boreas.

Tintoretto's painting is staged in a pastoral landscape, a spring with a luminous sunrise, a dawn or aurora. The background of the painting is divided into two parts: on the left of the painting there is a thickly wooded forest, where tree trunks are in the shape of male figures; on the right there is an open sky with an aurora borealis. The composition of the painting is horizontally divided into three parts: on the left, a muse holds a viola da gamba and touches the bow of a lira da braccio with one of her toes; in the center, three muses are encircling a regal while reading and playing music; and at the right a muse holds a cithara while attending to the musical instructions of her sister muse. Tintoretto invented a musical triptych. The placement of the musical instruments, some held by the muses and others resting on the grass, introduces the viewer to the concert, from the viola da gamba on the left, to the regal, cornetto, psaltery, and lira da braccio in the center, and the cithara on the right. Furthermore, he creates a contrapuntal arrangement with the poses of the figures; some turn toward the picture plane, while others move away from the frontal plane of the painting. The muses' physiognomy is similar. What is different is their attire or lack of it and the musical instrument or musical score that each holds. Four of these muses are nude, while two females are clothed in antique garments. Their blonde tresses are decorated with pearls or flowers and coiled in a chignon or donut-style hairdo.

Forming a semicircle inside the pictorial composition, there are only six females or muses engaged in a musical performance. Some of the instruments are held by the muses (the viola da gamba, the cornet and the cithara), while others are displayed on the ground (the lira da braccio and psaltery). Two nude muses play the regal instrument. Four different musical scores are displayed throughout the composition. The score on the ground, next to the musical instruments, is temporarily ignored, while one rests on the lap of one of the regal players, and the other two scores are being consulted by the clothed muses.

One muse, standing next to the regal on which the musical score is resting, holds a recorder and attentively reads the musical score. To her far left, the other clothed muse is raising the musical score and pointing out a passage to the nude muse who embraces a cithara. The consultation between these two muses is intriguing. The clothed muse holding the musical score is instructing the nude muse embracing a cithara how to accompany with her instrument, perhaps alluding to *Il primo libro di tabolatura di cithara di ricercati madrigali* ("First tabulator book for cithara of well-known madrigals"), the recently published book on interpreting Neapolitan love songs and salterelli with a cithara, written by Paolo Virchi from Brescia (1555-1610) and printed in Venice in 1572 by Girolamo Scotto (1505-72).

The cithara that the nude female holds is an ancient musical instrument. The word derives from the Latin name for a musical strung instrument played with a quill or plectrum, *chitara*, or from the Greek musical instrument, *kithara*, meaning the sound of sea snails found on the island of Kythera or Cythera. Because Tintoretto's nude muse holds a cithara, she may be identified in relation to the traditional portrayal of musical muses. She may personify Terpsichore, the Muse of Dance, who traditionally dances while playing the cithara, as seen in *Terpsichore, Muse of Dance with Cithara*, 1st century BCE, a Greek relief in the Archeological

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[26] Some scholars claim that a French scientist, Pierre Gassendi, coined the term in 1621. See S. I. Akasofu (1979/1994), "Aurora Borealis", *Alaska Geographic Society, 6*(2), 124-6.

Museum of Istanbul. Or she could also be Erato, the Muse of Lyric Poetry, who chants her lyrics while playing the cithara, as seen in *Erato*, *Muse of Lyric Poetry with Cithara*, 1st century CE, now at the Vatican Museum (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Erato, Muse of Lyric Poetry with Cithara, 2nd century CE. (Pius-Clementine Museum, Room of the Muses, 23, Vatican Museums, Rome; Photo credit: author. Courtesy of the Vatican Museums [Inv. No. 317], Rome)

Listening attentively to her interlocutor, the nude muse—whose back is facing the viewer—is different from her sister nude muses: their nude bodies are gently adorned with a minimal wrap, while she wears none. In addition to embracing the cithara and holding a plectrum, this nude muse sits in a classical pose alluding to a

popular Hellenistic copy of *Amor and Psyche* made in marble and in bronze in the Cinquecento. This ancient relief was referred to as the *Bed of Polycleitus*. In the sixteenth century there were several marble fragments of the *Bed of Polycleitus* (see Figure 4), which was a Roman copy of a Hellenistic relief of *Amor and Psyche* (now in a private collection). Cardinal Antoine Perrenut de Granville (1517-86), an avid collector of art who was employed as minister by the Spanish Habsburgs and connected with the court of Rudolph II in Prague, also owned a copy of this relief.[27] Titian, a Venetian painter and Tintoretto's mentor, appropriated the ancient imagery of the *Bed of Polycleitus* for his painting *Venus and Adonis* of 1553 (see Figure 5), a commission received from Philip II, King of Spain, now at the Prado Museum. Titian and Tintoretto probably were familiar with a bronze copy of the *Bed of Polycleitus* owned by Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), the Venetian poet and madrigal theorist who inspired many of their mythological paintings.[28]
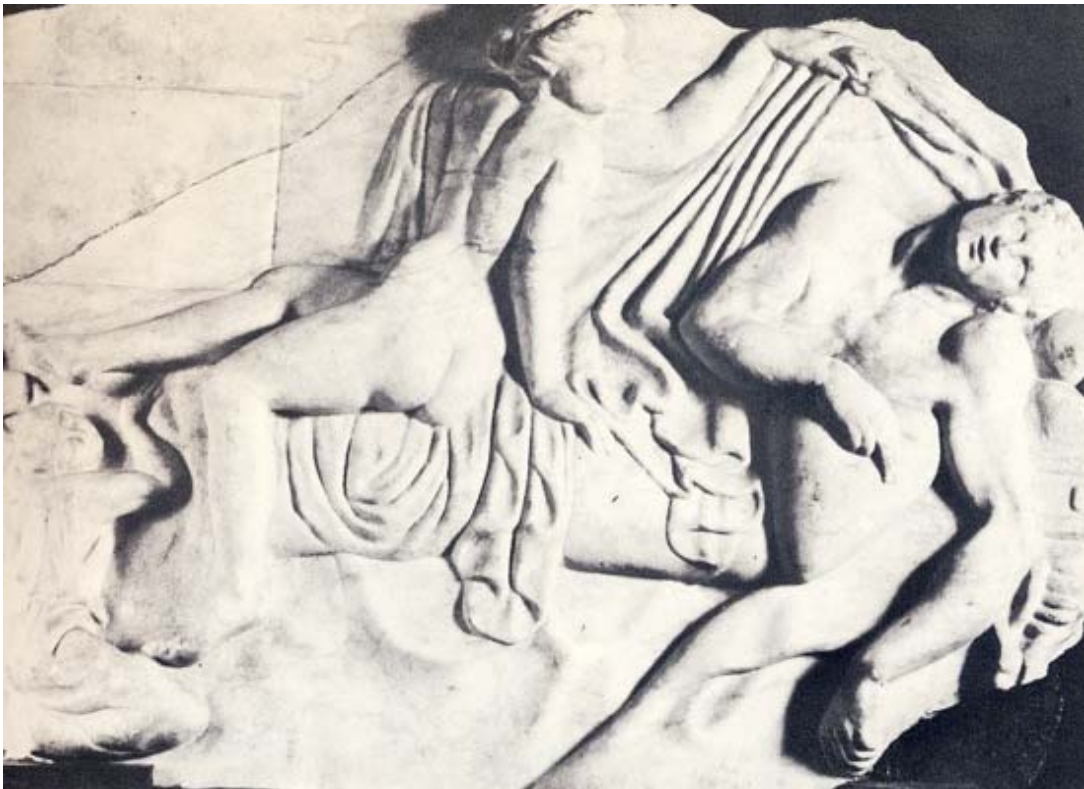
Figure 4. *Bed of Polycleitus*, sixteenth-century copy of *Amor and Psyche*. (Hellenistic relief. Private collection. Photo credit: author)

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[27] See Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubenstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, p. 127.
[28] Bober and Rubenstein (1986), *Renaissance Artists*, p. 127. Also, an exhibition in Padua, *Petro Bembo and the invention of the Renaissance,* at the Palazzo Monte di Pietà, Fall 2013, reunited works from Bembo's collection of ancient art, which was dismantled after his death.

Figure 5. Titian, *Venus and Adonis*, 1553. (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain; Photo credit: Art Resource, NY [ART 466119])

Tintoretto's nude muse also wears golden bracelets encrusted with gemstones such as emeralds, pearls, and rubies. Since antiquity, upper-arm bracelets have been associated with Venus, as seen in *Crouching Venus* (1st century BCE, now at the Vatican Museum) (see Figure 6), who wears an upper-arm bracelet on both arms.[29] Pearls, in particular, are attributes of Venus, because they are formed in the sea within the soft tissue of a living mollusk, reminiscent of the birth of Venus or Aphrodite (a Greek word meaning born from the foam of the sea), who was born from the foam of Uranus' testicles discarded in the sea, as seen in the lekythos in the form of Aphrodite, Greek mid-fourth century BCE, now at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.[30] In addition, pearls, unlike any other gemstones, are naturally formed in a shell, created with their own perfection and beauty;

[29] In *La Fornarina* of 1518 at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Rome, Raphael appropriates this conceit and decorates the arm of his muse with a bracelet holding his name, thus signing his painting as well as acknowledging his love for *La Fornarina.*
[30] See Hesiod (1988), *Theogony* (M. L. West, Trans. & Ed.), lines 176-188, and Guy de Tervarent (1997), *Attributs et Symboles dans L'Art Profane*, p. 145, on the symbols of the shell and Venus.

hence the pearl's association with beauty.[31] Like the pearl, Aphrodite is associated with formation in the sea according to ancient legend.[32] Aphrodite is carried ashore in a seashell, as seen in her traditional depiction since antiquity of navigating on a seashell (see Figure 7); e.g., the Pompeian fresco painting after Apelles' *Aphrodite Anadyomene*, before 79 CE, now at the Archeological Museum in Naples, or the well known Renaissance painting of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* of 1485, now at the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence. As Aphrodite rises from the sea, legend recounts, droplets of water transformed into pearls allude to the beauty of the deity.[33] In antiquity, pearls were coveted as a symbol of wealth and power, and men gifted their lovers with pearls; hence the pearl's association with love.[34]

Figure 6. Crouching Venus, *Lely Venus*, 1st century BCE, marble. (Sir Peter Lely, Royal Collection, on loan to the British Museum, London; Photo credit: author. Courtesy of the British Museum, London)

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[31] See Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (1994), *A Dictionary of Symbols*, pp. 743-744, and Hans Biedermann (1994), *Dictionary of Symbolism: Cultural Icons and the Meanings Behind Them*, p. 259.
[32] See Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 176-188.
[33] See Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 744.
[34] See Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 743.
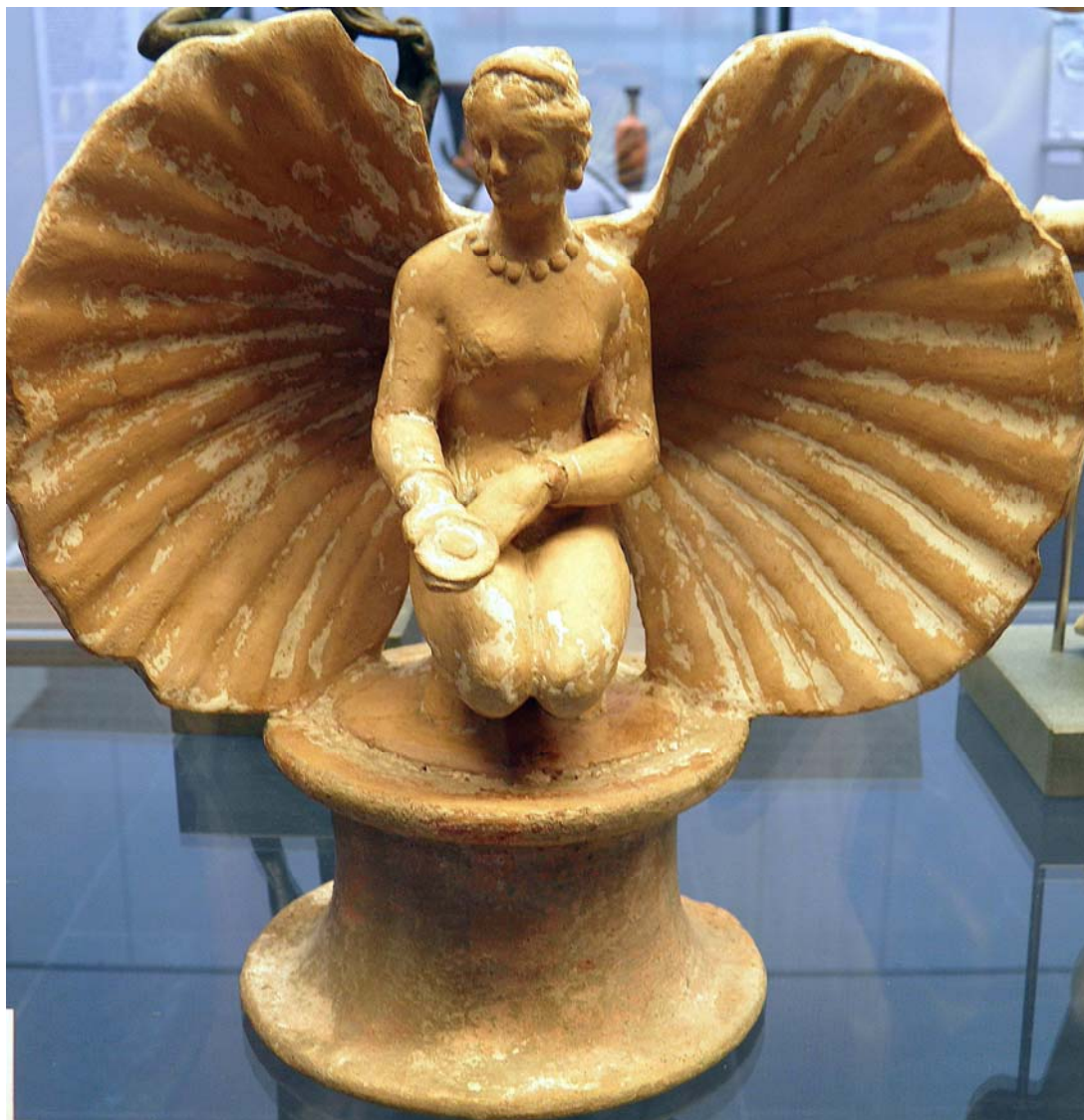
Figure 7. Aphrodite in a Shell, 3rd century BCE, Terracotta. (Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich, Germany; Photo credit: author. Courtesy of the Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich, Germany)

Furthermore, the mythological tradition comments on the divine birth, journey and name of Aphrodite born from the divine foam of the sea and transported in a seashell to the island of Cythera, known as the island of love; hence one of Venus' associations with love.[35] In Roman times the seashell, or the marine gastropod mollusk, was known as *venustas*, hence the Greek Aphrodite became known as Venus for the Romans. The Latin noun *venus* meant pleasure, love, or desire, and *venustas* referred to charm, loveliness, or beauty. The persona of Venus became identified with love and thus with the Goddess of Love and the Goddess of Beauty.[36]

With these ornamentations, appropriation of classical forms, and ancient literary connotations, Tintoretto's nude muse can be identified as Venus, who is a personification of Beauty and Love. Venus, as the goddess of Beauty and Love, is an allusion to the duality of love: profane or earthly and sacred or divine, Venus is the

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[35] See Hesiod, *Theogony,* lines 31-64. Venus' cithara is decorated at the bottom with what seems to be the head of a rabbit or a dove; these are both love attributes of Venus. See also, de Tervarent, *Attributs et Symboles dans L'Art Profane*, pp. 133, 461.

[36] See Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 1065.

clavis interpretandi for understanding the iconography of Tintoretto's *Female Concert.*

In the *Female Concert*, Tintoretto visualized a recital of music where the conductor or major protagonist is Venus among her muses. I define "muse" to mean a female who is absorbed in thoughts or in the process of a creative action. These muses are not the Ovidian muses from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book V, since these muses are five and not nine in number, and they do not reside in Helicon or in Parnassus with Apollo or Minerva.[37] They do not represent the Liberal Arts but are engaged in thinking about music, interpreting musical scores and sounds, and playing music. Tintoretto replaced the Goddess Minerva (Hans Rottenhammeer's *Minerva and the Muses* of 1603, now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum at Nüremberg) (see Figure 8) and the God Apollo (Jacopo Tintoretto's *Apollo and the Muses* or *Apollo's Marriage* of 1570, purchased by Egyptologist William John Bankes in Italy in 1849, and in the National Trust, London, UK since 1981), with the Goddess Venus.[38]

Figure 8. Hans Rottenhammer, *Minerva and the Muses*, 1603. (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nümberg, Germany; Photo credit: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

In this pastoral landscape, Venus and her musical muses compose music for lovers. Variants on the theme of the *Female Concert* are Tintoretto's *Contest among the Muses* of 1544-45 (in the Bernasconi Collection at

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[37] See *Ovid The Love Poems*, A. D. Melville (Ed.) (1990), p. 244, citing Ovid, *Fasti*, vi. 649-710, "Minerva invented the aulos but threw it away on seeing her face reflected while playing it". See also Carla Zecher (2007), *Sounding Objects: Musical Instruments, Poetry, and the Art in Renaissance France*, Chapter 2, Musical Rivalries, n. 8, for a recount of the legend about Minerva inventing the aulos to perform at the feasts of the gods. At one of these celebrations, Juno and Venus began to laugh at Minerva because whenever she played the aulos her cheeks puffed distorting her beautiful face. Subsequently, Minerva discarded the instrument for providing a mundane expression; hence the wind instrument became associated with mortals.

[38] A recent restoration of the London painting unveils that the subject might be different alluding perhaps to a marriage scene of Apollo or Hymen, the Greek God of Marriage, see from http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/jun/09/tintoretto-painting-restored-kingston-lacy. Furthermore, a seductive representation of Tintoretto's *Apollo and the Muses* of 1570s is at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, where all the figures are nude but nine in number. The provenance of this painting is still under investigation. See Cheney, "Giorgio Vasari's Pictorial Musing on the Muses", pp. 135-177, for a study of the same theme but in a Florentine and a Roman milieu.

the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona) (see Figure 10), where in Helicon nine clothed muses compete with birds for the sound of their music; Tintoretto's *The Muses* of 1578 (at The Royal Collection at Hampton Court in London) (see Figure 11); and Tintoretto's *Apollo and the Muse* of 1579 (at the Indianapolis Museum of Art) (see Figure 9), in which nine nude muses float in a celestial atmosphere while performing a concert with their musical instruments. In the background of the scenes, the aurora borealis illuminates their heavenly surroundings.

Figure 9. Jacopo or Domenico Tintoretto, *Apollo and the Muses*, 1570s. (Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana; Photo credit: The Clowes Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art [#2014.82])

Figure 10. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Contest among the Mu*ses, 1544-45. (Bernasconi Collection, Castelvecchio, Verona, Photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY [ART 27731])

Figure 11. Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Muses*, 1578. (The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, London, UK; Photo credit: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

In addition, their natural forms emphasize not only their own beauty as female figures but also the beauty of composing music. Tintoretto reveals his ability to depict a beautiful nude form, an image of loveliness (*venustas*).[39] Employing a Mannerist or Vasari's vocabulary, Tintoretto created *una bella figura* or *belle figure*.[40] Tintoretto, then, invented a realm of beauty, that is to say Venus' realm of beauty where muses play love songs. These delightful muses with their sonorous instruments also evoke amorous associations for listeners. As William Shakespeare notes in the opening words of *Twelfth Night*, "If music is the food of love, play on"!

Paragoni (Comparisons): Art, Love, Music, Poetry, and Nature

The *paragone*, an artistic comparison, is a Renaissance debate which was first established in the artistic Florentine Academy in 1547 by Benedetto Varchi (1503-65) and well articulated in the Venetian academy by Ludovico Dolce (1508-68) and by the Venetian musicians and musical theorists mentioned earlier. Inspired by

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[39] See Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*, 274-275, for a discussion of Vitruvius' *venustas* applied to the Renaissance art; Anthony Blunt (1968), *Artistic theory in Italy, 1450–1600*, pp. 15-18; and André Chastel (1975), *Marsile Ficin et L'Art*, pp. 107-114, on Alberti's concept of beauty as related to music and to Renaissance Neoplatonism.

[40] See Liana De Girolami Cheney (1997), "Giorgio Vasari's Theory of Feminine Beauty," in *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance* Art, pp. 180-190; Blunt, *Artistic theory in Italy, 1450–1600,* pp. 93-94; and Paola Barocchi (Ed.) (1971-1973), *Scritti del Cinquecento: L'imitazione, bellezza e grazia, proporzione, misure e giudizio*, 2 Vols, I, pp. 1611-1627 for Mario Equicola and Leone Ereo; II:1671-81, for Benedetto Varchi.

Horace's *Arts poetica* and his motto *ut pictura poesis* or "as is poetry so is painting",[41] one could apply this motto to the sister arts by saying *ut pictura musica* or "as is music so is painting".[42] In ancient Greek culture, "poetry and music were inseparable sisters" and through the faculty of imagination they were associated with the visual arts.[43] Thus as painting employs the visual elements of color, line, shape, space, and values to form a visual composition, so does music, which utilizes notes, scales, scores, sounds, and tones to create a musical composition. I propose an elaboration on Horace's motto, including the art of music in the *paragone* of the sister arts, thus "as is music so is painting" or "as is painting so is music".

Thus, the associations between love and music, love and poetry, and poetry and music have been long standing topics in the history of art from ancient times until today. In music, for example, there is the already established *paragone* between secular music and profane music, as in Lorenzo Monaco's *King David* of 1410 (now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), where a cithara is played by David, and Robert Testard's *Allegory of Music* of 1498 (*Les échecs amoreaux,* a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris), where a cithara is played by a noble lady. Or there is the *paragone* between string instruments and wind instruments, as depicted in Tintoretto's *Contest Between Apollo and Marsyas* of 1545 (painted for a ceiling in Pietro Aretino's Palazzo Bollani, Grand Canal, Venice, now at the Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum, Hartford, CT). Another conventional *paragone* in art is the association with poetry or music, for example, painting versus poetry as in Raphael's *Parnassus* of 1511 in the Stanza della Segnatura at the Vatican; or painting versus music as in Tintoretto's *Female Concert*.

Tintoretto moved beyond the traditional type of artistic *paragoni*. In the *Female Concert* he presented an inventive *paragone* between music and nature. Beginning with the natural setting in the painting, one sees a *paragone* of natures that is a pastoral landscape, a natural form, versus the nude female body, a human form. Both are part of the natural world but one is physically formed by Nature while the other artificially composed by the artist. In addition, the natural body is revealed and concealed, creating a contrasting effect: in the painting there are contrasts in color between the reds and greens, while in music there is contrast between string and wind instruments or between vocal and instrumental music.

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[41] The phrase originates from Horace's *Arts poetica* (line 361), 1st century BCE, who borrows the phrase from Plutarch's poem in *De gloria Atheniensium*, 3.347a, "Poema pictura loquens, pictura poema silens" ("Poetry is a speaking painting, painting is a silent [mute] poetry"). For further study, see *Horace on Poetry: The Ars Poetica*, C. O. Brink (Ed.) (1971). In the Italian Renaissance, Cristoforo Landino (1424-98) popularized Horace's phrase in his edition of *Horatius cum quattuor commentariis* (1498), citing Horace's passage*: ut pictura poesis erit; non erit dissimilis/poetica ars picturae*; Jean H. Hagstrum (1958), *The Sister Arts: The tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray*, p. 59; L. Mendelsohn (1982), *Paragoni: Benedetto Varchi Due Lezzioni and Cinquecento Art Theory*, pp. 109-142, where Varchi notes in the third disputation, "Onde, se bene i poeti et i pittori imitano, non imitano però, ne le medesime cose, nei medesimi modi. Imitano quelli colle parole, e questi co' colori; il perché pare che sia tanta differenza fra la poesia e la pittura, quanta è fra l'anima e'l corpo. Bene è vero che, come i poeti descrivono ancora il di fuori, così i pittori mostrano quanto più possono il di dentro, cioè gli affetti." See also John R. Spencer (1957), "*Ut Rhetorica Pictura*: A Study in Quattrocento Theory of Painting", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 20, 26-44; Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy*, p. 52; Rensselaer Lee (1967), *Ut Pictura Poesis: Humanist Theory of Painting*, 1, n. 2; *Dolce's Dialogo della Pittura* (1557), M. Roskill (Trans.) (1968), pp. 97, 239; and Gian Paolo Lomazzo (1584), *Trattato dell' arte della pittura, scultura et architettura*, which summarizes Leonardo's and Dolce's conceptions of the relationships between poetry and painting. See K. Borinski (1914-1924), *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie von Ausgang des klassischen Altertums bis auf Goethe und Wilhelm von Humboldt*, 2 Vols., I, pp. 30, 97, 175, 183, 238; II, p. 106, and, in particular, pp. 125-127, on the history of the dispute about *ut pictura poesis*; and Mario Praz (1967), *Mnemosyne: The Parallel Between Literature and the Visual Arts*, pp. 2-28.

[42] See Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts*, p. 9.

[43] See Werner Jaeger (1943), *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Gilbert Highet (Trans.), 3 Vols., II, p. 224.

Another *paragone* is associated with music and the senses, that is, the sensory (hearing) playing of music versus seeing or reading musical scores. Tintoretto emphasized this *paragone* by depicting female nudes holding or playing musical instruments, while some of the clothed females are reading or pointing to the musical notes. In this type of *paragone*, viewers act as participants as well as perceivers of the painting.

One more sensory *paragone* is musical: the sense of touch depicted between the musical instruments being performed or ready to be played—such as the viola da gamba, cittern and regal—contrasting with those resting or not played, such as the lira da braccio and the psaltery. In this type of *paragone*, Slim suggests an allusion between the religious psaltery of biblical times played by King David and the secular lira da braccio of the Renaissance played by Apollo. Perhaps the *paragone* is yet more complex, relating to the sound of the instruments when played, with the lira da braccio, for example, having a stronger affinity with sound of the viola da gamba (both being string instruments played with a bow) and with both the psaltery and the cithara having metal strings that are plucked with a plectrum. Or perhaps because the muse who is holding the viola da gamba touches the bow of the lira da braccio this suggests her ability to play both instruments. The psaltery resting next to the regal may suggest that those muses have the ability to play both instruments as well. In this case the *paragone* maybe associated with artistic presentation, a different type of performance accompanied with natural talent and acquired skills.

There are several associations with music, love and Venus in the painting. For example, the clothed muse points Venus to a musical passage for her to play from the Neapolitan song *Dolc'amorose e leggiadrette ninfe*.[44] The second legible score includes the first lines of the madrigal: "Quanto lieta ver noi sorge l'Aurora at the feet of Venus."[45] The lines of the song allude to the sunrise light seen in the painting as well to the spring setting, Venus' season. In addition, they allude to Venus embracing a cithara, most likely relating to a recently published book, as explained above.

The association of music with the realm of Venus and her season, spring, is also noted in astrological, alchemical and philosophical books during the Quattrocento and Cinquecento, such as Gabriele Giolito Ferrari's *Venus and Her Children*, from *Planetary Gods*, published in Venice 1533; Solomon Trimosin's *Venus and Her Children* of 1532, from *Splendor solis* at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin; and Marsilio Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* ("How Life Should Be Arranged According to the Heavens").[46] Astrologically, those individual born under Venus' sphere are referred to as the children of Venus.[47] They partake of Venus' celestial and earthly realms. With harmonious bliss, they reside in a celestial realm of beauty and love; whereas in the earthy realm, they experience an *élan de vivre* in a cultivated garden, pursuing pleasure through love

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[44] See Slim, "Tintoretto's Music-Making", p. 51. Slim notes that the Neapolitan song was published in Giovan Leonardo Primavera's *Il primo libro de canzone napoletane a tre voci* in Venice by Girolamo Scotto in the 1565, 1566 and 1570 editions.

[45] See Slim, "Tintoretto's Music-Making", p. 53. He also identified the score in the open sheet of music at the foot of Venus as being from a madrigal of Andrea Gabrieli published in a musical book *Il primo libro di madrigal a cinque voci* in Venice by Antonio Gardano in 1566 and 1572.

[46] See Paolo Galluzzi (Ed.) (2009), *Galileo: Images of the Universe from Antiquity to the Telescope*, p. 302 on Gaffurrius' *Practica musicae*; pp. 185-188, on Venus and the Children of Venus; and p. 304, on Baccio Baldini's depiction of the *Seven Planets* of 1460, including Venus. See also, Peter J. Forshaw, "Marsilio Ficino and the Alchemical Art", in *Laus Platonici Philosophi: Marsilio Ficino and His Influence*, Stephen Clucas, Peter J. Forsaw and Varely Rees (Eds.) (2008), pp. 251-71; Thomas Moore, *The Planets Within: The Astrological Psychology of Marsilio Ficino* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1990), pp. 137-147; Marsilio Ficino (Ed.), *The Book of Life*, Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark (1998), pp. 20-22 and pp. 33-36; and *Marsilio Ficino, The Book of Life*, Charles Boer (Trans.) (1980), pp. 64-67.

[47] See also Gwendolyn Trottein, *Les enfants de Venus: Art et Astrologie a la Renaissance* (1993), pp. 90-113, 173-76; and Paolo Galluzzi (Ed.), *Galileo: Images of the Universe from Antiquity to the Telescope* (2009), pp. 185-188, on Venus and the Children of Venus.

making, music making and dancing as illustrated in Baccio Baldini's *Venus and Her Children* of 1464, an engraving from *The Seven Planets,* in the Print Collection of the British Museum in London; Cristoforo de Predis' *Astrological Planets*: *Venus and Her Children* in *De Sphaera* of 1466-75, an illuminated manuscript in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena; and Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari's *Venus and Her Children*, an engraving from *Planetary Gods*, published in Venice 1533.

Earlier in Venice, Franchinus Gaffurius (1451-22), a northern Italian music theorist and composer, emphasized the astral connection with music as seen in the woodcut chart in *Practica musicae* of 1496, published in Venice in 1505.[48] Music is not only a practical art for Gaffurius but also a philosophical discipline connected with the movement of the celestial bodies, a Neoplatonic conceit. For Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), the Renaissance Neoplatonic philosopher, music connected with the realm of Venus and the human person with the divine, "the soul receives the sweetest harmonies and numbers through the ears, and by these echoes is reminded and aroused to the divine music that may be heard by the more subtle and penetrating sense of mind".[49] In *De amore* (*Sopra Lo Amore* or *On Love*), Ficino introduced the duality in the universe: nature versus celestial, physical versus metaphysical, and human versus divine.[50] This dualism is appropriate in the realm of Venus, hence creating two types of Venus, earthly or human and celestial or divine. The heavenly or celestial Venus is born from the heavens through the castration of Uranus, while the earthly Venus is formed from the union of Jupiter and Juno. The celestial Venus resides in the Neoplatonic Cosmic Mind or Intellect. In this heavenly realm she imparts spiritual beauty and divine love or sacred love (*amor divinus*). The Earthly Venus, in contrast, partakes of the World-Soul or the human world where she imparts natural beauty and human love or profane love (*amor humanus*).[51] Ficino's two Venuses create as well a *paragone* (comparison) between the divine and natural realms.[52]

The Milanese physician, mathematician, and music theorist Gerolamo Cardano (1501-76) applied Ficino's dualities to music in noting, "Music celebrates moral virtues…since emotions and music consists of gentle virtues…corresponding to [human] actions, and of divine virtues relating to the intellect".[53] In *Istitutioni Harmoniche* (Venice 1573), Zarlino, under Ficinian influence, postulated like Cardano the formation of two types of realms, *musica mundana*, which unites the principles of harmony in the macrocosm or the celestial sphere, and *musica humana*, which connects harmony to the microcosm or the human sphere, thus creating a

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[48] See *Practica Musicae by Franchinus Gaffurius*, Clement A. Miller (Ed.) (1968), and Irwin Young (Trans. & Ed.) (1969), *The Practica musicae of Franchinus Garffurius*.

[49] See D. P. Walker (2000), *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella*, pp. 3-29, for a discussion on Ficino and Music; also see *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, Members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science (Trans. & Ed.) (1975), 5 Vols., I, p. 45.

[50] See Marsilio Ficino (2003), *De Amore: Sopra lo amore ovvero Convito di Platone*, ed. Giuseppe Rensi, p. 101: "Siano dunque due Veneri nella anima la prima celeste, la seconda vulgare: ambe due abbino lo Amore: la celeste abbia lo amore a cogitare la divina Bellezza: la vulgare abbia lo Amore a generare la bellezza medesima nella materia del Mondo" ("There are two Venus in the soul the first is celestial, the second is earthly: both contain Love: the celestial [Venus] embraces Love in cogitating on divine Beauty: the earthly [Venus] expresses love in creating Beauty in the natural forms in the World"). See also Chastel, *Marsile Ficin et L'Art*, pp. 121-128, for a discussion of the two Ficinian Venuses and sacred and profane love.

[51] See also Moore, *The Planets Within*, p. 140.

[52] See Mendelsohn, *Paragoni: Benedetto Varchi Due Lezzioni and Cinquecento Art Theory*, pp. 109-142, and Heinrich F. Plett (2004), *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture*, pp. 297-364, for a discussion on the origin of the concept of the *paragone* in Italian Renaissance art, commencing with the writings of Leonardo da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting*, where he emphasizes the superiority of painting over sculpture. See also, *Paragone: A conception of the Arts by Leonardo da Vinci*, Irma A. Richter (Trans. & Ed.,) (1949), Introduction.

[53] See Hieronymus Cardanus, *Writings on Music*, Clement A. Miller (Trans. & Ed.,) (1937), pp. 105, 213, and Comensoli, "Music, *The Book of the Courtier*", pp. 100, 102, no. 12.

cosmos where the *natura spirituale* (soul) and the *natura coporeale* (body) form a *concordia harmonica* (harmony of the spheres).[54] This musical utopia was also revealed in the mythographic iconography of Vincenzo Cartari's celestial cosmos, the *Imagini delli Dei degli'Antichi*, published in Venice in 1557.

In the Prague court, Rudolph II (1552-12), the patron of Tintoretto, encouraged the study of occult sciences and hosted the renowned astronomers Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) and Tommaso Rangone,[55] and alchemists John Dee (1527-1608) and Edward Kelley (1555-97). Tintoretto, in the *Female Concert*, revealed a realm of Venus, connecting music with the sphere of Venus, creating a *harmonia mundi* (harmony of the spheres) with beauty and love, visualizing the planetary interests of the Rudolph II, which are also shown in his cabinet of curiosities (*kunstkammer*).[56]

Conclusion

In the *Female Concert*, Tintoretto represented an aspect of Zarlino's harmony of the spheres, a celestial (*natura spirituale*) and terrestrial (*natural corporeale*) realm of Venus, where her planetary influence leads Aurora's morning brilliant star[57] and her physical beauty guides the female muses to arouse love with the sound of their music. There are also two contrasting Venuses in Tintoretto's painting. On the left of the painting, the muse wrapped in a red cloak and holding the viola da gamba is the only female wearing pearl earrings and whose pudendum is covered with a transparent veil (see Figure 12), covering her nature for modesty as she turns toward the viewer.[58] She is the only muse who does not need a musical score to play her instrument, her inspiration is divine; hence she may allude to the Neoplatonic Celestial Venus or *natura spirituale*. Opposite to her, a voluptuous female, her back facing to the viewer, adorned with golden bracelets and gemstones and guided in her musical performance, may personify Earthly Venus or *natura corporeale*. In the dominion of Venus, the muses compose music to endow the "children of Venus" and those born under her sign with physical beauty and spiritual love. In Venus' sphere, the celestial and earthly realms are created by the symphony of sounds and experienced by the pleasure of the senses are in perfect harmony (*concordia harmonica*); "this metaphor of love is the noblest in keeping with Neoplatonic ideals".[59]

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[54] See Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella*, p. 28.

[55] See Tom Nichols (1999), *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, pp. 135-138, regarding Tintoretto's patrons, in particular, Rudolph II, and Tommaso Rangone, a physician and astrologer in the court of the Holy Roman Empire, pp. 136-147. On Pietro Aretino owning Tintoretto's painting *Contest of Apollo and Marsyas* in his Palazzo Bollani on the Gran Canal in Venice, p. 138.

[56] See Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (Autumn 1978), "Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The Kunstkammer as a Form of Representation", *Art Journal*, 38(1), 22-28; R. J. W. Evans (1984), *Rudolf II and his world: A study in intellectual history, 1576–1612*, (2nd ed.); and Peter Marshal (2006), *The Magic Circle of Rudolf II: Alchemy and Astrology in Renaissance Prague*.

[57] Aurora is considered the morning start and Lucifer (Light Ringer) is an appellation for Venus; see from http://www.thaliatook.com/OGOD/aurora.html.

[58] See Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism*, p. 365.

[59] See Alberto Ausoni (2005), *Music in Art*, p. 30.

Figure 12. Cheney's suggested composition of the initials *M(usic)* and *V(enice)* or *M(arietta)* in Tintoretto, *Female Concert.*

Reflecting on the axial design of diagonals and vertical lines in composition, and the relationship between the muses and the musical instruments, leads to several further observations. The initial letters "M" and "V" are formed in the composition of the painting; "M" probably alluding to the muses and their musical compositions[60] and "V" referring to Venus and *venustas*, beauty.

The placement of the lira da braccio on the ground and between the muses—one is facing the viewer while displaying the viola da gamba, and the other muse is Venus, who presents her back to viewer while holding the cithara—emphasizes a *paragone*, a sovereignty of string instruments over wind instruments. There is also an allusion to the contrast between profane and divine music. The partially clothed muse resting on the viola da gamba, while touching with one of her toes the bow resting next the lira da braccio, performs profane music, while the goddess Venus, who holds a cithara, plays divine music.

In addition, the placement of the lira da braccio suggests an association between the lifeless and living realms of music and nature. Although the lira da braccio with its curved shape is a lifeless object, it resembles in its form the natural body of the muses. Its sound will not be perceived until it is played by one of the muses. In contrast, the muses, with their beautiful bodies, will not only elicit visual arousal but will also, with their ability to play the musical instruments, awaken the soul of the individual.

Thus, it is not by accident that the composition is designed with an "M" for music and a "V" for Venus; Tintoretto's *Female Concert* is a conceit of music and love, a realm of Venus, where beautiful muses compose musical love songs.

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[60] Perhaps the initial "M" also refers to the name of his daughter Marietta, who was a musician and a painter. In observing the physiognomy of the muses, it is easy to see an idealized resemblance to Marietta's face.

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Nwomu: Hand-Made Embroidery Technique in Asanteland

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The study sought to investigate the historical background of the traditional hand-made embroidery technique, the production process, and its changing trends amongst the Asantes of Ghana. Interview and observation were used in collecting the needed data at selected craft centres in the Kwabre East District, Ejisu-Juaben municipality, Kumasi sub-metro and metropolitan in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The study employed both descriptive and experimental research methods based on the qualitative research approach. It was revealed that Kente and Adinkra enjoy wide reputation and therefore are considered as prestigious clothes. However, Nwomu cloth does not have this fame, only indigenes understand its usage and the philosophy behind its production. In view of this, it is recommended that the elders who are endowed with this unique craft must open their doors to the youth to learn the craft.

Keywords: Nwomu cloth, hand-made, embroidery, Asantes, satin stitch

Introduction

Asante, as an ethnic group, has various decorative styles and techniques of enhancing their textile products. One of such decorative styles is the traditional hand-made embroidery commonly known as *Nwomu*. Nwomu is characterized by vertical stripes of coloured yarns stitched in sections along the lengthwise direction of the cloth done basically in a plain Kente cloth which enhances its aesthetic appeal. Nwomu as decorative embroidery technique employs the use of varied satin stitch used to complement the beauty of Adinkra cloth—a stamped cloth that was originally done with natural dyes extracted from the bark of *Badie* tree (Awuyah, 2012). Adinkra cloth was originally produced for the royal Asantehene and his sub-chiefs. The most elaborate designs of the cloths were purposely for the Asantehene. Adinkra cloth is used during funerals and other festive occasions with the prior aim of bidding farewell to a beloved one (Ofori-Ansa, n.d.). Today, other fabric types can also be hand embroidered with the Nwomu technique without printing the Adinkra symbols or designs in them. This fabric is known as *Nwomuntama* (Nwomu cloth).

Historical accounts revealed that the art of Nwomu amongst the Asantes was practiced by the indigenes long before the emergence of the Adinkra cloth (Awuyah, 2012). The prestigious clothes found among the Asantes are Kente and Adinkra. People travel far and near to observe the craft and its accessories and even purchase pieces as souvenirs. *Nwomuntama* on the other hand does not have much reputation. Only indigenes know and understand its usage and philosophy. Nwomu is an Akan language which literally means "piercing through something". Nwomu involves sewing with needle as a means of joining two pieces of fabrics in a

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decorative style, and creating interesting designs in a fabric or at the selvedge. Nwomu cloth has been used and worn by various prominent people in Ghana since time immemorial but its exact origin is unknown. Many have learnt this craft at various craft centres in the Ashanti Region without knowing much about its evolution and history.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to delve into this awesome craft to investigate the historical background of the traditional hand-made embroidery technique. It is also aimed at identifying and describing how this traditional hand embroidery is executed, what tools, materials, and changing trends it has undergone through the ages.

Research Questions

What is the historical background of the traditional hand embroidery technique?
How is the traditional hand-made embroidery executed, and what are the changing trends?
Can any other decorative artefacts be made with this hand-made embroidery technique?

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was mixed method—using the descriptive research tool under qualitative approach, and design-based research. The descriptive method was used to provide accurate description of tools, materials, and processes involved in the production of the Nwomu cloth. This helped in the narration of relevant information on the historical background of the craft and the changing trends. Interview was restricted to experts endowed in Nwomu cloth design.

Data Collection Instruments

The study made use of interview and observation as the main data collection instruments. According to Leedy and Ormod (2005) in qualitative studies there is the need to acquire data from varied sources for the purpose of triangulation. The unstructured face-to-face interview with the respondents was recorded on audio-tape. In observing the respondents both participant and non-participant observations were used by the researchers.

Population

The population for the study was selected purposively from the following townships: Ntonso, Bonwire, Ahinsan, Ashtown (Manhyia Palace) and Centre for National Culture (Traditional Weaving Section), and Bantama-Kumasi all of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The target groups were the traditional weavers, machine embroiders, sellers of Nwomu cloths, curators at museums and galleries, chiefs, elders, historians of Nwomu cloth (Adinkra cloth). They were further grouped into three categories:

Category 1: Weavers, experts and specialists in the Nwomu craft;

Category 2: Sellers and curators at Nwomu shops, museums and galleries;

Category 3: Users of Nwomu cloth (chiefs, elders and general public who are endowed with the necessary knowledge on the Nwomu craft).

Sample and Sampling Technique

Frankel and Wallen (1996) define sample as a group in a research study on which information is obtained. The purposive sampling method was used to select the appropriate respondents from the main population for

the study. This method of data collection was appropriate because there was a predestined group in mind. The individuals whom the researchers considered to have in-depth knowledge and other resources useful to the research were contacted. Thus, the sample size was determined. In all, hundred (100) individuals were identified but the researchers, however, obtained access to only 40 who were consequently interviewed.

Data Collection Procedure

Interview. This is an oral presentation of obtaining information from respondents. Frankel and Wallen (1996) define interview as the careful asking of relevant question(s) pertaining to a particular problem. The respondents gave vivid description in narrating the needed information while the researchers had the opportunity to clarify issues and statements made by the respondents. The table below indicates the categories of respondents who were interviewed (see Table 1).

Table 1

Categories of Respondents Interviewed

Respondents number percentage (%)		
Category 1: Weavers, experts and specialist of Nwomu craft	17	42.5
Category 2: Sellers and curators at Nwomu shops, museums and galleries	9	22.5
Category 3: Users of Nwomu cloth (Chiefs, elders and general public)	14	35
Total	40	100

Observation. The researchers witnessed series of activities done by the weavers and embroiders at the traditional weaving section of the Centre for National Culture, Kumasi. Bonwire and Ntonso were also involved in the production of Nwomu cloths. Both participant and non-participant observations were used by the researchers. Apart from the interviews and observations, taking of pictures and recording of data were employed to get first-hand information from the respondents.

Data Analysis Plan

Data collected by the researchers during the interview and observation were analyzed based on the purpose of the study.

Results and Discussion

The discussion of the results has been presented sequentially in addressing the research questions and grouped to reflect the topical issues identified in the study.

History and Origin of Nwomu

It is believed that Nwomu was practiced by the indigenes long before the emergence of Adinkra in the 17th century. It is said that, after the Asantes defeated Nana Kofi Adinkra and the people of Gyaman in 1818, they brought along their weavers and craftsmen to Kumasi (Ghana) to be slaves to Asante King, Nana Bonsu-Panyin (Willis, 1998; as cited in Essel & Opoku-Mensah, 2014). These craftsmen started to design some of their clothes and other articles for the Asante King and his royals at Ahinsan. These artworks and designs included Nana Kofi Adinkra's symbols. In investigating some historical aspect of Ghana's ethnic art, Essel and Opoku-Mensah (2014, p. 32) conclude that "symbol creation, fabric construction and decoration techniques such as adinkra printing is, perhaps, an enculturated Egyptian experience refined and practiced in Ghana and possibly not a nineteenth century art". Adding to that Anene and Brown (1968) say the major ethnic groups in Ghana had settled by the 10th century. This helps in establishing that they migrated with the craft to present day Ghana.

Adinkra clothes made for the chiefs and the royals, with time began to fade so the craftsmen thought of reviving the cloth. They dyed and stamped the Adinkra symbols again into the cloth. But this time the cloth would not look like the previous ones. They cut into pieces and joined them with Nwomu style. This revived cloth was used for attending funeral. Conventional colours the early embroiders started with were black, red, and white. Consequently, the early designs woven employed black and white, red and black with dominant background colours of black or red respectively; hence the names Kobene (Red) and Kuntunkuni (black). Large and small pieces of Adinkra clothes were joined by knots or stitched with cotton thread and needle. This was in existence until one weaver called Appau, son of Gyamanhene brought from Ahinsan used dyed colourful cotton wool to make the first Nwomu cloth known as *Asanteman*. The *Asanteman* is a replica of the Kente cloth known as *Oyokoman*. It has the same colour combination pattern of yellow, green, and black. Again, it has the same philosophy and usage because it was used by the royals which include the Oyoko clan.

The pioneer weavers obtained strands from plant fibres which were processed for weaving. There were no colourful threads in the olden days. One of the commonly used plant fibres was cotton which was processed, dyed in different colours and spun into yarns. Three men who were acclaimed the first Adinkra and Nwomu makers in Ntonso were elders Kwaku Nsia, Pinkyehen and Kwadwo Appiah. They made the dye in small vats in which they dipped carved Adinkra motifs fashioned from cocoyam and cassava to stamp the cloth. Kwadwo Anane, who died five decades ago, was the first calabash stamp carver in Ntonso. Originally, the cloth to be used for printing was hand woven with hand-spun thread woven on a Kente-style loom. At first, the cloth was dyed with mud. Kuntunkuni (Black) and Kobene (Red) natural dyes were introduced later.

Tools, Materials and Equipment

The following are some of the tools and materials that are used by the weavers: assorted yarns, set of needles, skeiner or winder, stretching poles, trimming knife, pair of scissors, tensioning cords (nhyetire/Tabono), fabric, tape measure, sewing or embroidery machine.

Types of Existing Nwomu Designs

Basically, Nwomu designs are categorized into two main groups: Kukrubuo (the linear design) and Kawo (the centipede or intricate design). The most common Kukrubuo designs today are *Asanteman*, *Sikafutro*, *Aburo ne Nkatie*, *Hausa Nkyerew*, *Black and White* (see Figures 1 and 12), *Otumfuo*, *Nwotua*, *and Dwenimmen.* These are characterized by vertical running stitching with variations in yarn combinations and arrangements (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Black and white.

Kawo on the other hand are vertical stitching techniques with irregular or serrated edges. Some are also characterized by shapes which may look like Kente patterns or stairs. These alternating irregular edges symbolize the legs of a centipede or millipede hence the name Kawo (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Kawo style in Kente pattern.

Naming Nwomu Design

Names are very symbolic and significant in every Ghanaian community. Easy identification and description can be made of a person or product when there is a specific name given to him or it. In naming clothes produced with the Nwomu technique, the colour(s) of yarns, the design and strip combinations, the background colour of the fabric, and the Adinkra motif designs that characterized the cloth are considered.

Production of Nwomu Cloth

There are three main processes or procedures involved in the production of Nwomu cloth. The following are the stages the researchers observed during an execution of different kinds of Nwomu cloth: Yarn Preparation, Fabric Preparation, and Weaving Process.

Yarn Preparation

Conversion of yarns from cones into hanks. Yarns on cones are unwound from the skeiner. They are then removed from the skeiner and cut into pieces of about 50 cm long and converted into hanks (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Mechanical skeiner used to convert yarns into hanks.

Knotting the yarns. The next process is the knotting of yarns. This involves plying individual yarns of four at the extreme end of the yarns. This is done to avoid entangling and wastage of yarns (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Knotting the yarns.

Fabric Preparation

Preparation of fabric for weaving. The fabric to be stitched is measured and cut into pieces preferably 18 inches wide and 108 inches long with scissors. Two pieces of the cut out fabric are picked and folded inward about 2 cm and temporarily sewn together at extreme ends (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. A weaver cutting a fabric.

Preparation of "Nhyetire". The purpose of the Nhyetire (holder) is to secure and hold the fabric firmly when stitching. The Nhyetire also maintains the tension in the fabric at all times. A piece of bamboo stick is placed in the fabrics to be used and sewn together. This is to strengthen the Nhyetire and prevent it from moving easily (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Preparation of Nhyetire.

Fixing the "Nhyetire" to the strip to be stitched. This process includes the attachment of the "Nhyetire" to the strip to be woven which had already been tied together by the weaver. This is done by aligning the right sides of the strips and the holder together. Both ends of the folded strips are secured and stitched to the Nhyetire using the stem stitching technique (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Fixing the Nhyetire to the fabric.

Tensioning and aligning folds on the strip. The fabric or strip to be woven is tensioned and tied to the poles or to a hook (see Figure 8). The next step is the preparation of the strip for stitching. This is done by first securing, aligning, and tacking the folds with needles (see Figure 9). Several needles are used to secure the folds together.
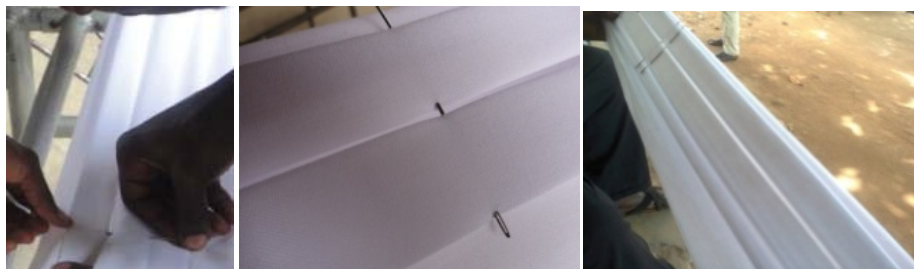

Figure 8. Nhyetire tied to a hook.

Figure 9. Folds secured with needles.

Weaving Process

Threading the needle. When using ply yarns, it is difficult to pass the end of the yarns through the eye of the needle. This is because the yarns are plied in fours and difficult to thread it through the eye of a needle since the eye of the needle is too small. In order to achieve a successful threading process, use corresponding needle size and type.

Actual stitching process (Nwomu stitching). The length of the fabric is measured to ascertain the number of design repeats that will fit into the length of the strip. If there are images or shapes in the design, it is first drawn (or traced) onto the fabric before stitching. There are many stitching styles that can be used in embroidery today but with this indigenous hand embroidery, running stitches is used. The embroidery is done by piercing the threaded needle through the fabric exactly at the edge of the folds, that is, where the folded end comes into contact with the surface of the strip beneath the folds. The needle is then pulled out through the opening where the other ends of the folded edges meet (this can be seen as an imaginary line between the folded ends as in Figure 10). The threaded needle is finally pierced through the opposite side where the folding of the other strip ends, and then reversed to its original stitching end. This process is continued in similar fashion until the thread on the needle is exhausted. This technique is repeated until the entire length of the strip is completed. A schematic drawing of the stitching process (that is, the use of vertical cross stitch) is shown at Figure 10 and Figure 11 (Awuyah, 2012). Figure 12 gives a realistic view of the how the sewing appears on the fabric.
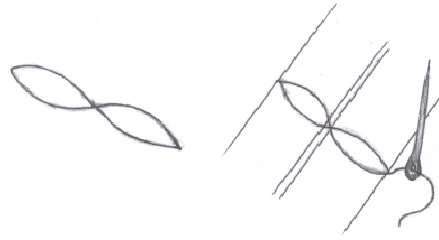
Figure 10. Cross section of the stitching process.
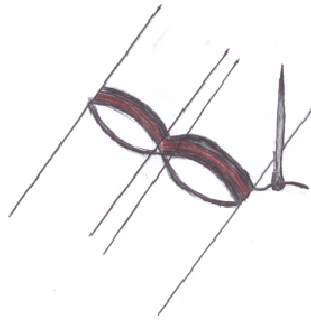
Figure 11. Schematic arrangement of the yarns when stitching.

Figure 12. A weaver weaving the Black and White.

After stitching, the embroidered strip was then separated from the holders with the help of the trimming knife. This process was applied to all the strips. If the fabric to be woven is meant for a relatively bigger cloth, five pairs of woven strips are used.

Sewing the end of strips together. The individual strips are joined together by stitching, and folded at the ends where they accommodated the Nhyetire. To cover the ends of the cloth and avoid fraying of the fabric, it is sewn with the help of a sewing machine.

Changing Trends of Nwomu in the Modern 21st Century

Nwomu stitching technique has welcomed the emergence of appliqué and embroidery combinations, whereby the electric machine or equipment is used to create intricate designs unto the Nwomu cloth (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Appliqué embroideries by an electric machine.

Heat transfer technique and computerised equipment for superb printing as a way of designing to add a good visual appeal to fabrics has also influenced Nwomu designs. Computers have added another twist into the stitching technique making the process easier for mass production of embroidered designs. The computerized machine has brought another technique of cloth designing known as Obama (see Figure 14). During President Obama's visit to Ghana, a special Nwomu cloth design composed of a combination of appliquéd embroidery and *Ntaremu* was presented to him as a gift, hence, the name of the cloth design, Obama.

Figure 14. Obama.

Another changing trend is the advent of *Ntaremu* technique (see Figure 15). *Ntaremu* is a modern way of incorporating the unique Nwomu technique in the form of woven Kente strip into a cloth. With this technique, the fabric is marked out into sections depending upon its size and the *ntaremu* design fixed between these sections with the help of hand needles. Using the *ntaremu* technique makes it easier to work with fabrics originally made with plastic or *metallic* ornamentations which may pose problem in piercing them with hand needle; and seals the opened gaps associated with lacy fabrics. Besides, *ntaremu* required the use of less time and energy in its production in comparison to *nwomu*. It is also less costly.

Figure 15. Ntaremu cloth.

In addition to the techniques of joining the strips, is the creation of sophisticated *Kawo* designs. These designs are hand woven with Kente patterns (see Figure 16), Adinkra symbols (see Figure 17), totems or brass symbols (see Figure 18) and even alphabets or names of organizations and institutions (see Figures 19 and 20).

Figure 16. Kente pattern.

Figure 17. Adinkra symbols.

Figure 18. Kotoko (Porcupine).

Figure 19. KNUST.

Figure 20. C.N.C.

Researchers have manufactured Nwomu machine or equipment with galvanized pipes (see Figure 21) which has rollers to accommodate woven fabrics. They were motivated to do this when they observed that the traditional stretching poles have no rollers. Fabrics woven on the poles by the weavers are placed on a mat, dirtying the cloth in the event. This Nwomu machine differs from the traditional ones and even works better.

Figure 21. Nwomu machine.

Using the Kukrubuo Techniques to Manufacture Decorative Artefacts

The traditional weavers have conservative thoughts and misconceptions that apart from the designs being used for cloth production and the product worn as men or women's cloth, the Kukrubuo technique could not be used for any other decorative article or artefact. This compelled the researchers to investigate and experiment to find out if some of the Kukrubuo designs could be used to make decorative artefacts such as pillowcases, chair backs, arm rests, and wall hangings. These artefacts are meant to decorate living rooms and offices. The ideas were based on the previous knowledge of the techniques and uses of Nwomu designs and the results was that these designs could be used for other decorative artefacts such as chair backs and pillowcases (see Figure 22).
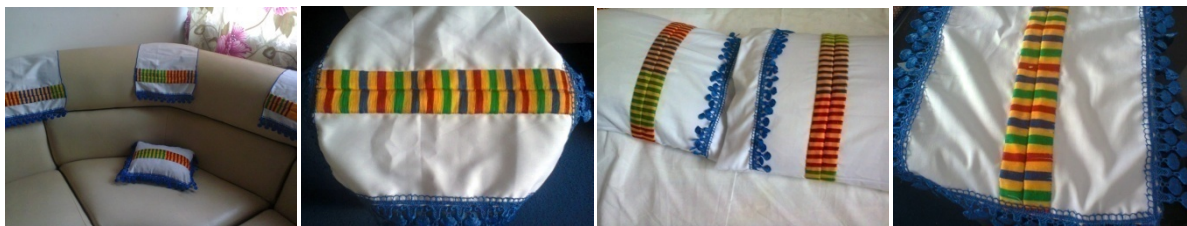
Figure 22. Decorative artefacts made for rooms.

Conclusion

Though Nwomu predates Adinkra fabric production in Asanteland, many people including the weavers in the craft have little or no knowledge of its origin. Historical accounts revealed that the art of Nwomu amongst the Asantes was practiced by the indigenes long before the emergence of the Adinkra cloth. It became prominent with the introduction of Adinkra cloth some centuries ago. The most prestigious clothes found among the Asantes are Kente and Adinkra. People travel far and near to observe the crafts and their accessories and even purchase pieces of these unique clothes. Nwomu on the other hand does not have much fame. Its usage and philosophy seemed to be limited to the indigenes.

There are types of Nwomu designs namely *kukrubuo* and *kawo*. Kukrubuo designs are characterized by vertical running stitching with variations in yarn combinations and arrangements. *Kawo* on the other hand are vertical stitching techniques with irregular or serrated edges. Some are also characterized by shapes which mimic Kente patterns or stairs-like designs. These alternating irregular edges symbolize the legs of a centipede or millipede hence the name *Kawo*. It has evolved and adapted modern embroidery equipment that intensifies creation of intricate designs and making the craft less laborious. Hitherto the study, the Nwomu embroiderers at

the craft centres had not exploited with using the technique to produce other decorative artefact such as pillowcases and chair backs apart from its conventional usage in moderately large pieces of clothes worn for occasions. The researchers attempted to produce chair backs and pillowcases using the Nwomu technique which proved useful. The study has exposed the step by step method of producing Nwomu cloth. It recommends automation of the process to increase production.

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New Existentialism: The Literary *inetto* as a Reemerging Prototype in Twenty-First Century Cinema

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The new prototype of the *inetto*, a helpless and impassive character, makes his first appearance near the end of the nineteenth century in Italian literature, continues to gain strength and status throughout the twentieth-century artistic climate (through the existentialist philosophy of Sartre and Camus) and reemerges in contemporary cinema. The present study examines whether there is a gradual exacerbation or overcoming of this psychological disorder across the centuries in the novels and films investigated. Specifically, I offer a comparative analysis of Svevo's character Emilio Brentani in *Senilitá* (1898) and Giuseppe Piccioni's Guido in *Giulia non esce la sera* (*Giulia Does Not Date at Night*) (2009). This study will also draw unusual parallels between Schopenhauer, Svevo's existentialist philosophy and contemporary cinema.

Keywords: inetto, malaise, impotence, existentialism, philosophy, (anti)hero

Introduction

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century literary characters in many Italian novels offered a significant break from their self-assertive and positivist literary predecessors. Their personalities weakened exponentially and their certainties progressively crumbled under the social and historical epochal events, especially the WWI and the communist and fascist revolutions. This same prototype of character reemerged in several twentieth century French existentialists' works and it made a final appearance in twentieth first century Italian cinema, which generated more than a century-long *trait d'union* between genres and disciplines.

The Trajectory of the Existentialist *inetto*: The Anti-hero

Many late nineteenth and early twentieth century Italian novels welcome the appearance of a fairly new stereotype in the array of literary characters. This new prototype reveals two very distinctive features: a deep and dramatic ineptitude and *malaise*. Notables among the many literary examples include Alfonso Nitti in Svevo's *Una Vita* (1892), Mattia Pascal in Pirandello's *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (1904), Emilio Brentani in Svevo's *Senilitá* (1898), and Zeno Cosini in Svevo's *La Coscienza di Zeno* (1923).[1] Most of these characters are unable to deal with distressful and traumatic events since they are tormented by a psychological condition of anguish and helplessness. When a traumatic event occurs, the characters normally have two methods for coping with tragedy. In one approach, they fall into neurosis and psychological distress causing their own collapse. In the

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[1] Many other twentieth century Italian novels present characters affected by the same disease of ineptitude such as in Antonio Borgese's *Rubé*, Federico Tozzi's *Con gli occhi chiusi*, Alberto Moravia's *Gli indifferenti*, just to mention a few.

second, they adopt an attitude of complete estrangement and indifference towards reality, incarnating the prototype of *inetto*.[2] Curiously and anachronistically, the second approach will be theorized a few years later by the novels of two existentialists: Jean Paul Sartre's *Nausea* (1938) and Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (1942).

Through a postmodern and philosophical lens, enlightened by the writings of Schopenhauer, Leake and Docherty, this essay traces how the existential literary milieu (1) spread at the beginning of the twentieth century; (2) was theorized by Sartre and Camus in the middle of the century; and (3) resurfaced a century later in Italian contemporary cinema. Several contemporary movie directors, such as Francesca Comencini, Emanuele Crialese, Daniele Lucchetti, Nanni Moretti, Paolo Muccino, Ferzan Ozpetek, Paolo Sorrentino, and Paolo Virzí, portray characters that share the same psychological disorder as their literary ancestors. Some of their common traits include nausea, triggered by exclusion from society and life in general; inclination to "pensiero debole" (weak thought), which causes the weakening of the self, theory elaborated by Vattimo.[3] They also include nihilism, annihilation of the emotions, feelings of worthlessness, and powerlessness with thoughts of suicide. The aim of this discussion is to establish whether there is an exacerbation or an overcoming of this psychological disorder across the centuries in the literary novels and films investigated. Specifically, it will focus on a comparative analysis of Svevo's Emilio Brentani and Giuseppe Piccioni's Guido to show whether and to what extent there is an overcoming of the literary psychological *malaise* or a regression towards a more tormented individual. It will also dwell on how the themes of Italo Svevo's novels anticipated early twentieth-century French existentialism and resurfaced in twenty-first century Italian film, creating a long *trait d'union* between different artistic media and a new revamped model of existentialist *inetto*: the (anti)hero.

Sartre's *Nausea*: The Nothingness of Existence

At the core of existentialist theory lies Sartre's claim that "existence precedes essence" (2007, p. 19), which means that a personality is not built over a previously designed model predetermined by nature (as ancient metaphysics maintained) or a precise purpose laid down by religious tradition.[4] As Sartre puts it in his *Existentialism is a Humanism*: "man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards" (2007, p. 30). The idea that "existence precedes essence" is that, for human beings, there is no predefined pattern that they must fit into. Each life defines what individuals truly are, not any idealized set of characteristics.

Sartre's *Nausea* theorizes this new existentialist approach through the main character, Antoine Roquentin. Antoine suffers from a very ingrained psychological *malaise*, ineptitude, and powerlessness that will later infect Camus' characters as well. The novel claims to be a collection of sparse notes written in the form of a diary by Roquentin, and put together by an editor who found them. Roquentin feels that something has changed in the

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[2] This article uses the Italian word "inetto" as a noun representing ineptness, lack of will, and powerlessness.

[3] Vattimo's philosophy of "weak thought" involves a withdrawal from metaphysics by asserting hermeneutical nihilism. This requires that the foundational certainties of modernity with its emphasis on objective truth founded in a rational unitary subject be relinquished for a more multifaceted conception closer to that of the arts. The philosopher from Turin is convinced that the contemporaneous philosophy, following Nietzsche and nihilism, presents itself as thought without foundations, as reflection that is not anchored anymore on the solid bases of metaphysics and on the Cartesian certainty. The period of the systems and of the strong ideologies has set this as the epoch of weak structures. Reason is not central anymore; it is as if it had lost its power, entering into a dark zone and taking on the form of a nebulous silhouette, just as if it had eclipsed. The pilaster of "pensiero debole" (weak taught) is built on the idea that man interprets the world within linguistics horizons, not fixed but historical. "Pensiero debole" (weak taught), in a few words, means that the foundational concept of philosophy has consumed itself, the ultimate foundations, the incontrovertible principles, the clear and distinct ideas, the absolute values, the primary evidence, and the ineluctable laws of history have dissolved.

[4] The maxim "existence precedes essence" coined by Sartre subsequently became the axiom for the existentialist movement.

way he sees objects, but he cannot clearly understand his malady. He hopes that a diary will help him better process his thoughts specifically in an effort to see, classify, and determine the extent and nature of the change. However, this writing exercise does not help him work through his anxiety, and he only realizes an increasing feeling of disgust of the outside world because ultimately it cannot be known or understood. In writing the diary, he begins to address the major themes of existentialism: anxiety, suffering, fear of freedom, and self-deception. As he observes the world and realizes that there is no real essence or meaning to the objects, he concludes that everything disgusts him, which increases his sense of nausea towards everything and everyone. He progressively proves to himself that life is senselessness and begins to realize the nothingness of existence. It is important to remember that Sartre's "nothingness" can also be considered a form of existence; therefore, the paradox represents another reason for Roquentin's nausea. Nevertheless, Sartre believed that awareness of the "nothingness" behind existence inevitably leads individuals to exploit their freedom. As a matter of fact, rather than suffer indefinitely, Roquentin uses his recognition of the absurdity of existence to reestablish his identity: "the *I* surges into the consciousness, it is *I, Antoine Roquentin*" (Sartre & Alexander, 1964, p. 85). Roquentin decides to write a novel and, though he doesn't think it will make him unaware of his own existence, he hopes that writing it will help him make sense of who he *was*. Eventually, he feels confident that he can survive his nausea by ignoring anxiety, living a life of action, and embracing responsibility. As Sartre wrote, "Life begins on the other side of despair" (Sartre & Alexander, 1964, p. 133), which means that in order to start a true life, it is necessary to overcome the anguish of existence.

Albert Camus' *The Stranger*: The Philosophy of the Absurd

Just a few years later, Albert Camus published *The Stranger*. In this novel, the Algerian writer posits his philosophy of the absurd and humanity's futile attempt to find rational order where none exists. The main character Meursault believes that the world is purposeless and feels no grief for life's tragic events, a sentiment that is epitomized by the lack of emotion he expresses at his mother's death. While he is completely unmoved by the emotional, social, and interpersonal content of situations, he is far from indifferent when it comes to the realm of the physical and practical, as in Roquentin. Camus' philosophy of the absurd characterizes the world and human existence as having no rational purpose or meaning. According to his philosophy, the universe is indifferent to human struggles, and Meursault's apathetic personality embodies this philosophy emphasizing the futility of man's inevitable attempts to find order and meaning in life. The "absurd" refers to the feeling man experiences when he tries to find or fabricate order in an irrational universe. During the story Meursault kills a man, yet there is no logical reason for his action. He does not try to justify his act because he comes to the conclusion that there is no way out of prison and there is no way out of life that inevitably and purposelessly ends in death. Meursault's lack of concern about his death sentence implies that his trial and conviction were pointless exercises. In his heightened state of consciousness prior to his execution, he says that he has come to recognize the "gentle indifference of the world" (Camus & Ward, 1989, p. 122). Meursault decides that, like him, the world does not pass judgment, nor does it rationally order or control the events of human existence.

Camus' novel proves that the condition of total estrangement and schism between action and immobility becomes the mental disorder affecting (post) modernity, whereby the individual moves with no direction after having satisfied his primary needs and becomes disinterested in finding reasons to feel alive. The modern individual, according to existentialist philosophy, does not know how to deal with freedom and gets

overwhelmed by all the possibilities and choices life offers.[5] Thus, the individual decides to give up freedom and chooses to face a life of ineptitude. Very soon, s/he realizes that s/he is trapped in this existential desperate dimension, which spirals him/her down to a dark and depressive place or even to suicide.[6]

However, preceding Sartre and Camus' twentieth-century existentialist claims, Italo Svevo and Alberto Moravia in Italy wrote various *ante litteram* existential novels, in which their main characters greatly recall the dysfunctions and absurdity of those of Sartre and Camus. The connection between Satre/Camus and Svevo/Moravia is clear: ineptitude is perceived as a direct result of an existential *malaise* that assails the characters and seems to be too strenuous to overcome. It is important to emphasize that for some of the aforementioned writers, the indifference is not a stoic form of wisdom towards life,[7] but a form of self-degradation affecting individuals who, resigned and defeated, renounce fighting for their lives. The new concept of indifference entails moral inertia[8], existential passivity, alienation, and superficiality that the bourgeois society uses as a shield to cope with existential questions and urges.

Italo Svevo's *Senilitá*: A Lacanian Split Subject

In Svevo's 1898 *Senilitá*, the main character Emilio Brentani is a subject split between the longing for love and pleasure and the regret for not having enjoyed them. He is a Lacanian subject in that his self is divided between his conscious part (the ego, the awareness of unhappiness) and his unconscious (his inner and unspoken pleasure-seeking id).[9] In his *The Lacanian Subject* (1995), Fink explains that "the subject is split in between the conscious and the unconscious, between an ineluctably false sense of self and the automatic functioning of language (the signifying chain) in the unconscious" (1995, p. 45). According to Fink's interpretation of Lacan, "the being's two parts share no common ground: they are radically separated (the ego or false being requiring a refusal of unconscious thoughts, unconscious thoughts having no concern whatsoever for the ego's fine opinion of itself)" (1995, p. 45). Emilio incarnates the alienated Lacanian subject, in continuous confrontation with the Other's desire. As Fink insists:

> If alienation consists in the subject's causation by the Other's desire which preceded his or her birth, by some desire not of the subject's own making, separation consists in the attempt by the alienated subject to come to grips with that Other's desire as it manifests itself in the subject's world. (1995, p. 50)

Emilio views separation from the Other (his lover Angiolina, her sister Amalia, his friend Balli) as the only possible way to accept and come to terms with his alienated self. However, he will never get out of his psychological *impasse* and he will end up desperate and alone. He is not capable of handling his inner struggle and his romantic life; his indecision and moral inertia lead him to close himself off in his memories, in a state of spiritual senility (as the title of the novel evokes). In other words, Svevo's senility foreshadows the distressed

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[5] In *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre claims: "Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. It is up to you to give [life] a meaning" (Sartre & Kulka, 2007, p. 24).

[6] Ultimately, Meursault's fate is a self-induced suicide since he favors the death sentence on him.

[7] For Epicurus, the most pleasant life is one where we abstain from unnecessary desires and achieve an inner tranquility or freedom from all worry (*ataraxia*) by being content with simple things, and by choosing the pleasure of philosophical conversation with friends. The stoics claimed that *ataraxia* is a virtue with witch philosophers manage to control irrational passions and impulses. In Roman times, Seneca claims that *ataraxia* coincides with the concept of aplomb (from the Latin *Tranquillitate*), and it is the only attitude that helps individuals to attain happiness.

[8] Carolina Sartorio explains in her essay published in 2008 that moral inertia is "moral pressure to fail to intervene in certain circumstances" (2008, p. 117).

[9] On this topic, see Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*. New York: Norton, 1977, p. 288.

condition affecting Sartre and Camus' existential characters.

Svevo's other characters are associated by the same sense of helplessness, worthlessness, and powerlessness.[10] A force coming from within themselves overpowers Svevo's inept characters: they are not necessarily crushed by external events, but by an internal disease that spreads within their souls and slowly consumes them. They are impaired by an intrinsic inability to function properly, and they are unable to turn their will and desires into actions. Therefore, they feel excluded from the fight for existence, and prefer the position of contemplators to fighters. They willingly accept the existential condition of ineptitude since they decide not to defend their beliefs and to renounce living. In an attempt to explain the possibility of accepting such a complex psychological stance, it is imperative to recall Schopenhauer's philosophical apparatus that undoubtedly influenced Svevo's *Weltanschauung*.

Arthur Schopenhauer's *noluntas* and Svevo

In *The World as Will and Representation* (1844), Schopenhauer states the supremacy of will ("desire", "striving", "wanting", "effort", and "urging") as the nexus of life and all being. His philosophy holds that all nature, including man, is the expression of an insatiable *will to life* (1958, v. 2, p. 269). It is through will that mankind finds all of their suffering, as the desire for more is what causes this misery. Thus, the awareness of will can have tragic outcomes since human nature has limitless unsatisfied wants and unattainable goals. The only way to avoid suffering is the renunciation of desire and the practice of *noluntas or the negation of will* (1958, v. 2, p. 369). Those who successfully manage to negate this urge are able to eradicate the eternal and unsuccessful quest for truth, happiness, love, and beauty that undeniably would lead them to dissatisfaction, failure, and further suffering (1958, v. 1, p. 193). Aesthetic pleasure results from being a spectator of the "world as representation" (mental image or idea) without any experience of "the world as will" (need, craving, urge) (1958, v. 1, p. 4).

It is likely that Schopenhauer's argument likely influenced Svevo's idea of the *inetto*, a character who decides to give up his will and his actions in order to enact his detachment from reality, protecting him/herself from the pain of living with awareness. However, the schopenhaurian *noluntas* cannot include every aspect of one's life, but it can only be applied to shun oneself from corrupting pleasures. According to Svevo, the individual should avoid giving in to negative vital instincts because they lead to fixed and conventional living schemas and eventually to death, anticipating Camus' Meursault.

Emilio Brentani incarnates Schopenhauer's theory of negation of will since he decides to give up his love for Angiolina (the only source of his happiness) when he realizes that he would have to fight for her love in order to have her. He does not care and does not have enough moral strength to assert his will; therefore, he decides to forsake his romance and continues on with his miserable life. However, Emilio's decision ultimately challenges and invalidates the German philosopher's claim of salvation through renunciation since Emilio finds more pain and suffering in his decision to deny his will. Emilio is a man torn between his longing for love and his ineptitude, and he is incapable of enjoying either.

Following the same path as his predecessor Alfonso Nitti in *Una vita*,[11] Emilio personifies the prototype

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[10] Alfonso Nitti in Svevo's first novel *Una Vita* feels inadequate and incapable of living with other people. His sense of helplessness culminates in the final suicide. Zeno Cosini in Sveno's last novel *Zeno's Conscience* is a man without qualities and fails to be able to assert his life and take important decisions.

[11] Alfonso Nitti is the protagonist of Svevo's first novel, Una Vita, published in 1892.

of the *inetto*, as he is incapable of living life to its fullest because he is trapped in his dreams and illusions, in a perpetual and unaware self-deceit. They are both vanquished by an unwelcoming reality. But, whereas Alfonso commits suicide, putting an end to his sense of uselessness and unsuitableness, Emilio shows even more ineptitude by his incapability of carrying out this ultimate gesture of (lack of) will. Conversely, his sister Amalia shares a similar fate with Alfonso because she decides to end her life by injecting ether after realizing that she cannot cope with the anguish caused by the loss of the man she loves.

Svevo himself explained Emilio's senility in his 1927 preface to the novel. Just like Sartre's nausea, senility is a mental condition that triggers the protagonists' ineptitude and impairs them from engaging with life and reality. It also leads them to be absorbed even more with their inner being. This obsessive insistence with self-analysis reflects the form and syntax of the novel. In effect, Svevo structures his narrative following the meandering of Emilio's conscience and psychology by freely recounting his feelings and opinions, similar to Joyce's stream-of-consciousness style. The space-time continuum of the novel is not crucial; rather, the internal motives and the reactions to the events become the pivotal feature of this (post) modern novel.[12] Due to his obsession with self-analysis, Emilio loses everything and everyone in his life. His lover, Angiolina, leaves him after she grows tired of his jealous attacks. His sister, Amalia, commits suicide when she cannot cope with a romantic setback with Stefano Balli, and she simultaneously feels abandoned by her brother Emilio, who seems to be paying more attention to his tumultuous love affair than to her. At the end of the novel, Emilio is left alone, desperate and hopeless, sadly trapped in his state of senility and ineptitude.

The conclusion of Svevo's novel confutes Schopenhauer's assertion that negation of will generates a positive resolution to overcome the senselessness of existence. After he feels he is getting too attached to Angiolina, Emilio tries to leave her in an attempt to suppress his will. He also indirectly neglects his sister Amalia (suppressing his affection to her) when he falls in love with Angiolina because he realizes that his attachment to his sister was getting too morbid and incestuous. However, the several attempts to negate his will fail and his life ends up being more miserable and intolerable than at the beginning of the novel. Emilio's turbulent experience demonstrates that Schopenhauer's theory is rather utopic and unrealizable. It is impossible to convince oneself to negate will and live happily ever after according to Emilio/Svevo. Everyone confronts struggle, and in the face of it one cannot simply take sides; rather, as Lacan's split subject shows, one must cope with both will and apathy. Thus, Emilio's fate foresees Sartre and Camus' philosophical characters Roquentin and Meursault since they are all bonded by the same nihilistic view of life and existence manifested through abhorrence, disgust, and resignation.

Giuseppe Piccioni's *Giulia non esce la sera*: Postmodern Pessimism

This harsh and sudden awareness of a utopic happiness and inner helplessness finds its way in many cinematic characters throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries Italian cinema. These include roles such as Guido in Fellini's *8 ½* (1963), Giuliana in Antonioni's *Red Desert* (1964), Michele Apicella in many of Moretti's films, Titta Di Girolamo in Sorrentino's *The Consequences of Love* (2004), and Jep Gambardella in Sorrentino's *The Great Beauty* (2013).[13] Similar psychological existential nuances are also found in Guido

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[12] *Senilitá* paves the way to the new narratology in *Zeno's Conscience* where the narrator and the main character coincides, giving the readers the internal and not objective point of view. The plot of the novel does not follow a traditional chronological order but a psychological sequence of facts ordered by the conscience and memory of the main character.

[13] This list of *inetti* does not include characters in the Neorealist films, whose desperation was triggered by external devastation at the aftermath of the Second World War.

Montani, the main character of Giuseppe Piccioni's *Giulia non esce la sera*.

In order to better elucidate the psychological contour affecting these cinematic characters, it is necessary to refer to Thomas Docherty's postmodern theory of pessimism elaborated in his *Postmodernist Theory: Lyotard, Baudrillard and Others* (1994). Docherty affirms:

> The pessimism of the postmodern lies in the realization that the future will not redeem the present; that the material world may be thoroughly resistant to consciousness and to our determination to master it by signification; that history, in short, does not exist *for* the Subject. (1994, p. 500)

If history does not exist for the subject as a linear entity, and there is no essence in existence, as Sartre maintains, the individual loses all spatial and temporal points of reference. This loss of direction makes it difficult to assert one's will because the individual feels disoriented and does not possess hope for the future. Schopenhauer's negation of will becomes strictly interconnected with pessimism, nihilism, impotence, and the awareness of the impracticality of a personal catharsis and an ultimate final redemption. Characters become aware of the unlikelihood of a final atonement because they have lost the ultimate reference point (the proverbial Lacanian transcendental signifier), opening a massive vortex of existential possibilities, which could drag them to a senseless dimension.

This is the gloomy milieu that surrounds and influences Giuseppe Piccioni's characters in their choices, verbal exchanges, kinetics and nonverbal communication. Pessimism becomes an invisible entity that acts as a centripetal force that paradoxically draws closer and pushes away the characters, impairing their will and rendering them helpless like marionettes in a puppet show.

In Piccioni's film, the viewer witnesses an opposing game of forces, which creates a kaleidoscope effect. The film unravels through the vicissitudes of two lonely characters, Guido and Giulia, who are deprived of any specifically interesting characteristics. Guido is the stereotypical example of an inept writer who does not even recall why and how he started writing. His writings' imaginary characters, who are exactly like him, also condemn him, as they are airy, lofty, harmless and apparently deprived of any history. Giulia is a convict for having killed her lover in cold blood even after having abandoned her family and her small child for him. Over time, with good behavior, the judge grants her daily leave from prison to work as a swimming instructor, where she first meets Guido as her student. Despite their many differences, they share the same outlook on life: they are spectators of their existence. They passively see their existence flow by without getting too involved in it, as if they were swimming beneath the surface of their life using the metaphor of the water omnipresent in this film. The water simultaneously isolates them and protects them from coming into contact with and communicating with the rest of the world. This system of thought combines Schopenhauer's philosophy with Pirandello's ontology.[14] In fact, the characters seem to avoid getting too involved in their existence for fear of being hurt by reality, following the concept of *noluntas*.[15] Therefore, they negate their will and desires while embracing a mediocre existence. They accomplish this detachment from reality, borrowing the Pirandellian concept of

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[14] Pirandello's ontology is based on his concept of "absurdism" which is an idea or view of philosophical thought of existentialism, of the contrast of humanity living in a world that is and will always be hostile or uncaring and their efforts to find meaning in the world in a meaningless world. In the absurd world, there is no meaning or absolutes; the only absolute is that there is none. The absence of absolutes seems to remove all reason for living. Absurdism is based upon the nature of the absurd and how one should react to if he or she becomes conscious to it.

[15] This existential approach also recalls the estrangement of Camus's Merceault, who realizes that we all have to die eventually, so it does not matter if one gets killed or dies a natural death. The only reasonable position is the detachment from life's passion.

"vedersi vivere",[16] a philosophical and existential theory that confines them to be spectators of their existence. Guido's life is characterized by a series of misjudgments, as his mental inertia and ineptitude prevents him from taking a definite stance on anything. For instance, Guido is not able to leave his wife while he is dating Giulia, he cannot find the strength to move to another house with his family, and he does not manage to continue writing his novel, blaming this arid state on writer's block. Similarly, Giulia's will is impaired; even if she would like to talk to her daughter, she represses her desire for fear of being rejected. Instead of talking to her, Giulia spies on her from a distance without daring to meet her face to face. All of the ill-conceived attempts lead to a deep ineptitude and helplessness that will eventually culminate in Giulia's suicide in her jail cell.

Svevo's Amalia and Piccioni's Giulia both decide to take their own lives after coming into contact with an *inetto* who initially seems to care for them but who ultimately cannot commit to them and abandons them to their ruthless fate. The ineptitude suffered by the male characters is transferred to the women as if it were an infectious disease. The only major difference is that women cannot cope with the castration anxiety fever that assails men; they succumb to it without finding redemption. However, if suicide becomes an extreme gesture of self-assertion and rebellion against an adverse fate, it can further be interpreted as a tool to overcome a paralyzing ineptitude.[17] Their suicides become a symbol of a fearless spirit, which puts an end to their enslavement, reminding us of the suicide of the romantic character Thomas Chatterton, which "became a symbol of a fearless spirit that triumphed over death and was somehow conceived as a victory of the individual against adversity" (Friend, n.d., p. 125).

Elizabeth Leake, in her *After Words: Suicide and Authorship in Twentieth Century Italy* (2011), examines the suicides of several Italian writers who ended their lives at the beginning of the twentieth century. She pays particular attention to Guido Morselli, Giuseppe Rensi, Cesare Pavese, Gianni Vattimo, Primo Levi. Leake theorizes that these writers' acts of suicide represent attempts to become the authors of their own death. The suicide is therefore perceived as an extreme gesture that expresses the writers' wills to control and write the moments of their lives until the last instant: "The authoring of one's own death," Leake points out, "will be key to conceptualizing the ways suicide acts as a form of writing and rewriting" (2011, p. 10). However, the author refers to the aforementioned writers' suicides as a hermeneutic tool to (re)analyze their entire opus. Therefore, the voluntary act of suicide reimagines and redirects the interpretation of their work. The writers reify ultimate control over their lives through suicide, which becomes a calculated and rationalized decision that has effects that are imposed and controlled *post-mortem*. Therefore, their suicide becomes a literary statement: life is their work of art on which they have full control and can be manipulated at their will.

Conversely, Giulia's suicide is a more desperate and pragmatic gesture that aims to terminate the anguish and suffering of her life. Since it expresses a renouncement of fighting, her suicide can be interpreted as a consequence of her ineptitude, conceived as final capitulation.

The recurring theme of ineptitude in the film does not only impose itself as a philosophical and psychological leitmotif, but it also becomes visibly tangible through the presence of several signifiers: (1) Guido's nearly empty house, which stands for the emptiness following the departure of his wife and daughter; (2) the recurring scene of the white curtains lifted by the wind, which symbolizes a possible change that never

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[16] The concept of "vedersi vivere" can be translated as "watch one's life from outside".

[17] This type of suicide recalls the Stoics' view of it. The Stoics accepted that suicide was permissible for the wise person in circumstances that might prevent them from living a virtuous life. Plutarch held that accepting life under tyranny would have compromised Cato's self-consistency (*constantia*) as a Stoic and impaired his freedom to make the honorable moral choices. Suicide could be justified if one fell victim to severe pain or disease, but otherwise suicide would usually be seen as a rejection of one's social duty.

occurs; (3) the several scenes at the swimming pool which denote a search for protection and a regression to the amniotic fluid of the womb. Moreover, the long cinematic scenes at the swimming pool emphasize the paradox of a human activity that leads nowhere, i.e., swimmers going back and forth in an enclosed pool without actually travelling anywhere. The pool further symbolizes the absurdity of their lives where every effort is meaningless and uselessness.

Giuseppe Piccioni and Italo Svevo: The *inetti*'s Meaningless Lives and Impotence

Although Piccioni and Svevo belong to different times and use different artistic means, they offer the same individual prototype of the *inetto*. Their protagonists are disabled by the same psychological *malaise* affecting Sartre and Camus' characters. The *inetti* are not capable of living and acting like the rest of humanity because they are more aware of the meaninglessness of life. Accordingly, they react to their helplessness by finding refuge in the alibi of an alleged intellectual superiority (in an aristocratic isolation) or dreaming of a life filled with glamorous actions and exceptional gestures (as with Guido).

Among the points in common between the cinematographic and the literary inept characters, one such quality is their inability to approach the women they love. Logically, their internal uselessness makes them incapable of having authentic feelings towards others because of their lack of self-esteem; thus, they continue making mistakes and showing poor judgment when facing romantic issues. For example, Emilio in Svevo's *Senilitá* neglects his responsibilities since he convinces himself that he needs to sacrifice other obligations for Angelina's well being. Similarly, Guido in Piccioni's film continues to date Giulia without committing to her, giving her poor advice and eventually and unwillingly causing her to commit suicide. Therefore, their preexisting *malaise* impairs their will and prevents them from acting in a proper and judicious way.

Another common characteristic between Emilio and Giulio is their inability to fight when facing crises, confrontations and crucial circumstances, which serve as a direct repercussion of their disease. In accordance with Pirandello's thinking, Svevo maintains that mental illness affects people with fixed certainties in which they ground their existence and cannot analyze themselves with criticism because they think that life is ruled by unchanging laws.[18] Therefore, it is extremely difficult to differentiate between the two psychological conditions of sanity and disease in a climate of universal *malaise*, imbued with Einstein's theory of relativism which becomes the *humus* and cultural environment of both nineteenth and twenty-first century aesthetics.[19] Consequently, this sense of helplessness viewed as a psychological illness inevitably leads to physical death and suicide, and may be perceived as the ultimate solution to an unsustainable mental oppression and agony. However, the very decision of ending one's life by some of Svevo's and Piccioni's characters once again dismantles Schopenhauer's theory of *noluntas* since according to the German philosopher, the answer to overcome the pain of existence is not found in suicide (which is still an affirmation of the individuals' will) but in the liberation from the *will of living* (*voluntas*). Broadly, in Schopenhauer's view, suicide is the ultimate personal failure when conceived as an extreme refuge and escape from the world (2010, p. 12). It is in this sense that the twentieth-century literary and cinematic successors of the German thinker embody a progressive decline in individual strength and an increase in psychological fragmentation, which will lead to a severe psychological collapse and a crumbling of meaning and certainties.

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[18] Pirandello also believed that life is a constant flux, and whoever tries to fix it in a form becomes insane.

[19] Einstein's theory of relativism is transposed in literature with Pirandello's concept of "relativismo gnoseologico", which states that nothing can be fully known since our knowledge is limited by its endless possibilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparison between Schopenhauer's philosophy, Svevo's novel and Piccioni's film proves a progressive regression of individual's personal and psychological strengths and sanities. This new prototype of the *inetto* as a helpless and impotent character first makes an appearance at the end of nineteenth-century literature, continues to gain strength and status throughout the twentieth-century artistic milieu (through the existentialist philosophy of Sartre and Camus) and reemerges in contemporary cinema. However, while the nineteenth-century literary characters represent an attempt to react to and escape the condition of *malaise* called ineptitude[20] (although, for the majority of the time, the attempts result in failure) and are still mindful of Schopenhauer's lesson of *noluntas*, the twenty-first century cinematic descendants remain stuck in mental disorder and adopt drastic measures to cope with this impotence. In fact, Guido in Piccioni's film shows an ontological weakness, which spoils his will of power and traps him in an irreversible mental state of helplessness. Moreover, we can also infer that this twenty-first century character is more dangerous than his forerunners because he infects those around him, and uncontrollably spreads his contagious existential *malaise*. The last scene of the film is emblematic of this theory since it shows Guido and his daughter Costanza standing by themselves at an empty banquet, just after learning that he has lost a prestigious literary prize for his latest book. During the speech of the award-winning writer, Guido and his daughter start selfishly taking food from a buffet table and begin eating right off the serving plates without consideration of the other guests who have not yet retrieved their food. Metaphorically, Guido is contaminating other people and spreading his disease of ineptitude through his surroundings after his final and definitive failure. Thus, Guido's *malaise* is even more acute and severe than that of his predecessors due to the fact that he inherits the weight of the twentieth-century crisis of consciousness and ontological fragmentation, which exacerbates his illness and sends him spiraling down to an irrecoverable capitulation. One wonders what the future of the *inetto* will be both in literature and film.

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[20] Among the many examples, we can mention Zeno Cosini in *La Coscienza di Zeno* and Mattia Pascal in *Il Fu Mattia Pascal.*

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Animation of Chinese Characters:
Evolution of Shapes and Styles*

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Hanzi (Chinese characters) has a long history and affluent contents. To promote the popularity of historical and cultural knowledge of Chinese characters, an online program has been launched by Beihang University and Beijing Normal University to explain Chinese characters' original meanings and evolution processes with vivid and expressive animation videos. Currently, More than 1,000 videos can be accessed through the website "http://www.chinesecharacter.org/". Besides these online resources, a human-computer interaction system is also proposed to simulate clerical changes of Chinese characters through computer morphing technology. What we want is to make the teaching and learning of Chinese characters more reasonable, more easily understandable and more interesting.

Keywords: animation, evolution of Chinese characters, original meaning, clerical change

Introduction

Since 2013, a multidisciplinary research project named "Digital Technologies and Systems to Visualize Evolution of Chinese Characters" has been jointly developed by "State Key Laboratory of Virtual Reality Technology and Systems" at Beihang University and "Research Institute of Chinese Characters and Chinese Information Processing" at Beijing Normal University. This paper is one fruit of the big project. The first section gives a brief background. The second section introduces an online program to explain Chinese characters' original meanings and evolution using computer animation technology. The third section proposes a teaching system to simulate clerical changes of Chinese characters through computer morphing technology. And the final section makes a prospect to the research in future.

Background

Hanzi (Chinese writing) is well known as the representative of ideographic system. That means each Chinese character was formed according to a word's meaning, which is called the character's original meaning. Hanzi is also known as the oldest writing system still in daily use. The earliest confirmed evidence of the Chinese script yet discovered is the body of inscriptions on oracle bones from the Shang Dynasty (1600 B.C.-1100 B.C.). During the long course of development, the shapes and styles of Chinese characters had

undergone great changes, which can be divided into five main stages: oracle bone inscription, bronze inscription, small seal script, clerical script and regular script. Figure 1 shows these five stages in the evolution process of Chinese character "友", which means "friendship" in English.
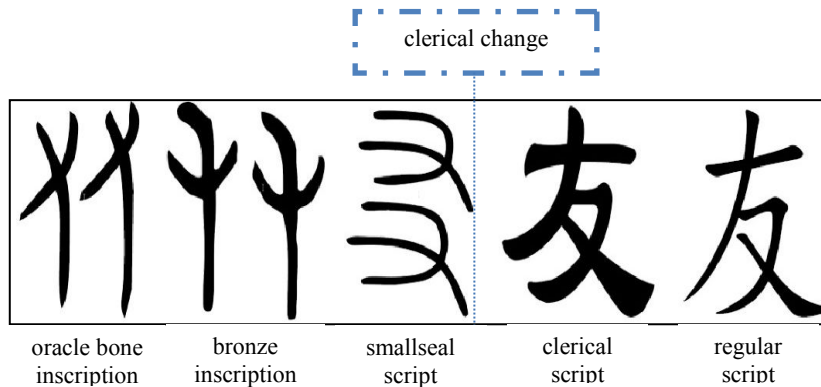

Figure 1. The evolution process of "友".

The greatest variation, as seen in Figure 1, occurred between small seal script and clerical script, which is called clerical change. Those scripts before the clerical change are classified into ancient scripts, while those ones after the clerical change are classified into modern scripts. The clerical change is so significant that people today, without tutoring, can hardly recognize ancient scripts or understand why a Chinese character was formed like that.

Usually, a traditional method to teach a Chinese character original meaning and its evolution process is to list this character's typical shapes in different stages as the character"友" shown in Figure 1. The teacher would tell students that " 牪 " is the oracle bone inscription of "友". It is composed of two" 彐 " which looks like as well as means "right hand". Therefore,"友" means "friendship" clearly by means of "hand in hand". However, there are still two questions for the teacher to answer: first, the similarity between " 彐 "and "right hand"; and second, how the seal script" 彐 " becomes the clerical script " 友 ". Sometimes, a still image can be used to answer the first question. Figure 2 is an illustration (LI, 1992) of the similarity between to " 彐 " and the side outline of a human's right hand.
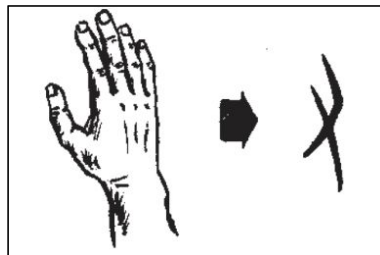
Figure 2. The similarity between "right hand" and " 彐 ".

The second question would be more difficult to answer, because the change process is dynamic. An alternative way for the teacher is to write down different scripts of"友" on the blackboard with colored chalk to show the correspondence between strokes by means of the same color (or number) as Figure 3 shows. Luckily, it is today, thanks to modern multimedia and virtual technology, possible to show the process vividly.
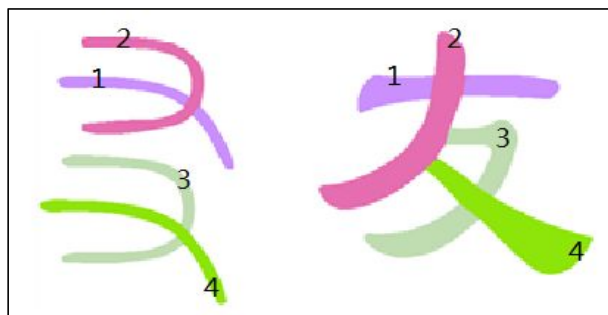
Figure 3. The correspondent strokes of "友" between its small seal script and clerical script.

Animation of Chinese Character Evolution

Since 2013, a multidisciplinary research project named "Digital Technologies and Systems to Visualize Evolution of Chinese Characters" has been jointly developed by "State Key Laboratory of Virtual Reality Technology and Systems" at Beihang University and "Research Institute of Chinese Characters and Chinese Information Processing" at Beijing Normal University. This project has three primary tasks: (1) to design and construct a marked system of Chinese character information resources; (2) to develop digital technologies and tools for the construction of the above system; (3) to design and develop kinds of software to teach Chinese characters based on the above two works.

"Animation of Chinese Character Evolution" is one application of this big project. It has an online program,[1] as shown in Figure 4, aimed to explain Chinese characters' original meanings and evolution processes vividly by using computer animation technology. The online program so far has more than 1,000 animation videos of Chinese characters and the number is continuously increasing.

Figure 4. The home page of online "Chinese Character Evolution" program.

Figure 5 is a screenshot of the animated evolution process of Chinese character "马" which means "horse" in English. The evolution process is divided into five main stages: oracle bone inscription, bronze inscription,

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[1] See from http://www.chinesecharacter.org/.

small seal script, clerical script and regular script. And simplified Chinese characters, like "马", have six stages.
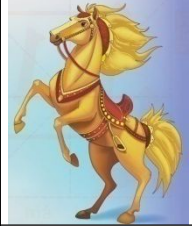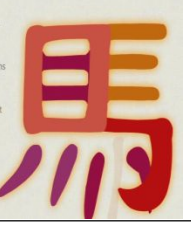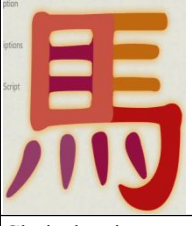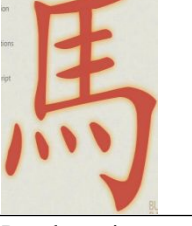
Figure 5. A screenshot of the animated evolution process of "马".

Each animation video started with an illustration of the character's original meaning. The video of "马", for example, starts with the image of a horse with soaring spirit. It makes audiences get to know that the oracle bone inscription " 馬 " was actually formed according to the outline of a war horse and how the oracle bone inscription " 馬 " evolved to the modern form step by step as shown in Table 1. Although the whole process is continuous and dynamic, it's only possible to present some screenshots of critical points on paper.

Table 1

Screenshots of Critical Points in the Video of "马" to Show Its Animated Evolution Process

A war horse	Outline of the horse	Transition form	Transition form	Oracle bone inscription
Transition form	Bronze inscription	Transition form	Small seal script	Transition form
Clerical script	Regular script	Simplified character		

A Morphing System to Simulate Clerical Change

The animation video can give audiences a direct and interesting impression of each Chinese character's original meaning and evolution process. However, clerical change, the variation between seal script and clerical script, is complicated as well as critical. It is the bridge to communicate ancient scripts and modern scripts, while, it can hardly be mastered only through browsing videos. Therefore, a morphing system is proposed to simulate clerical change for teaching and studying (YUE, LIANG, HU, & GUO, 2012).

Based on "Structure Theory of Chinese Characters", Chinese characters are made up of components and components are constituted by strokes, as shown in Figure 6. As a result, the clerical change of a Chinese character can be analyzed by the change of strokes.
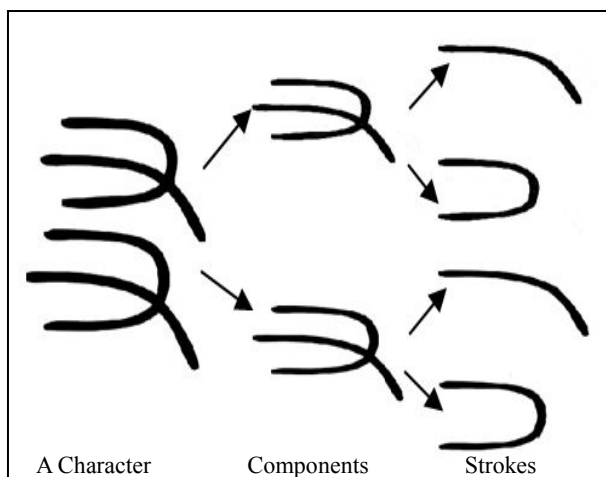
Figure 6. The structure of small seal script "友".

The morphing system provides an interface for users to define the corresponding relationship of strokes between small seal script and clerical script of a same character. As shown in Figure 7, when the user inputs a Chinese character, the system will present both of its small seal script and clerical script forms, and then extract their strokes. The user can use the toolbar to mark strokes with different colors, and the two strokes with the same color of both scripts are corresponding to each other.
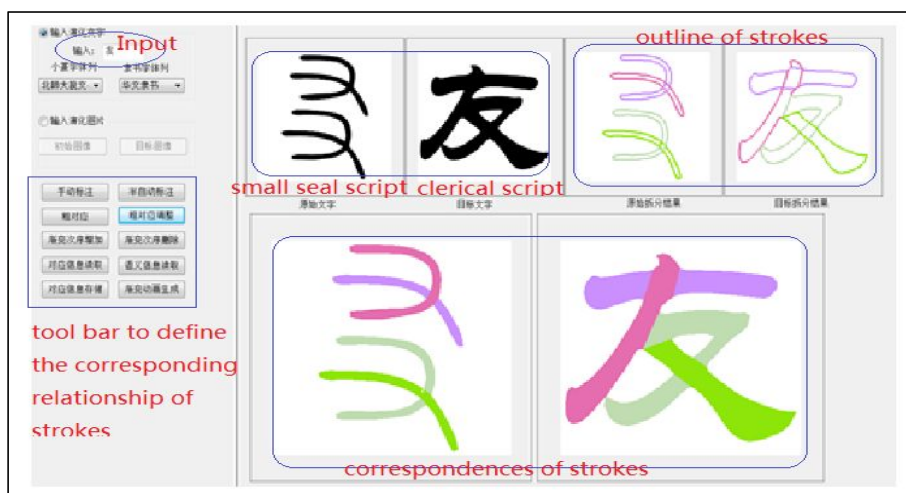
Figure 7. The user interface of the teaching system.

Based on the correspondence between strokes of different scripts, a morphing process can be generated automatically by computer algorithms, as seen in Figure 8.

small seal script   clerical script
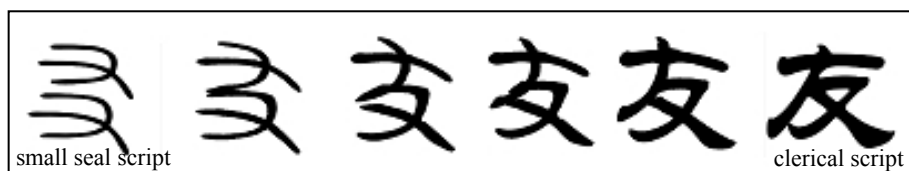
Figure 8. The morphing process of clerical change of "友".

The corresponding relationships can be saved for further use. Therefore, teachers can use the morphing system to illustrate typical clerical changes on classes again and again. And students can use it to practice on more Chinese characters which can then be examined and corrected by teachers.

Future: Learning Characters in Groups

Hanzi is a system. The elements of the system are not characters but character components which bring certain meanings when they are used to compose characters. A character composed of only one component, i.e., the character itself, is called non-composite character, like "木" which means "tree" in English. A character composed of two or more components is called composite character, like "林" which means "forest" in English. It is natural to use the non-composite character to understand those composite characters. Our future work is to organize animation videos of separate Chinese characters into networks with selected non-composite characters as cores, as Figure 9 shows, which can reflect the principles of Chinese characters' structures.
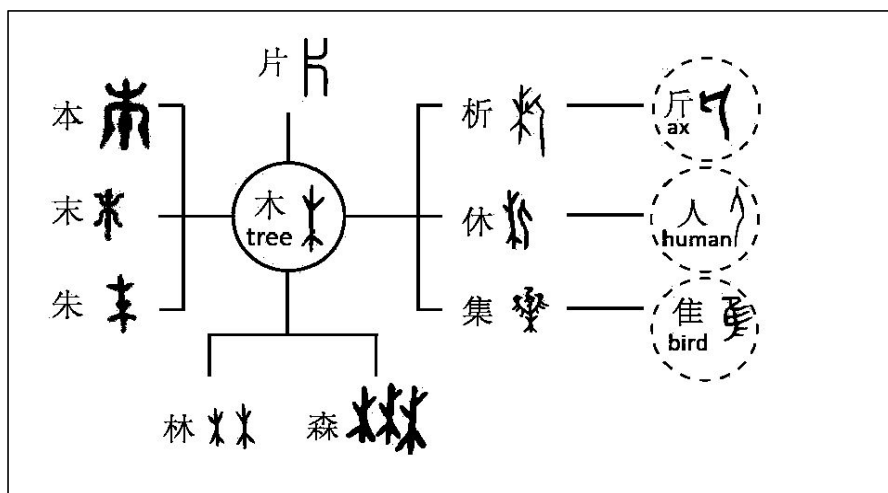
Figure 9. Part of the group of Chinese characters composed by the core character "木".

Conclusion

As a multidisciplinary project, "Digital Technologies and Systems to Visualize Evolution of Chinese Characters" requires the usage of various computer technologies and abundant knowledge of Chinese characters and culture. What is the most important is how to select the appropriate technology according to different kinds of Chinese characters' knowledge to make the learning more expressive and interesting. This is a long-term integration process which needs scholars of different academic backgrounds trying hard to understand each other on the basis of their own knowledge structure.

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The "Competent Literary" Teacher:
The New Perspectives of Initial Teacher Training

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The aim of the paper is to describe the literary competence of teachers as a dimension of the knowledge for the teaching, which can be extended to all aspects of the professional teacher transformation. Among the various knowledge, competences, and dispositions the shape its legacy, the literary competence becomes the main turning point between pedagogical knowledge and specialized knowledge, between core and characterizing disciplines. The literary competence lives in the intersection between different kinds of competence (linguistic competence, communication competence, reading competence, writing competences, interpretive competence, discursive competence, cultural competence, cross-cultural competence, pragmatic and strategic competence and social competence). The approach offers a framework for pedagogy of the literary competence in the teacher training as substantial experience and expertise able to increase the professional repertoire of teachers in training fields. This paper provides food for thought for enrichment and enhancement of the literary competence and its use in teaching.

Keywords: literary competence, higher education, initial teacher training, teaching-learning processes

Introduction

The literary competence has become over the time a key term in the discourse of literary education, even if its meaning is not clear yet. If literary education often appears as a generic expression, even more generic is literary competence. In Italy several scholars have been engaged in studying said aspects as demonstrated by the recent conference organized by the didactic section of Associazione degli italianisti (Association of Italianists) held on 13th March 2013 at Università di Padova (University of Padua) and the related debate started before (Tonelli, 2013), even if the first literary researcher that underlined its importance was Coenen (1992), who tried to define and systematize such a competence by considering the competent literary reader as someone able to talk and communicate literature, as well as master roles and rules of literary discourse and knowledge. Nevertheless, the expression "literary competence" is known as coming from the literary theories of Culler (1975) and Schmidt (1982), who used it by analogy to Noam Chomsky's (1965) linguistic competence and in various meanings in the different countries in relation to purposes of teaching literature (Soetaert, 1992; Soetaert & Mottart, 2003). At the end of the eighties, in programmatic documents and in

professional magazines for teaching literature, the meaning of "literary competence" seems to fall into the fog after its frequent use in a wide range of contexts ending up to make the term unusable and unintelligible (Ibsch, Schram, & Steen, 1991). Coenen (1992) thinks that this represents a reason to better define the teaching of literature that cannot be confused with that of "programme of literature". De Groot and Di Medendorp (1986) introduced the "concept of semantic analysis" that induced them to define the literarily competent reader able to communicate "with and on" literature and at least able to build the coherence of a text, although the content of communication may hugely vary. This entails the construction of a coherence aiming at improving the understanding between different literary texts, with reference to the world (the society and the personal world of the author), to the personal opinion on the literary work and that of other readers. The attitude of the literarily competent reader is characterized by a will to invest in reading and to be open-minded in relation to perspectives and reference frameworks (Coenen, 1992, p. 73) that turns into original ways of thinking. Over the last decades, a series of instruments has been developed for texts analysis, that, from philology to structuralism up to semiotics, have assumed an increasing importance in teaching, mainly aiming at developing in the reader the capacity of understanding and interpretation of literary texts in relation to reference contexts ("given" and "located"), temporality and spatiality and, in an advanced phase, capacity of producing them. The acquisition of a literary and critical competence comes from the educational importance for some intrinsic qualities of the literary language and the narrative practices that were matter of interest by scholars of several disciplines, but analysed in depth by researchers of the sector such as Remo Ceserani (2010), defining such a situation "contradictory and almost paradoxical" since if, on the one side, literature and literary criticism have no longer the centrality and prestige enjoyed over the centuries in western schools and culture, on the other side, those dealing with branches of knowledge other than the literary one, in a twist of linguistic and cultural loan words and calques, are more and more interested in narrative practices and language. This as evidence of a form of unexpected and tenacious persistence ranging between the tendency of literature to lose its traditional prestigious position within culture and an increasing interest in literature that sees the emergence of the requirement to equip the readers with an interpretive approach to texts requiring an activity of complicated cultural mediation in order to allow them to interpret carefully and correctly a literary text, understand it in depth by analysing its signified elements, signifiers and the connections between them. Furthermore, the readers while reading the text enter into relation with all of this by using their experiences and ideas, as well as their own interpretive and reflective structure. A form of individual awareness that requires, for reception and elaboration of information, appropriate reading instruments, aiming at the promotion of a literary fruition not exclusively focused on the linguistic education and varieties of languages of the literary language, but also on the capacity to place the texts in their historical context, in cultural and literary history etc. achieving the result to make the readers express a critical opinion (attention to the work in its context of production) and a personal opinion (opinion of the reader on the work) in terms of responsibility and cognitive and interpretative autonomy. The literary mastery, as a combination of intellectual and instrumental skills, attitudes, beliefs etc., allowing to activate processes of reception and production of literary texts of various kinds, as well as activate evaluation, elaboration, production and communication skills, of literature, orchestrating resources and competences (cognitive, affective etc.) necessary to acknowledge the need for literary fruition and to locate, read, evaluate, apply, and create literature in a given cultural and social context, feeds the critical thinking and the interpretation techniques strengthening the interpretive repertoires of individuals and communities. Within the wider and more complex debate around the role of literature (suffice to think to recent initiatives, such as the

Day specifically dedicated to "Letteratura per la scuola, competenze per la vita" (Literary for school, competences for life) of 29th October 2014 organized by the Ministry of Education, Directorate for School Systems, in cooperation with Associazione degli Italianisti—ADI—and 12 universities within the project "CompIta" focused on competences in speaking Italian and its role), the concept of literary competence in terms of analysis of the literary text, that is mainly positioned in Italy during the years of high school, makes hope that the students achieve to possess a corpus of characteristics allowing them to express themselves on particular points of view and kinds of texts, and to make this in a certain particular language, in a specific context, in specific situations; they are factors that shall be assessed through specific, valid, and reliable instruments evaluated according to particular criteria reflecting their performance at a particular level (Coenen 1992, p. 71). These elements offer in this way clues to identify the various levels of such a competence. But the main issue lies in the fact that it is not clear whether or not some of the combinations of these elements correspond to the levels of literary competence. How can we say whether or not upper secondary school students in the interaction with a text have the literary competence and at which level and with which kinds of texts? How can the students during their school experience achieve the literary competence? How do they build their literary knowledge over the time? Which acquisitions should be mastered in order to generate such a competence? Which are the responsibilities (Brumfit & Carter, 1986) that can be attributed to teachers in their role of guide of each student, since the nursery school, towards the development of a literary competence bringing them over the time to pay attention to types of styles, forms, symbolizations? Usually in the primary school the learning of literature is exclusively promoted depending on the language and twine itself inextricably with the latter that is taught with reference to the development of four essential competences (reading, listening, talking, and writing), it is likewise true that it should not be considered a mere instrument to develop such competences. Literature expresses itself through the language and presents itself in its most subtle hues of meaning and ambiguities. From this point of view "language" and "literature" live of mutual support (Bassnett & Grundy, 1993). If we think in terms of competence in literature (identifying information, completing and reflecting, reflecting and evaluating, OECD-PISA, 2009), writing, talking, listening represent concrete examples showing how often in the educational area the objectives of language and literature are often connected and integrated. Hence, if it is true that in the primary school, context where the first education of the reader occurs, the efficient readers are built (Cardarello, 1995; Cardarello, 1997; Cardarello & Chiantera, 1989; Lumbelli, 1988), readers that should master specific skills and strategies allowing them to turn the words on the page of a literary work into literary meanings and master some conventions on how a text should be read and understood, it is likewise true that the literary competence entails a set of competences and sub-competences that the teacher should possess and allow the teacher to improve the writing of teaching and planning of his lessons, as well as create the conditions to ensure his students the full achievement of those skills, attitudes, and independent processes that represent "the conventional precursors of reading and writing", or rather, in particular to:

(1) make know the rules of print, emergent reading, awareness and phonological memory, syntactic awareness, pre-reading and emergent writing, lexicon and reasons why reading (Cisotto, 2006; Cisotto, Gruppo RDL Infanzia, 2009) at a different degree of school and on the basis of an educational continuity;

(2) guide them in facing an appropriate reading in various literary texts (rhetorical figures, such as metaphor, similarity, personification, hyperbole, epithet, apostrophe, oxymoron, metonymy etc.; narrative and poetical expedients such as plot, story, character, point of view, preparation, irony, satire, paradox, assonance, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm etc.; specific characteristics of the text such as topic, style, etc.; literary trends such

as Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Modernism etc.; literary forms such as diary, epigram, heroic poem, lyric, ode, sonnet etc.; literary genres such as novel, tale, poetry etc.);

(3) create the favourable disposition to use "literary skills" to interpret and elaborate texts.

The literary competence appears today as a process of activation of various "discursive forms" that opens a passage through the violent ambivalences characterizing our era and allowing to identify/create deviations, intervals, interstitial spaces within the flows of communication. The practice of the analysis of the text explains at best the literary posture to the extent that focuses the exercise of the competence on what escapes from the same competence (Citton, 2011), but the real problem is the interpretation that represents the main concern of many talking about concepts such as *opening* and *restriction* between text and reader (Citton, 2011), actually ending up to define and limit the essential negotiation between text and reader. Between author and text, the literature of competences chooses to move the spotlights on the reader: the reader that makes use of and learns "with, through and the" literary knowledge. The literary competence benefits the capacity to acknowledge, decode and produce a personal feedback to the text; this entails the assumption and use of a metalanguage and a metalinguistic competence that shall be compared to the whole process of learning and teaching and progressive appropriation of the language that sees the awareness of the language acts as artefact comprising syntactic units (sounds, words and sentences) and semantic structures and creates a connection between linguistic competence and literary competence and of them with those of the similar families. Such an awareness has to do with that "law of comprehensibility" (Lumbelli & Salvadori, 1977) that allows symbolizing and perfecting the thinking and going beyond the text (Genovesi, 1993) and that is often far from what is actually learnt at school, which should in its complete cycle working for building in students higher-order skills too. Nevertheless, it is just a specific literary terminology providing the students with instruments to identify, interpret, and appreciate the value of peculiar characteristics of a literary text and express personal opinions on it, to make familiar and more pragmatic the learning of literature, if they really master appropriately the language. The necessity of a change of perspective in the definition of literary competence and its acquisition methods from the nursery school to the university entails both declension of the prerequisites at various levels and adoption of indicators and parameters aiming at describing their level of final mastery at high school level, which content of its communication ranges and is connoted by a clear will of the reader to invest in reading with an open mind to change and a reflective capacity on what is reading; and this depends on the basics and acquisitions acting as prerequisites with respect to the following cycle and the experiential progress that is implemented during the educational process. It is known that the "pleasure of reading is not a discovery made in adult age" (Livolsi, 1986, p. 51) and that, during the educational path, in order to be able to read, understand and interpret literary texts, several difficulties shall be faced and important "cognitive fords" shall be crossed to realize that process of acquisition allowing to turn the beginner reader into "competent consumer of literary texts", namely, able to understand how the authors use some literary conventions to communicate their intentions and to formulate these communication conventions. The future non-disciplinary teachers, or rather not the future teachers of Italian or foreign literature, but the future teachers of nursery and primary schools, on whom this contribute is focused, shall be aware of all of this.

In the same way as there are rules and principles in the spoken discourse, literature, including as communication means, is framed by expectations and standards forming an important element of communication between teacher and student, between text and reader, which assume a key role in building the capacity to teach. In this sense, the teacher of the nursery and primary schools in the initial education shall be

allowed to understand that the literary knowledge may perform a synergic role in the capacity to help the students, whom they will take care of, to learn essential prerequisites to build the literary competence, by identifying the most appropriate strategies to face the literature of a text and improving in this way the phonological, pragmatic awareness, etc. and how becoming competent readers (Isenberg, 1990) gaining progressively a positive attitude towards the reading of literary texts.

Text and Reader: Learning to Teach With Literature

Teaching strategies to read the literary text in university classes, where the literature teachings are performed, assumes a crucial role in developing a wise literary competence, for the students future teachers are readers called to build meanings as of any genre of text, whether or not literary, which interpretation is set and limited by the same authors (Paran, 1998), their unsuitable knowledge at any level, or rather at different degrees of competence can be attribute to a lack of cultural preparation and a bad mastery of the basic interpretive instruments, since usages of literary texts are tightly connected to sophisticated uses of language, such as the figurative one, which the codes and symbolic repertoires of culture are linked to, or rather components, other alphabets, essential conditions, representations, elements, hence the cultural heritages of individuals and communities they belong to. In this logic, teaching literature in the Degree Programmes of Science of Primary Education represents much more than a way to steer students to understand the importance of literature, but becomes an educational instrument to welcome and interpret the cultural characteristics of a certain community. Domain of educational transversality, literature becomes in this meaning a crucial component of the "profession" of teacher of nursery and primary schools both at the level of self-construction (personal) and at the professional level in a path of construction of meanings that always calls into question vision of oneself and of the world. A literary text is considered, irrespective of its use in a lesson of language or history, an essential support to help every student to circumscribe specific visions of the world, where the role of the teacher of nursery and primary schools is the one to mediate and build an interface between every reader and genre of text examined, to help the student to face the various "textual problems" met in comprehension and to encourage to acquire awareness about classification and cataloguing of information within specific cognitive and interpretive universes.

The teachers may turn to draw the attention from time to time on aspects of different order that may concern texts, for their goal is to put the bases in order that in their future educational path the students can catch both intertextuality (between data and text) and extratextuality (or rather place the text in its historical-cultural context placing the reader between text and knowledge of the readers of the world), elaborate a gradual reduction of a text through various phases of refinement, demonstrating how in this way every element of synthesis allows the logical recovery of information comprised therein. The initial education of teachers of nursery and primary schools should deal with the problem of teaching literature to make learn how to use it in an educational context, namely in a phase where the university teacher may come back to decide to share in class with the future "teacher" the "competence of text". Now, a data analysis can be carried out, as well as provide the students with basic information or concepts that they have not acquired or understood yet etc. allowing the students to become more autonomous readers, and thus more qualified, by elaborating more efficaciously the information provided by the teacher, information that shall still be organized in their "interpretive encyclopaedia", namely in a framework of understanding whereon anchor the new knowledge through imitative, heuristic, or creative strategies. Of course, it is also possible and useful as an occasional and alternative exercise, starting with the presentation of a critical study of a literary work allowing the university students to work backwards from the critic's generalizations to

the specific evidence in the text. This teaches them also how to acquire critical sense and to be bearers of the understanding of meanings. The use of literary competence, combined with that of literature in contexts of university education, makes challenging the behaviour of the university teacher within the educational context of teaching literature, where borders and definitions tend to make fluid also the understanding of other disciplines (such as the example concerning the understanding of a math problem). This is that curricular logic including the approach for competences guiding the acquisition of the linguistic domain towards the development of the literary awareness and action of decoding, based on educational processes and procedures able to make the process of education proactive and significant, making possible the understanding and critical interpretation of complicated texts to make later licit their didactic transposition. Nevertheless, over the time the various interpretations of the concept of "literary competence" have really affected the way to teach and evaluate it (such as the ways to introduce texts and verify if the learners have understood the text, set the interpretation on a merely aesthetic vision of literature, ask questions on action, plot, and characters of the text, read only the summary of a text to understand its plot and so on), in academic contexts, above all when this has concerned the relationship between experts of different sectors and education of teachers (linguists, literati, philologists, pedagogists etc.). This, from time to time, has affected often confused educational readings and proposals, that created problems in the construction of the profile of future teachers, who, in turn, gave place to cultural interventions and proposals in educational contexts that did not always fit with the students' skills, above all those of nursery and primary schools, but also those of lower and upper secondary school, with ill-fated effects on readers and their reason and favourable disposition to read literary texts. The absence of a clear sense and value of literature, along with the aesthetic and creative aspect, emphasized by many parties as the intrinsic value of the literary text, has sometimes promoted, in the learning contexts, fanciful attitudes and free approaches to literature, that instead of encouraging behaviours of literary mastery and use of the language, activating a teaching based on specific and higher-order skills, have ended up to promote behaviours of distance from or refusal of literature. With the promotion of the literary knowledge, hence, the expectations are that the future teachers can acquire solid scientific approaches of methodological area allowing them to provide their future students with the instruments for an individual elaboration, also connected to the request of identity of the reader helping to emphasize over the time the self-awareness for a progressive success in acquiring and understanding the literary and poetical knowledge, that requires favourable disposition to reading and it mostly depends on the self-esteem of the student as a reader. The result of such a point of view is that the attitude towards the literary text shall be built and cultivated as of the texts but also from the capacity to choose texts. This means that the "competent literary" teachers in the continuity of the various school grades should progressively teach to the "students readers" to appreciate not only linearities, mixtures or originality of texts, but also ambiguities of fiction, drama, poetry, tale, novel etc. if we want that the literary competence does not lie only on the effort to extract meanings from a text. The beginner readers are those that sometimes cannot understand metaphorical or symbolic uses of words and so they have no literary competence meant as mastery of roles and standards of the literary discourse. The teachers of the nursery and primary schools shall understand that behind such capacities that will be developed later there is their actions, the basis of an educational, effective, and qualitatively significant action to make possible what would happen elsewhere, at another school level and grade. Without laying the essential foundations in order that all of this occurs, without building the framework whereon the literary competence is based, it will be impossible in teaching-learning contexts to achieve the deepest layers of the text activating affective, cognitive, and positive behaviours of the students towards literature. This means that the literary competence loses its meaning if not

considered in prospect, as a dimension needed to anchor over the time deeply and personally the meanings to the interpretive repertoires of students. In the pedagogical language, the future, competent, literary teachers shall be aware of the existence of symbolic codes to interpret and use them educationally. The literary texts, as polysemic, have at least two interpretive levels, literal or denotative and connotative, metonymic and metaphorical (Jakobson, 1988). Non-sophisticated readers can read texts just by using the literal level, assuming its nominal value (this is tangible above all in narrative with non-mimetic explicit structure, for instance in novels that characterize a travel in an imaginary world), with evident problems in the capacity of teaching. The understanding of symbolic meanings assumes a high degree of competence of codes by the competent literary teacher, able to go beyond the interpretation as such to turn towards other interpretations. In this sense the challenge of the initial education of teachers is that to look at a poetry and literature in class as a place not only for the creation of competences of the sector but also of original competences and knowledge in the learner future teacher, in order that the process of reading literature turns into a significant experience to give place to those processes of symbolization and conversion of the reader's mind, helping to complete the process of construction of symbolic repertoires of culture, essential condition to be able to teach, educationally transpose anything learnt from specific disciplinary sectors concerned (linguistic, literature etc.) and perceive an organization of culture able to make accessible for everyone a heritage that too often tends to be the privilege of few, rather than giving prescriptions and raising barriers to understanding that induce to distance from the text, to those subtle mechanisms of exclusion that pass through culture and teaching (Bourdieu, 1988) and that concerns both teacher and learner. In this direction, Pierre Bourdieu shares with many scholars the belief of the importance of the subjective and objective experience through practices that could have a discursive goal in relation to causes and effects of the structural signification of the human activity (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 18) and the concern for the language either in its constitutive effects or its textual characteristics in both main aspects concerning the study, understanding and construction of written texts and systematized meaning translated into "practice and human action". The literary meaning is a personal experience in the meaning that the future teacher, student being trained, will experience a text in a difference way than another reader, but will share with others some main nucleuses and then will become able to operate on it and transfer it to teaching-learning contexts when will be in class with children. In this way, reading literature becomes educationally a significant experience and a way to learn but also to teach. The university student in the pre-service phase is a "special" reader needing to look at "substance" of literary texts and this entails the necessity to acquire an appropriate use of the educational communication and language functioning entailing an act of reading and an experience of literature and the assumption of a positive attitude to its fruition as well as a centering on its nature. Usually teachers, including in-service teachers, ask to the research to indicate appropriate methods that are viable, or rather directly applicable or operating, and that help to identify practical methods to teach in class; often they are erected in favour of an operating fusion between theory and method to achieve practical purposes concerning the "*making education with texts*", but it is known as no approach is able to explain the complexity of learning to teach literature and to generate appropriate strategies that may solve the problems of teachers in class if the point of view is not changed. In this regard, the way could be the one traced by John Dewey (1916), or rather direct oneself towards any model of teaching that induces the student to *sail over the subtle ice* covering the real problems and overturning the correct method to educate mind, aiming at a "deep" learning for it is the depth with which a problem is perceived to determine the quality of thinking arising from it. In this way, it is pursued an education aiming at building behaviours, styles, conducts, and attitudes, aiming at

making the future teachers of nursery and primary schools responsible to increase their awareness and role of competent literary readers without resorting to absolutizing and unilateral methods that cannot be able to fulfil the requirements of every student that will meet and solve each peculiar difficulty. The professional habitus of the competent literary teacher is connoted by an educational action aiming at building in students a motivated, open and internalized learning aimed at understanding. In its operating dimension, step-by-step, the education of literature offers a quick, theoretical, and methodological approach for teaching allowing the future teachers to move their attention from text to reader to increase the knowledge through literature and expand the "readers' mind" instead of anchoring them to a collection of events, facts, phenomena; an educational process providing for a profitable effort to make the new young literary competent readers to grow within an educational-institutional framework making them active literate citizens. It could be affirmed that such an adaptation is not only possible but also desirable in the light of a university education that, in the literary area, pursues as purpose the development of a future teacher able to activate a teaching aiming at feeding a stable and lasting reason in the students, encouraging their personal participation and helping to create important connections and cross references between learning carried out in and out of the school; the initial education of teachers in the literary field may favourably influence the profile of the students future teachers and their capacity to read and appreciate critically a literary text, only if it will be able to provide means and instruments to acquire progressively suitable knowledge and competences to turn them, step by step, from literary novices into literary advanced beginners, from competent academics into educational transposers of the literary knowledge, in order that, in their capacity of expert of education, their action will become essential to accompany the students towards the achievement of the goals set and the school success, contributing in a significant way to their emotional (Lazar, 1993, p. 19) as well as cognitive enrichment.

Development of Literary Competence in the Initial Education of Teachers of Nursery and Primary Schools

Teaching literature strategies in the classes of literature plays a key role in the development of the literary competence (Brumfit & Carter, 1986). An increasing number of studies has demonstrated that highly qualified and effective teachers have a positive effect on the learning of students (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Haycock, 1998) and if we want to assure a qualitatively substantial teaching-learning process every student needs a highly qualified teacher able to effectively meet their requirements (Margiotta, 1999). This means that the professional profile of every professionalism of teaching should be reviewed and strengthened and the efficacy and academic and pedagogical quality of the initial education of teachers should be re-examined, coherent systems and appropriate resources for recruitment, selection, inducement and professional development of the teaching staff on the basis of clearly defined competences necessary in each stage of teachers' career should be introduced (European Commission, 2013). Hence we witness to the appearance of an original "literacy epistemology" that look to the teaching as a complex multimodal process working through multiple channels and plural-sign codes (see Figure 1), makes it possible to build kills kits every more suitable to feed people in the exercise of active citizenship (Nuzzaci, 2012a, p. 13).
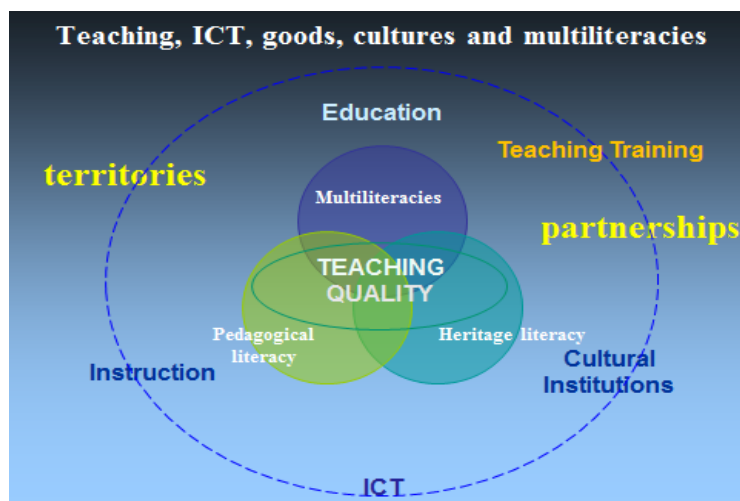
Figure 1. Teaching, ICT, goods, cultures and multiliteracies (Nuzzaci, A., ICT, teaching and multiliteracies, 2014, L'Aquila, unpublished conference paper, L'Aquila, 2014).

The unsuitable preparation of teachers to face the challenge of the 21st century has been faced in Italy by the law 249 of 2010 that paid particular attention to the initial stage of the educational process of teachers of nursery and primary schools, defining the educational path, enhancing and extending the repertoire of competences and strengthening the cultural profile of teachers by structuring a new single-cycle five-year university curriculum and path. The literary knowledge as part of the teachers' curriculum in the university education becomes the starting point of teaching literature as instrument of cultural literacy, aesthetic awareness, social awareness, and personal development concerning specific goals in terms of contents and teaching-learning processes. The term "literary competence" has provided the literary education with a status in the discussion about the position of literature within the curriculum becoming a key element. Today the term has shown to be explanatory enough, above all if considered in the meaning given by Fish (1980), namely a capacity developed from experiences carried out in an "interpretive community". Usually teachers of literature in educating teachers are often defined only in terms of "disciplinary contents" or parameters for selection linked to specific readings. In this context, the description made here try to understand also the educational aspects in relation to activities of teaching and learning. This dimension is significant because of leading to considering the importance of literature not only at national but also at international European level through the concept of "literary competence", which prerequisites, at various level, can be identified and evaluated. Among the various knowledge, competences, and dispositions the shape its legacy, the literary competence becomes the main turning point between pedagogical knowledge and specialized knowledge, between core and characterizing disciplines. The literary competence lives in the intersection between different kinds of competence:

(1) Linguistic competence;
(2) Communication competence;
(3) Reading competence;
(4) Writing competences;
(5) Interpretive competence;
(6) Discursive competence;
(7) Cultural competence;

(8) Cross-cultural competence;

(9) Pragmatic and strategic competence;

(10) Social competence.
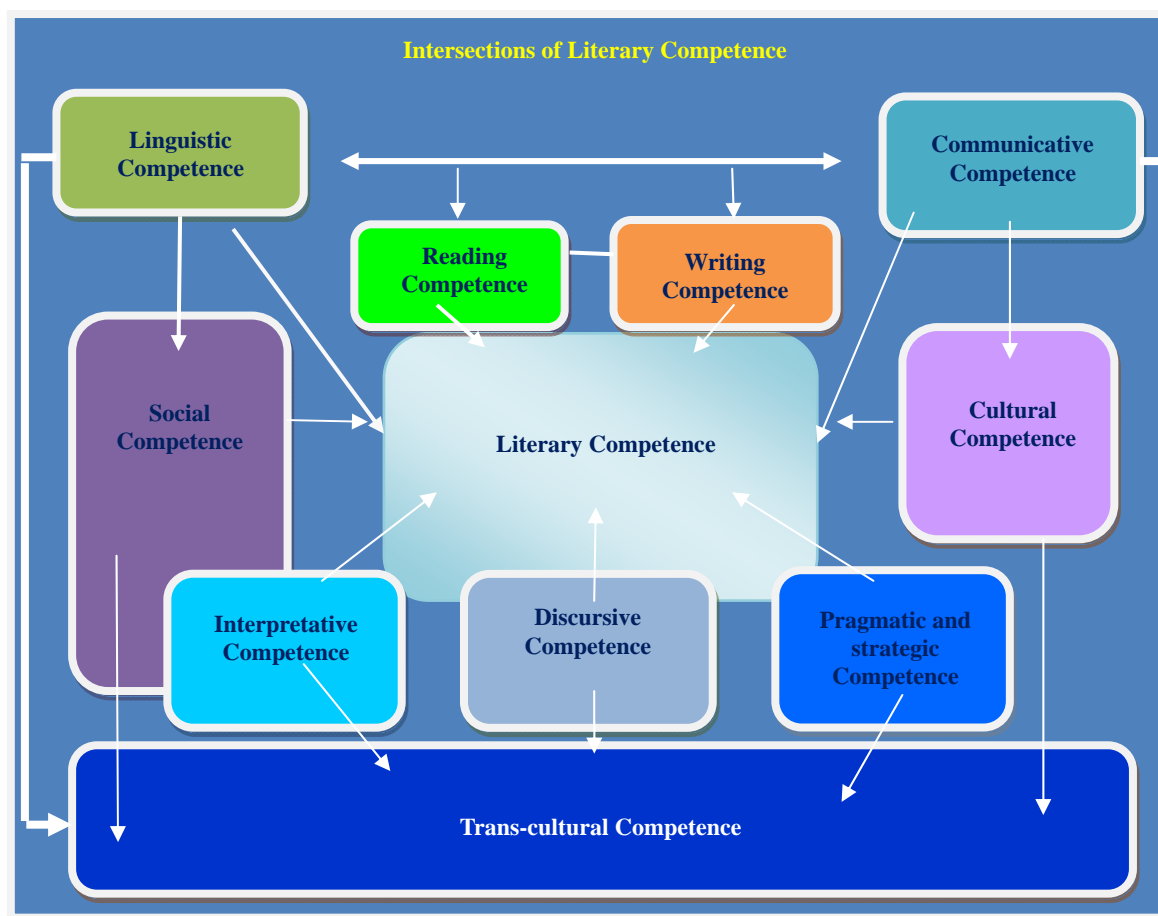
Figure 2. Intersections and literary competence (Nuzzaci, A., Competences, multiliteracies and teaching, 2014, L'Aquila, unpublished conference paper, L'Aquila, 2014).

The model of ten synergically interacting competences tries to answer the basic concern on what using literature in class implies, which does not mean focusing on the "literary nature of texts" (Maley, 1989a, p. 10), but, conversely, improving educational practices in using literature to enhance the quality of teaching supporting both social awareness and linguistic competence, both cultural and communication awareness. In this interpretive key, the literary competence plays a central role in the literacy process of teachers in the initial stage, first of all for the distinctive traits of the discipline as subject of the university knowledge (contemporary and Italian language and literature are taught), but also as instrument to learn other disciplines (understand an order, carry out a demonstration etc.). Hence, it intervenes at two levels of teaching, expressing values built in a wide sense on ideologies, entailing a university teacher (specialist of the sector) and student (future teacher) exchange in the complicated field of beliefs and opinions but intervening in the construction of the cultural world of learning, of construction of teaching, of the personal history of student and teacher and of the professional culture of school and its values. The students future teachers write and re-write, listen to their own and other's word, read in a loud voice, reshape their efforts to make words significant. Literature has no rivals

in its power to create natural repetition, consideration on language and its functioning. The wide range of genres, accepted as literature, extends its potential influence in classes going beyond the teaching of Italian and school. The use of literary texts in class was widely discussed by a specific and wide literature (Maley & Duff, 1989; Carter, Walker, & Brumfit, 1989; Widdowson, 1990; Kramsch, 1993; Lazar, 1993; Carter & McRae, 1996; Edmondson, 1997) and some scholars (Gilroy & Parkinson, 1997; Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Yang, 2001; Vandrick, 2003; Kim, 2004; Sánchez, 2008; Parkinson & Reid, 2000, pp. 9-11) mainly support the idea that the role of literature is to provide an excellent model for a "good writing", demanded by educational strategies that leverage on "vicarious" processes (Reuchlin, 1978; 1999; Bertoz, 2015). This is a non-trivial and challenging task also helping to assimilate the rhythms of a language, simplifying the education to a special sensibility. Many genuine characteristics of the written language, such as education and function of sentences, variety of possible structures and different ways to connect ideas are presented at different levels of difficulties (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 5), but the important thing in university contexts that take care of educating teachers of nursery and primary schools is the one to ask to university students to explore the literary language and not neglecting its educational viability, not limiting to encourage consideration on standards ruling the use of language (Lazar, 1993, p. 18) and literature. The students shall be encouraged to become familiar with different uses and linguistic and literary forms for an appropriate specialized and educational development of competence and an effective literary communication. In this way, the richness and variety of language can be appreciated and we can become more sensitive to its characteristics. The literary culture as a total enrichment of the set of competences of the teacher carries within the culture of teaching other cultures (local, national, international, and cross-national) and allows cultivating a culture of sectorial educational literature allowing the students future teachers to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies other than their own, in time and space, and being able to perceive traditions of thinking, feeling and textual and art forms within the literary heritages of given cultures (Carter & Long, 1991, p. 2). Thus, the future teachers learn progressively to make use of the literary knowledge, that includes countless potentialities, to learn to teach achieving different forms of mastery and learning to look at the world through someone else's eyes, observing the human values, different types of life, discovering other educational and didactic ways and styles in very different societies and cultures, entering into relationship with different codes according to formulating messages with evident increases of signification amplifying the possibilities of the educational action, enlarging its boundaries in terms of perception of new relationships, new visions, new points of view and knowledge of the social sphere, political, historical, cultural, and educational events organized in a certain society. Through literature, the future teachers can examine in depth their cultural understanding of educational facts, events, and phenomena, for the literary texts mark a specific methodological gap compared to reality, even if they often touch common topics and values ranging from individual and personal dimensions to collective and social issues, such as death, love, pollution, ethnic conflicts etc. In this key, the genres, conventions, stylistic expedients and portraits (poetry with its rhythms, rhymes, figurative uses, etc.; prose with its tales, novels, plots, crisis, conflicts and solutions etc.) become necessary elements to be acquired as an experience of mother tongue (Maley & Duff, 1989, p. 8) from which move to go towards other languages and cultures (learning of L2, cross-cultural skills etc.). That is why, literature becomes the means to understand the possible varieties of matters, languages, topics, and contexts concerning literary texts as "authentic texts, real incontext languages, which we can answer directly" (Brumfit & Carter, 1986, p. 15). This quality seems to make literature a precious instrument to teach in many contexts and cultures, allowing the university students to understand and appreciate other cultures and ideologies and provide those that

take care of education of teachers with the possibility to identify methods and forms to be better ready to meet the requirements of every university student (Causton-Theoharis, Theoharis, & Trezek, 2008). The university reader, future teacher, seems to that "ideal reader" mentioned by Umberto Eco (1979, p. 52), namely who helps to correctly update all the semantic structures of a text and that during the education helps the "empirical" or "real" reader to use it for various purposes, assuming the role to fill the recipient's gaps. Then there is no doubt that the use of literature can be considered in a university context of teachers' education, as concrete possibility to make "work texts" to generate an educational competence of area being able, with appropriate cultural proposals, to improve the literary competence of the university student and fill specific gaps of acquisition. Nonetheless, the gaps keep existing when we think about the various intersections of the literary competence with other kinds of competence, such as that of writing of teaching (Calkins, 1994). Among the various knowledge, competences, and dispositions shaping its legacy, the literary competence becomes the main turning point between pedagogical knowledge and specialized knowledge, between core and characterizing disciplines, that joins vertically the teaching (nursery, primary, lower secondary school etc.) with and through literature. Therefore, there is the necessity to lead studies of research that contribute to understanding which corpus of knowledge the teachers of nursery, primary and lower secondary school need, to make appropriate decisions during those processes of planning and programming education aiming at building the literary competence, for the basic training of the teacher affects decisions and choices of the educational approaches to be used (Lee & Hemer-Patnode, 2010). It is worthwhile reasoning on these aspects and how knowledge, skills, dispositions in this sector affect the educational planning and the decision-making processes and examining and describing how the latter intervene to assure the school success of students, even keep being awareness that what teachers think, decide, and realize during the process of planning education about the literary competence has a significant effect on learners and on the identification of the necessary prerequisites to pursue it, at a different level, and that need to be accurately identified and evaluated.

In Italy this aspect has assumed particular importance as of the definition of the new curricular path of Science of Primary Education of New System, single-cycle five-year university course of study started and activated for the first time in 2011 and that sees (see Figure 2) the professional learning of teacher as included in a continuum starting from the initial education of teachers, carrying on through the stage of inducement and for all the rest of their career. In this context, the literary competence becomes central and concerns the possibility to achieve a wide consensus on descriptions of competences that extend to various levels of teachers' competence. The research suggests that the development of the literary competence of teachers is rather slow and entails in teaching a reflective logic, a proactive practice and high quality feedbacks. As a whole, the nature mainly tacit of the practical thinking of teachers entails complicated cognitive processes to develop the professional knowledge, in line with everything indicated by the European Commission (2013); hence, as regards the key aspects of the process of professionalization, the literary competence acts:

(1) on constant consideration in relation to update and progress of practices;

(2) on cooperation with the professional community (OECD, 2009);

(3) on belonging and construction of the professional world.

The main characteristics of expert teachers include:

(1) routineness, namely the development of models of action and repertoires of teaching;

(2) specific domain and expertise in acknowledging models (recurring situations) in the complexity of life in class;

(3) sensitivity for social requirements and dynamics of class;

(4) problems of understanding;

(5) flexibility and improvisation;

(6) critical examination of one's professional practice (at school and in national contexts, as well as in professional dialogues) (European Commission, 2011).

Two requisites are essential in the preparation of quality teachers:

(1) the capacity to evaluate systematically one's base of knowledges and professional practices, on the basis of a wide range of criteria coming from practice, theory and research;

(2) critical and reactive attitudes to innovation and professional improvement (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006).

Hence, if a key role is performed by self-evaluation of teachers, reflection on their job and professionalization, then the construction of the literary competence follows this direction, that of curricular strengthening to develop the necessary competences. A culture of the literary competence should be a stable component of the initial education of teachers at any level, even if in an articulated way for the various levels and curricular programmes. It is clear that the presence of purposes of education will allow and require a higher extension and depth of development with respect to the grade of school and type of professionalism teacher concerned, given the presence of schools stages with different purposes and curricula. Then there is the problem of the standards with respect to real curricula and the problem of how projecting each standard on the specific disciplines concerned and disciplinary programmes. In system such as the Italian one, such standards should be taken into consideration by a rather wide variety of specialized, whether or not specific, disciplines, above all if we refer to the nursery and primary schools, whereon the "conditions" for the development of the literary competence and of a culture of language and Italian literature, included in the programmes of other school stages, are based. In particular, the literary competence in the professional development of teachers of nursery and primary schools helps to support the development of a community of knowledge around the knowledge and languages and the practice of key competences of teachers that are behind the educational change and requiring a critical mass of teachers trained on aspects, topics, models and approaches joining the solid pedagogical, methodological and educational culture with the sectorial educational culture, fostering progressively a process of curricular innovation and disciplinary contamination promoted by the national indications expressed as competences. The lacking presence of such a competence prevents the development of a capacity of analysis that is not just an instrument to improve the oral and writing practice of the Italian language, but can also persuade to have a more direct and, sometimes, more subtle perception of reality and teaching. In contexts of initial education where the role of literature, in terms of textual structures and strategies, outlines the profile of the competent reader, the professional legacy does not tend to be weakened and more influenced by critical traditions focusing its attention exclusively on national literature but enlarges the observation to wider cultural contexts. In the opening of the education of teachers to the approach to a literary approach that invests competences of various nature (linguistic, reading, writing, communication, interpretive, discursive, cultural, cross-cultural, pragmatic and strategic and social), as well as of various types (cross-sectional, disciplinary etc.), the literary text provides not only the knowledge of life through its imaginary shape, but develops also a cohabitation, the cross-cultural one, which importance in the new system of the higher education cannot be underestimated.

Conclusion

The literary competence and literature play a very wide role in the initial education of teachers, but are affected by a lacking research of empirical kind. The studies often comprise wide descriptions of experiences (Wragg, 1984), usually concerning future teachers under initial education who conversely approach literature almost exclusively from the point of view of narration and its pedagogical function (Batini & Giusti, 2010) rather than in its role of "literary discourse" as concrete instrument of professionalization and socialization (Lacey, 1977) or critical theory (Ginsburg, 1988) leading to acquire higher-order skills such as the critical thinking and the reflective competence. This shows both epistemological and methodological weakness (Atkinson & Delamont, 1985). The narration is perceived as instrument to explore thoughts, habits, and attitudes to express the knowledge and the job of teachers (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Schön, 1983). This is broadly "literary", and in the sense of "discourse" linked to the methodological dimension initiating a "new epistemology of practice" (Nuzzaci, 2012b) presented as opposition to an "empty formalization". In this sense, the literary competence enters in the experiential processes of education of teachers as neglected element of processes of professionalization. But beyond the methodological variations above, there is a deep division between the experts on the concept of "literary nature" and teaching of literature. But, it is understood that, in the classes where teachers are educated, widespread and recent phenomenon, but qualifying the university context as privileged space for a critical glance at education and reality, literature opens to a certain number of knowledge and domains and helps the future teacher to build conceptual schemes that will need to develop a teaching based on:

(1) appropriate linguistic and communication domains and practices;

(2) elements of research in the field of the relationship between discourse and educational action;

(3) literary sources for personal and professional use and change;

(4) literary sources to activate specific forms of didactic transposition to specific disciplinary sectors;

(5) instruments of identification of reading, writing practices, etc.;

(6) methods to explain the schemes of knowledge behind the literary repertoires;

(7) innovative forms of evaluation of competences (area of production);

(8) domains (linguistic, pragmatic, cultural etc.) for disciplinary and cross-disciplinary contamination to define strategies of innovation;

(9) components and supports for methodological innovation and structuring;

(10) elements and starting points for a consideration on the use of literature in professional action and ethics.

Such a reasoning arises from the necessity to build a culture of learning and teaching of the literary competence as factor able to influence the set of competences of teachers of nursery school and primary school under initial education. In brief, the "literary reading" is thought to be part of a wider culture founding its roots in a wider repertoire producing some consequences of adjustment in teachers' life and their professional culture. Aware that until recent times the value of the literary reading in the education of teachers was mainly taken as a whole as communication experience, where the reader/teacher tends to re-contextualize or redefine some significant aspects of the experience by using a literary text to make effective the aspects leading the act of reading, there is the necessity to review this vision of literature in the light of more recent research lines. The changes of the last decades have given a boost to reshape the quality of education of teachers in Europe to

provide the students future teachers with appropriate competences required by a school under transformation. The requirements of teachers of the nursery school and primary school are changing and the rapid social and technological development requires new knowledge and competences, and their contamination, which impose a further higher education and retraining. In order to assure the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems of education, the teachers, who put the basis of the structure and future knowledge, should be equipped with the capacity to give birth to a cultural project aiming at implementing the set of competences, knowledge, and experiences supplying a common theoretical, methodological, and practical base allowing teachers under initial training to promote appropriate alphabetical processes and active citizenship in their students. This is a long discourse, still open, on the concept of literary competence that has led to the elaboration of frameworks of competences as instruments aimed at defining, measuring, and evaluating the human literary performance according to various types of activity and well specific standards, intended to provide a definite reference:

(1) for those engaged in education of teachers when planning such education and preparing the fields of experience for an appropriate professional development;

(2) for teachers when they self-evaluate in order to better identify their requirements of professional development;

(3) for experts of the sector engaged in conceptualizing the competences linked to disciplinary didactics opening themselves to specific forms of planning and evaluation, such as, indeed, the literary one examined herein.

The assumption of such a competence in university paths concerning the education of teachers of nursery school and primary school becomes cause of deep change because interactions "mediated" by the student with the literary text produce either enhancement and understanding of many pedagogical experiences, or opening of future teachers to fanciful contexts where using language (Collie & Slater, 1987; Gibbs, 1994), that may be turned into useful instruments from the didactic point of view and help to become familiar with specific styles of literacy and then encouraging its development (Krashen, 1985). The latter is an important component for the professional role that will be covered by the future teachers of nursery and primary schools, who may leverage on their literary competence to learn to teach to their future students the richness and variety of language and culture, to progressively build the knowledge of the language and its culturally determined meanings, so as to expand the understanding of one's own and other's cultures. In this interpretive key, the literature for the teachers under initial education can create both opportunities of personal expression and educational opportunities leading them to become teachers able to help their students to put the bases to progressively build their competence and examine in depth their knowledge concerning the lexical and grammatical structure (Savvidou, 2006) of the language, as well as understand the cultural meaning that it expresses, for it is not licit understand completely a language without understanding the cultural meanings conveyed by it (Lado, 1964, p. 9). Thus in the education of university students that are preparing themselves to become "teacher", the literary competence is acknowledged its own function, the same that Kramsch and Ricoeur (1976) connect to literature and concerning "production or non-reproduction of the discourse" or culture that is being represented and that the teacher will be able to teach only as long as making accessible and understandable for young students values, intentions and beliefs incorporated in various texts, transposing didactically the meanings expressed through the language, which meanings refer to culture and cultural experience with which the literature has been written and understood. The learning of the literary competence lives everywhere within the context of the education of teachers, in understanding educational goals to be pursued, as well as in teaching methods to be adopted, in

approaches that resort to individualization and leverage on characteristics and personalities of students, in integration of technologies in didactic and methods to evaluate the quality of learning results. The strengthening of the "literary competence" within the set of competences of teachers is needed to make transparent the aspects connected to the improvement of the literary fruition and linguistic, textual production etc., or rather those areas that, ranging from childhood to adult age, passing through the history of the individual, in order to ensure the lifelong learning. The literary competence helps to be introduced in the didactic systems of action and of measurement of practical, innovative performances and forms of interactive communication, supporting the continuous passion for the profession of teacher and push it towards the research of those dimensions of "quality" making a teacher genuinely competent.

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Exploration and Rethinking: Children-Voice Studies in China

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This paper reviews children-voice studies in mainland China over the past 10 years in the context of the globalisation era. The traditional grand narrative in the field of contemporary education research in China has been challenged by individual recounts and by concernsregarding the situation in the classroom, which is reflected in the children-voice studies conducted by young researchers. The paper begins with background regarding society, culture, and schooling, continues on to describe related studies in this field, and ends with a rethinking of current research. The conclusion is that the studies were hampered both by an inherited culture of inertia and cynicism towards students' voices and by a dysfunction in research methodology.

Keywords: children-voice, grand narrative, methodology

Introduction

Researches on pupils' experiences are not new in western countries (Dewey, 1913/1975, 1916/2005), but it seems to be ignored by most of Chinese researchers. Despite China's emergence as one of the top countries of PISA (Programme of International Students Assessment) since 2009, relatively little is known in other countries about Chinese children's voices on their experiences of schooling and life. People might have gained some insights either through naratives of adults, or from the art works which reflect their perspectives. Otherwise, the prevailing impression is that students in China are well-behaved, learn by rote, and that much in the schools is about memorising and cramming for examinations.

This study seeks to provide a more nuanced and accurate picture of chidlren's voices in China, according to the chronological representatives literatures. As China encompasses such a diverse spectrum of economies, societies and cultures, studies on understanding children voices in various regions are still thin. The children voices are not simple expression on their learning issues of knowledge, but have their own source, nature, structure and content. In the context of Chinese schooling and society, it is often that childrens voices had been ignored. This study attempts to illustrate the historical process of losing voices of children since accient China to the beginning of new republic, according to the poems and essays in Chinese history, individual experiences and the ideological function of restriction on children's voices in political system. Meanwhile, this study displays the social factors that impact on expressions of children voices.

Background: Silence of Children's Voices in Traditional Chinese Education

Chinese society expects a great deal from its children. Nonetheless, there are relatively few academic studies

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of the children voice. The good news is that the situation is changing in line with an increasing academic focus on students' rights, values, and behaviours (GU, 2003). This paper seeks to provide an account of key foci in the study of childhood voices, while also extending the reach of the works cited to certain writings about "youth". Childhood is a difficult category to pin down, as cultural and social norms can mean that a 16-year-old is a child in one place, but a working adult somewhere else. Here, we keep to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of a Child (United Nations, 2009), of which China is a signatory, and mark infancy up to age two, and childhood up to 17 years of age. However, we have still included references that are concerned with "youth" who are over 17 years old, when those discussions are also pertinent to an overall study of generational change.

China has typically been known as a country with a long history of educating children (GU, 2013). However, children's voices have disappeared from public discourse over the past 1,000 years. As Cotterel points out, ancient Chinese children were deprived of education. Most of them worked on their parents' farms, picking weeds and planting seeds. Only boys of rich families enjoyed the right to go to school (Cotterel, 2000). Similarly, Benn examines the data during the seventh century to the 14th century of the Tang and Song Dynasties (Benn, 2004), emphasising that girls belonging to the higher strata of society were not allowed to go to school. In contrast, to achieve political power, boys had to work diligently in school, as doing well in state examinations was the only way to obtain it (Miyazaki, 1981).

Discrimination between boys and girls existed across all of ancient Chinese society. For ancient Chinese people, sons were more important than daughters and since the Han Dynasty (B.C. 202-A.D. 220). It has been said that "obtaining jade is as joyous as having a son", but having a girl is like "getting a slate". Female infanticide also prevailed in ancient China. Children were expected to know their limits in the family and be obedient, rather than speak their opinions and thoughts to the family (Gernet, 1963). Particularly, Chinese Confucian education with its revered institutions privileged texts of elders, ancestors, and worthies of antiquity, promoting the study of classical texts and moral exemplars of ages past so as to gradually shape the child according to canonical moulds (Ebrey, 1993). Some Chinese researchers argue that ancient Chinese practices did not produce a philosophy of respect for children or their ideas (YIN, 2009). In Confucian philosophy, three cardinal guides (ruler guides subject, father guides son, and husband guides wife) and Five Constant Virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, knowledge, and sincerity) show the basic principles of filial piety as the backbone of traditional ethics. They emphasize the hierarchical relationships between parents and children, to deny that love exists between father and son. As a result, core values were dominated by the three cardinal guides, which emphasized fathers guide their sons in the traditional family (XIA, 2001).

JI's study analyses preformation theory, which holds that ancient philosophy deeply impacted the understanding of children for centuries to come. His study also focuses on the image of children in ancient Chinese literature. He argues that in the Song Dynasty (11th century-14th century), children were typically described as the spokes people of mysterious forces. He also points out that boys and girls were treated differently in ancient China, with girls being deprived of education even if they belonged to the higher strata of society. At the same time, the civil service-exam system—which had a positive role in accelerating reasonable social mobility and constructing social equality—broke the old system of social stratification and played a vital function in education, with even poor children having a chance of obtaining political power as they could study in private academies (JI, 1992).

It should be noted that even though children had no voice in ancient China, some vividly recorded their feelings and understanding of the world in poems, expressing deep feelings with childlike innocence. These poems had several forms such as song proverbs in children's folk rhymes, ditties, odes, or songs. Sometimes they became incorporated into the wordsused in games. LUO Bin-wang, a typical seven-year-old wrote the masterpiece *Ode to the Geese* in the middle of the seventh century (Dang Dynasty).

Ode to the Geese

Geese, O geese!
Your necks curving sing to sky in glees;
Your white plumes float on water green,
Red feet paddle streams clear and clean.[1]

Aside from LUO's descriptions of geese, there are *Ode to the Rabbit* (written by a seven-year-old poet, Tang Dynasty), *White Lotus* (written by a five-year-old poet, Song Dynasty), and *Pines* (written by a seven-year-old poet, Song Dynasty). Written by young children, these poems reflect the harmonious state of childhood life. Another category of poems in ancient China was those created by adults describing the life of children. Examples of these include *A Little Girl's Crying in Front of the Tomb* (written by MEI Yao-chen, Song Dynasty), *Grieving over a Child's Death* (written by XU You-ren, Yuan Dynasty), and *Whose Family is This Seven-Year-Old Child* (written by Yaoxie, Qing Dynasty). Even though children did not write these poems, they were written from the child's perspective and could still strike a responsive chord in the hearts of their contemporary readers.

Apart from the poems created by children themselves and those created for children by adults, nursery rhymes that bring children laughter and joy, help them understand the good and the evil in the world, and tell them how to behave themselves, also played a very important role in giving voice to children in ancient China. Nursery rhymes spread widely in ancient China because of their rich content and vivid representation, and greatly influenced the intellectual development and ideological education of Chinese children. In the Ming Dynasty, LU Kun (1536-1618) edited the first book of Chinese children's folk rhymes. It demonstrated the unique charm of nursery rhymes with a fresh style, plain and clear rhythm, and strong rural appeal.

First Stage: Understanding Children's Voices in Modern Times: Beginning of the 19th Century Through the 1940s

As LU argues, rethinking attitudes towards the opinions of young people in modern China can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century. With the expansion of Western colonialism in the 1840s, ideas regarding modern western education began to influence the Chinese upper classes. The western trend of thought for respecting the rights of children was a breakthrough for understanding children through comprehensive study and helped to breach the doctrine and standard outlook for children that had dominated for centuries in China (LU, 2007). Chinese government officers were sent abroad, young people of affluent families studied abroad to learn Western techniques and skills, and the word "children" as a specific term was introduced, first appearing in an official document in 1902. This indicated that the perception of children had changed, with their importance

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[1] The poem is made by LUO Bin-wang (619-684).

as individuals being greatly raised, and that Chinese society was entering an era of emancipation and discovery of children (SHU, 1960; HE, 1990).

The first document that recorded the lives of Western children from the perspectives of Chinese officers was written by three 18-year-old mandarin boys, who were educated in the first modern school setup by the Qing government. Their travel notes focused on France, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Russia, Germany, and Belgium, and recorded their interest upon witnessing the birth of Western children, educational environment, and public primary and secondary schools (ZHONG, 1985). In the following years, a systematic investigation of Japanese primary and secondary school education was undertaken because they too were influenced by Western culturein China started in 1898.

Since the 1920s, scholars who return from Japan and the US have established a trend of rethinking attitudes towards the lives of children. These scholars are the first who revealed the life and voices of Chinese children at the beginning of the 20th century in China.

Professor TAO Xing-zhi was a 20th-century Chinese educator and reformer who proposed optimising children's developmental environment and caring for their needs (TAO, 1933). Other famous scholars, including the Chinese philosopher, essayist, and diplomat HU Shih and the essayist and translator ZHOU Zuo-ren, showed that health care for Chinese children was stunningly poor and that children were confronted with many challenges that resulted from a lack of scientifically informed care and development (Chou, 1984; Grieder, 1970). These scholars urgently insisted that Chinese people must persist with scientific development to promote harmonious development between education for girls and realize educational equality between boys and girls. TAO and other scholars strongly criticized the popular culture that made a distinction between the sexes and which held to a deliberate educational model of gender inequality.

The voices of children began to be explored by adults, and the appeals for emancipation, particularly for girls, created an interesting perspective on children's voices. Dissatisfaction expressed with gender inequality such as being deprived the right to equal education and having feet forcibly bound clearly reflected the real lives and voices of young girls (XIONG, 2006). They also first proposed that respecting children means respecting the nature of children through their play and games (CHEN, 1934). This raised the status of children to a focus on the "children's own life" and "own world and society" (SUN, 1938).

To understand the voices of students, *Magazine of Students*—a magazine that was less than 50-pages-long—was published from 1914 to 1918 by Commercial Press in Shanghai. This magazine was precious and unique because many of the essays were created by students themselves.These essays were written by children aged 12-16 years (secondary school students) and were the direct expression of inner feelings and ideas of Chinese students at the beginning of the 20th century (LIU, 1986). Secondary school students were the first group that was formed after abolishing the imperial examination in 1905, which had been carried out for more than a thousand years. They represented a new rising class who had strong responsibilities and identities linked to saving a country that had suffered from wars among warlords and imperialistic aggressors. The voices at the beginning of the last century indicated that those enlightened young people carried indeed the burden of saving the country. The expressions in their essays were full of crisis consciousness and the hope of national salvation. Thus, a cultural change in China around this time towards respecting and promoting science came about not only from the impact of western culture, but was also an inevitable outcome of "national salvation":

Students realized that in order to save China from national demise, reform was essential and the feudal monarchy and religious authority needed to be removed (FANG, 2008).

Similar sentiments from young people occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, which was a time taken up with the struggle to defeat internal fascist aggressors. In particular, songs written by young students were rich in national styles, the clear-cut atmosphere of the times, and the unique characteristics of self-expression, and therefore it gave confidence to the youth (LI & QIAN, 2009).

Second Stage: Politics Shaped Students' Voices Under the Red Political Power From the 1950s to 1970s

Liu argues that the revolutionary victory only ushered in a new time of turmoil. Over the past 50 years, no-one in mainland China has experienced the difficulties that existed at that time. For youth who have grown up since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the new national situations implied to carry the notion of a termination of the revolutionary era. However, they do not usually realize or reflect upon what the mission of social reconstruction was for those who lived during those times (LIU, 1986).

FANG and his research team published a series of works for the Chinese Children's Culture Research Report since 2011 (FANG, 2011), in which analyse the annual themes of children studies in China, for instance, the report discussed the premodern history of children and childhood, modern histories of childhood and youth, music and literature, television and film, media use with Chinese children. It also reveals that listening to stories and experiences of youths is at the heart of understanding contemporary Chinese society and culture. Generations of children since the mid-20th century have been given the burden of achieving a revolution. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, children were shaped at the forefront of internal struggles during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. In his memoirs, ZHOU gave a detailed account of what happened to the generations of youth that developed in that era, particularly, focuses on China's turbulent political history has created more than the usual gaps among youth when they were in the life course and the Cultural Revolution hit has had a major effect on their subsequent trajectory (ZHOU, 2006).

Children voices display the deepest emotion of young love for their motherland, for their people, for their hometown, and for the Communist Party and its revered leader since 1920s: Chairman MAO Ze-dong. They also reflect how their opinions changed as Marxist scholars. Although students had been involved in political movements, the "cultural revolution" was brought about not by the youth but by political leaders. In his book, *Reason and Insaneness*, WANG analyzed the voices in turmoil, and focused on the poems created by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution (WANG, 1993). In their conversations with the younger generation of the Cultural Revolution, CAI, FEI, and WANG asserted that the primary school students hadlost their reason, and thus offersa psychoanalytic understanding of the young students' fanaticism (CAI, FEI, & WANG, 2002). The distinguished novelist WANG An-yi describes examples of destiny and absurdity, which reveal what confronted the young generation. Under her pen, students who had been brainwashed by the Ultra-Leftist government destroyed their naïve childhood and transformed their humanistic ideals to humanistic evil (WANG, 1981). Meanwhile, people who were children at the time now recount that some investigations that were carried out ostensibly to uncover subversive adult activity was actually used to harass and undermine those with views that differed from the government. Self expression and language became the tools of political persecution. Children

could understand from this atmosphere and its social dynamics the complexities of politics even if they were not living amidst totalitarian communists.

As He points out, the lives of Chinese children differed from their Western counterparts who experienced a sexual liberation during this same period. Although there are few documents or works that include the thoughts and voices of children who lived during those chaotic years, most adolescent boys and girls had to deeply hide their feelings and desires regarding sexuality because all language, pictures, and other media regarding sex were seen as sinful by the schooling andstate machinery (HE, 2013).

In the aftermath, children were assigned the task of taking Chinese science and technology to the pinnacle of modernity. REN's photographs tell the story of how students lived and learned at a high school in the 1980s (REN, 2011).

Third Stage: Diverse Voices in the Social Transition Period: A Generation That Differed From the Previous One

The year 1978 witnessed a historical transition in the realm of ideology and culture in China after a long process of twists and turns. Beginning in the 1980s, Chinese officials and media began to talk about the existence of a youth problem (Hooper, 1985), while Chinese youth themselves were regarded as experiencing an "ideological crisis" (Kwong, 1994). Subsequently, students, especially those youths in colleges and universities, were depicted as "utilitarian and individualistic, kind of self-centered and wounded individuals without thought for the future, mankind, or the motherland; distant from the Communist Party" (LIU, 1984; XU, 2002; XU, 2004). The sociologist, Professor QIAN Min-hui published his book titled *Students: To be honest* (QIAN, 1998). In the book, Chinese students themselves scrutinize the exam-oriented education system, which places too much emphasis on rote memorisation rather than on the critical application of concepts. Emerging from such accounts are vivid pictures of young Chinese as viciously overworked and under-rested, and even psychologically damaged, by the pressures placed on them by parents, family, teachers, and Chinese society as a whole (Mullins, 2005; Davey, Lian, & Higgins, 2007).

Comparative study on the voices of students at universities and colleges reveals the dramatic changes in the goals of the younger generations. Fairbrother's (2011) study shows Marxist-Leninism became the guiding ideology after 1949. Yet, from the early 1980s, in the face of a legitimacy crisis, the leadership shifted toward patriotism as a unifying and justificatory ideology, while still professing ultimate objectives in line with Marxist principles. Fairbrother's book is a comparative study of the political attitudes of patriotism and nationalism held by the university students in Hong Kong and mainland China in the 1990s, with a focus on the factors that led individual students to resist. The researcher demonstrates how the students from these two places, to different degrees, were distrustful of the agents of political socialisation. They wanted to know more about the nation, and were receptive to alternative ways of thinking about the country. Further, by comparing three multiple regression models, the author also shows the relative strengths of the effects that socialisation and critical thinking had on national attitudes (Fairbrother, 2011).

Meanwhile, according to some studies, attitudes of younger generations towards sexuality in China have changed since the economic reforms of the 1980s (e.g., Zhang & Beck, 1999). Premarital sexual intercourse occurs more frequently among young people, and people in China are now more tolerant toward extramarital

sexual behaviour. Compared with their parents' generation, who were constrained by culture, ideology, and societal context, youth in the age of information and globalisation can easily access sexual media such as pornographic photographs or videos. As a result, the traditional sexual/moral attitudes of Chinese people have been changed by the influence of modern or western values on Chinese youth, in particular secondary school students.

The history of considering the potential of student involvement as a lever in educational change can be traced back to the end of the 1990s. HUANG (2009) proposed that an individual's voice cannot be acknowledged without identifying human/childrens' rights. In terms of the legitimacy, of their interests, however, children cannot always express their own interests as they cannot recognize their rights by themselves (HUANG, 2009, p. 75). Based on this understanding of legitimacy, some studies regarding young voices consider how those of young children differ from those of students and learners in the context of Chinese schooling (HE, 2013). Re-conceptualising the roles of young people in society has powerful implications for schools. There were more substantive theoretical explanations that promote listening to children voices in the classroom. LIU offers detailed explorations of principles and rationales that focus on the thoughts of students on curriculum change during the first ten years (LI, 2001). Mitra's (2008) research, based on hundreds of interviews and observations at one American urban high school, provides an empirical analysis of voices from older students in addressing efforts to effect school change. It indicates that creating a space in which all group members—youth and adults—could develop a common vision and share responsibility for decisionsas she points out, the theme of children voices in education emerged more prominently in research and practice at the beginning of the 21st century. This is also true for Chinese education.

Most people believe that by the 1990s the one-child per family policy resulted in only-children dominating the student body, in contrast to the earlier baby-boomer generation. Studies on Chinese children voice/s since the 1990s show the unique characteristics of the 1980s generation, especially with regards to awakened individualism and self-awareness (Davin, 1991). Particularly, those millennial youth have been described as having a stronger sense of independence that prioritizes self-interest over other people's interests (Moore, 2005; WANG, 2006). As Cockain mentioned, single children in China were spoiled as little emperors or grandparents as they were growing up in the 4-2-1 family-member structure with anxiously over indulgent parents and parents-in-law are involved in child upbringing in urban China (Cockain, 2011).

Living in the globalized market economy, the recent information explosion has greatly affected Chinese students (Goldman Sachs Foundation and Asia Society, 2003). Some studies have focused on Chinese students' multicultural understanding of beliefs and values in this increasingly diverse and globalized context (ZHAO, LIN, & Hoge, 2007). One qualitative study explored 105 high school students (sophomores to seniors, ages 15-19) from three city public schools. The interesting finding reveals that the positive aspects of China that these young students held included its long history, rich culture, rapid economic development, and its achieved reforms. Meanwhile, their negative images of China included social problems, pollution, a lack of environmental protection, political corruption, and the exam-oriented education system (ZHAO, ZHOU, & HUANG, 2008). The study reflects that news media plays vital roles in how Chinese students obtain their knowledge about China.

China's myriad problems with children begin to become clearer as the political environment changes and restrictions on religious policies loosen. For instance, many Chinese Christians are turning their attention to the

local ministry in southern China that is reaching out to care for some of China's "left-behind children", children who are left behind in villages and small towns when their parents go to the cities to work. These "left-behind" children have already become a major social problem for local governments. MA interviewed 23 students whose age ranged from 5 to 12 years. Their narratives reflected the current dilemma of rural education: The younger generations who stay in their villages without accompanying their parents do not receive the same quality of education as wealthier city students, and what is worse, lack of school-based psychological support and concern. The result is anti-social behaviours and resentment of the rich (MA, 2001).

In recent years, a range of films and reports have been concerned both directly and indirectly with student learning in China and the socialisation process in schools. *Chinese School*, produced by BBC4 takes as its subject one small town in rural Anhui, and focuses on the lives of a group of children and their families during the course of a single academic year in 2008. This was a rare chance for students to express their frank opinions in front of the British journalists' cameras. Through the individual pupil's stories of hardship, joy, and success, an extraordinary portrait emerges. *Chinese School* is not just a documentary film of a group of children, but a side of the Chinese students' voices seldom seen. In the same year, the US Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) followed five Chinese students through their final high-pressure year at an elite high school in Sichuan Province. *China Prep* reflects those pupils who study seven days a week and their lives are regimented almost every minute of the day as they prepare for the end-of-year exam that can determine their fate. For many students from poor or rural backgrounds, a strong performance on the test is the only way to climb the social ladder and excel without connections. Competition is fierce and the majority of high school seniors will be relegated to vocational schools. Above two documentary films are regarded as the typical case studies on Chinese students' voices as there is lack of other resources on understanding their lives in the field of academic community.

Since the 21st century, the call for children voices to be heard has also impacted some Chinese researchers (LI, 2001; YANG, 2000). Focusing on China, education research has extended to such topics as the power of schooling and the relationships between teachers and students (e.g., MA, 2003). As KAN (2009a) comments, there is increasing interest in the right of students to voice their views and opinions in the context of a more open society in mainland China, especially regarding teaching and learning in the classroom. He points out that over the past decades, children voices and experiences in primary and secondary schools have been neglected, and this has been recognized by researchers and the public since the beginning of the 21st century. Echoing studies on children voice in the West, some Chinese researchers have begun to rethink their attitudes towards student perspectives, albeit in a limited way. This study also advocates that in particular, the new curriculum should use inquiry-based learning that is linked with the students' own experiences. Other studies from East China Normal University lend further weight to the need for placing greater emphasis on the views of students and teachers. For example, in her case study of classroom experience, DENG (2000) places a strong focus on individual perspectives on educational events and in teacher pedagogy. TANG (2002) also deliberately focuses on the importance of accounting for student perspectives. A study in Nanning, Guangxi Province investigated primary school life in 2000 through the stories of students. The aim of this qualitative study was to illuminate students' perspectives on the education reforms to add new content to the curriculum which then became embedded in the values and behaviours of the students. Through this, TANG sought to answer the question "why does some reform have limited impact in the classroom?" (TANG, 2002). A central factor that this study reveals as crucial to

the success of reform initiatives is the need to attempt an alignment between the values inherent in the reform and those of the individuals charged with implementing the reform within the schools. Analysis shows that successful implementation did take place in one primary school, but only where members of staff were aware of the need for such an alignment of values and therefore cooperated and supported the initiative.

In recent years, some studies of student needs have emerged in China (e.g., LI, 1999). These reports argue that students come to the classroom with a pre-existing view of what "appropriate" teaching and learning should be, something that has also been shown by researchers in China (e.g., HUANG, 2009). Students tend to evaluate new teaching methods in light of their preconceptions and expectancies, which is part of their classroom requirements. Dissonance or inconsistency is likely to occur if the introduced pedagogic innovations are inconsistent with previously held beliefs (LI, 2001).

The imperative to take account of students' perspectives in the implementation of complex, systemic educational change has also been highlighted in recent research in Taiwan (e.g., CAI, 2003). The qualitative case study examined collaborative education policies in local primary schools using data collected between 2000 and 2002. A mixture of direct observation, documentary evidence, and interviews with participants is used, and the study describes and analyses the responses of teachers and students to changes in educational policy. The aim was to examine whether and in what ways the needs of students should be considered during periods of policy implementation. One of the main conclusions was that student needs are largely ignored during phases of reform. Consequently, the researchers suggest that it is not enough for school administrators simply to have awareness that students have views as they attempt reform initiatives. They need to consult them directly.

However, most studies in education research, as WU (2000) notes, have not yet focused on students and their points of view on learning. For example, the authors of an official document on inquiry-based learning in China stress that the constructivism teaching method is designed for "pupils' development of their intelligence, ability in communication and learningin classroom or at home"; therefore, inquiry-based learning should be implemented and accepted by all students (HUANG, 2009). It is instructive, controversial, and rather disheartening to read their findings regarding the implementation of inquiry-based learning in some classrooms, in which most of the feedback, comments, and suggestions come from administrators and teachers, rather than students themselves.

Although some academic articles suggest the new curriculum reform and extra-curricular activities should be implemented at the classroom level, the comments and views of students are ignored by administrators, educational researchers, and policy-makers alike. They appear to give no consideration, as Fielding (2001) emphasizes, to "why pupils should speak, what use will be made of the speech after it is heard".

Essentially, underlying these questions for Chinese educational researchers is a challenge to the dualistic acceptance of "teacher" and "student" and to the assumption that "educators stand above their pupils and guide them in their struggle for their 'voice'" (HAO, 2005; LI, 2001; WU, 2000; ZHANG, 2014). Furthermore, WU points out that many researchers claim that students' "chaotic" perspectives (WU, 2000, p. 154) and learning environments undermine the authenticity of their voices in what is idealized as linear curriculum implementation. Thus Wu, echoing Brooker and MacDonald (1999), advises educators and teachers to "discard monarchical conceptions of power and shift [their] focus to notions of power as productive and present in all contexts, regulating all discourses and social interactions in the classroom" (WU, 2000, p. 155). He later (2003) claims that

schools should reduce their reliance on traditional teacher-student relationships and rethink their conceptions of teacher authority. But another researcher doubts whether we can truly hear students' ideas. LI (2001) notes that although some Western researchers have called for students to find and articulate their voices, the complex Chinese classroom context is beyond their imagination, because "all voices within the classroom are not and cannot carry equal legitimacy and power in dialogue [in] specific Chinese school settings" (LI, 2001, p. 74).

Running through the research literature cited above from liberal, critical, feminist, and poststructuralist views, the issue of children voice has been a concern in education. However, studies of children voice, particularly empirical research, are noticeably sparse in Chinese educational literature. Questions not yet addressed include the means by which researchers might use the breadth of children voices, and the proposed outcomes of seeking children voices. Particularly, little empirical data exist regarding children voices within curriculum implementation in China. Therefore, it has significance for Chinese educational reform that such study places emphasis on the role of student experience and response during curriculum reform and the implementation of a new teaching strategy.

Epilogue: Challenges for Studies on Children Voice in China

When we queried the literature over recent years in the educational community of mainland China, we found evidence for approaches that genuinely involve children voices in influencing educational change. However, SUN (as cited in ZHONG, 2005) claims that the mere act of listening to students' voices often appears to be an end in itself, and KAN (2009b) stresses that the effect of speaking for students is actually often distorted by the researchers themselves. Confronted with these doubts, we have to admit that some studies that place emphasis on accessing the children voice can be tokenistic. This is an area for debate and transformation in Chinese educational research. Hopefully with a view to reform on the ground!

Conclusion

This paper reviews children-voice literatures in mainland China over the past 10 years in the context of the globalisation era. It shows children are not just a passive mass of bodies without capacity for autonomy or critical thinking. The traditional grand narrative of Chinese literature has been challenged by individual recounts and by concernsregarding the situation in children's life and schooling since 1990s.

This study begins with background regarding history, culture, and schooling, continues on to describe related literature which concerns on children's voices, and ends with a rethinking of children's development in current Chinese society, which embodies the tremendous gaps between urban-rural, disparities between the Eastern and the Western China. The conclusion is that the understandings on Chinese children's voices had not been given adequate priority as it was hampered both by an inherited culture of inertia and cynicism towards children' voices.

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A Survey of the Effect of Socioeconomics

on the Evolution of Millinery Styles:

A Case Study of the U.S. From 1900 Through the 1960s

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This study explores the relationship between socioeconomics and millinery style through an analysis of statistical data from the United States Bureau of Statistics. It was very common for women to wear hats in the early 20th century. Most studies regarding millinery are limited to a discussion of style, while some focus on extended functions of millinery styles such as how they aid in social communication. In this study, we discuss the relationship between a woman's socioeconomic status and her hat-wearing behavior. This study covers the period from 1900 through the 1960s, when there was a sudden decline in hat-wearing behavior. We analyzed the changes in the number of people listed in various occupational categories in the U.S. Bureau of Statistics data for each decade. Careful observation of labor distribution statistics for the job market can yield valuable insights about women's hat-wearing behaviors. Fluctuations in the population of the lower class were significantly correlated with changes in millinery. We also identified time-sensitive periods in millinery style that coincided with the two World Wars.

Keywords: millinery, hats, popular culture, socioeconomic, dress style, labor

Introduction

The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between socioeconomics and popular culture. Socioeconomics (also known as socio-economics or social economics) is a study of how economic activity is shaped by the social processes (Wikipedia, 2015b).

Social process is the pattern of growth and change in society over time. Social process is wide-ranging and covers many aspects of everyday life from clothing and accessories to language, gestures, and lifestyle habits. Apparel is one of the most prominent of these elements and hats are particularly conspicuous. The evolution of hats can be traced from ancient murals and paintings to modern advertisements. Hats have a long life in human society because unlike clothing, hats are not human necessities but original pieces that can be worn in any season, says Dolly Jones, editor in chief of the online version of British Vogue (Young, 2011). Women's hats have gone

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through more extreme transformations than men's and most advertisements target female consumers by featuring female models. Therefore, we studied the evolution of millinery styles as a representation of popular culture and how these styles have been influenced by the distribution of socioeconomic status.

Millinery can be studied from two different angles: functionality and social significance. Most research on functional form discusses how millinery has developed and changed over time. These references show that the purpose and requirements of millinery changed frequently throughout history. In the 18th century, women wore mob caps to protect their hair from dust and dirt while they were working. Women in the 19th century wore poke bonnets to signify their unmarried status or wore extravagant, glamorous hats to highlight their social status. The veils worn today have their roots in the 19th century. Since the 20th century, millinery has made unprecedented progress in design and material (McDowell, 1997). Preferences for millinery styles have also changed over time. Wide-brimmed hats were popular in the 1990s as the preference was for a visual S-shape. In the 1910s, however, slender styles came into fashion and women began wearing cloche hats, which are close-fitting and have narrow brims that partly cover the cheeks (Guild, 2012).

In addition to fulfilling basic functional requirements, millinery has also always been socially meaningful. Hats and clothing can provide us with a snapshot of the social structure of labor. Most people take clothing and accessories for granted, therefore little research has been devoted to the appearance of clothing (Dant, 1999). This study uses socioeconomic status (SES) as a measure of social position. Socioeconomic status is the "economic and sociological combined total measure of … an individual's or a family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation" (Wikipedia, 2015b). We chose to assess SES distribution based on occupation statistics, as education in the first half of the 20th century was not as accessible as today and records of individual income were also limited. We then evaluated the stratification of the socioeconomic state of a particular period based on the results and compared it to millinery styles in order to explore potential correlations.

Previous research has discussed the social implications of millinery from the angles of gender, power, and communication. A number of studies have explored the rise and evolution of social consciousness among women through the lens of changes in millinery styles. Moehling (2005) pointed out that the two world wars brought significant change to millinery styles. As men were dispatched to the frontlines, women entered the workforce to fill the labor gap, gradually cultivating economic power. The social status and awareness of women improved as their authority was extended from the family to society. Studies have explored the influence of positional power on the evolution of clothing and accessories. Some researchers have indicated that fashion trends are set by those in the upper socioeconomic strata and imitated by those of lower socioeconomic background (Crane, 2000a; Simmel, 1904; Veblen, 1899). People may also use appearance as a means of characterizing themselves; for example, wearing heels or a hat to appear taller than others (Bell, 1947; Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

Researchers studying these issues from the angle of communications have coded clothing and accessories, and then used this coding system to explore the messages that apparel conveys (Crane, 2000). For example, people often use uniforms or hats to symbolize belonging; likewise, we may be able to judge the occupation of a person based on the cleanliness, color, or labels of his or her clothing and accessories (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). Sociologists Barthes and Baudrillard have employed coding systems to study the social value of apparel and accessories to consumers (Barthes, 1967; Baudrillard, 1970).

Method

Our objective was to discuss socioeconomic influences on millinery. Women's hats were most popular from the 1900s to the 1960s, after which they were eclipsed by novel hairstyles (Wyatt & Hecker, 2006). Therefore, we defined our research period as the 1900s-1960s and employed content analysis to discuss the correlation between millinery and the distribution of SES.

Our data source on millinery was The Vogue online archive, from which we collected all Vogue covers with images of hatted females from the 1900 to 1960. We documented and compared the width, height, and depth of hats and faces. For example, Figure 1 shows that the maximum hat width is three times the width of the model's face; therefore, the width ratio is 1:3. Figure 2 shows that the height of the hat is nearly equal to the length of the face; therefore, the height ratio is 1:1. Depth was recorded as 50% because the face in Figure 3 is half obscured by the hat rim.

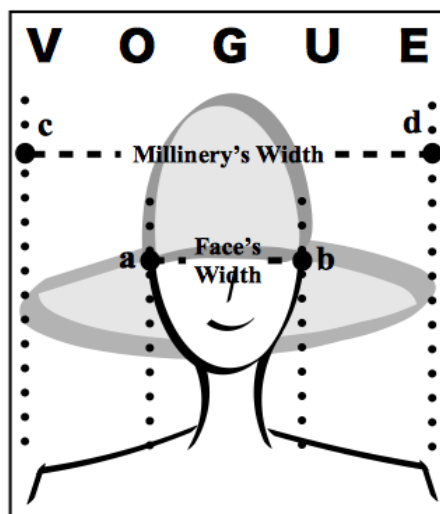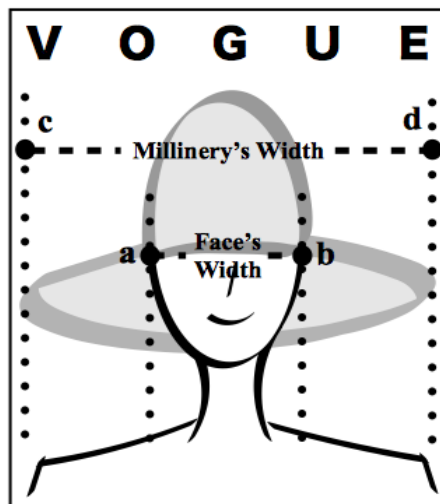*Figure 1.* Calculation of millinery-face width ratio. Face width: a to b millinery width: c to d ratio: $\overline{cd}/\overline{ab}$.

Figure 2. Calculation of millinery-face height ratio. Face height: a to b millinery height: c to d ratio: $\overline{cd}/\overline{ab}$.
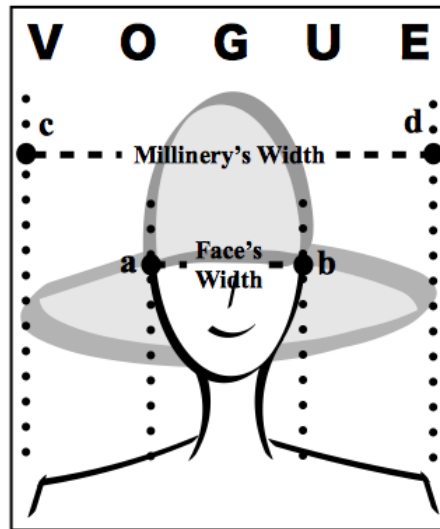
Figure 3. Calculation of millinery-face depth ratio. Face depth: a to b millinery depth: c to d ratio: $\overline{cd}/_{ab}$.

Socioeconomic data were obtained from the Detailed Occupation of the Economically Active Population: 1900-1970 (Series D 233-682) published by the United States Bureau of the Census. We collated labor statistics for each occupation from the 1900s-1960s. The U.S. began conducting labor force surveys in the 1930s (Webb, 1939). Data from 1900-1950 were published by Kaplan and Casey (1958) in Series D 233-682. Data for the period from 1950-1960 (Table 201) and 1960-1970 (Table 221) were extracted from the population surveys conducted in 1960 and 1970, respectively, by the U.S. Census Bureau. The occupation categories in Series D 233-682 were cross-checked against the third edition of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) from the U.S. Bureau of Employment Security, in order to clarify some ambiguous categories such as Counseling or Placement (U.S. Census Bureau, 1976).

We sampled and compiled data on millinery and socioeconomic contexts. We randomly sampled ten magazine covers per year, and found that by 1966, the number of cover models wearing hats was in decline. We sampled 667 covers from the 1900s-1960s and documented millinery features, as well as the width, height, and depth ratios between hats and faces. Using the data in Series D 233-682, we calculated the number of people in each occupation per decade, and then employed the Occupation Prestige Score developed by Davis et al. (1980) to rank the occupations. We were then able to identify the distribution of SES from occupational status (Wikipedia, 2015b). Finally, we divided the occupational hierarchy into four levels using the interquartile range approach (IQR = 20.55):

Upper class: Professional, Technical, Manager, Officials, and Proprietors, Excluding Farm workers;

Upper-middle class: Farmers, Farm Managers, Clerical, Craftsmen, Foremen;

Lower-middle class: Sale Workers, Operative, Service, Exclude Household;

Lower class: Domestic workers, Farm laborers and foremen, Laborers, Excluding Farm and Mine laborers (see Table 1).

Table 1

Socioeconomic Status Based on Occupation Prestige Score

Occupation	SES	Prestige score	Interquartile range = 20.55
Professional, Technical…etc.	Upper Class	59.12	Maximum
Manager, officials, and proprietors, exclude farm	Upper class	51.99	
Farmers and farm managers	Upper-middle class	41.08	Q1
Clerical…etc.	Upper-middle class	40.29	
Craftsmen, foremen…etc.	Upper-middle class	39.57	
Sale workers	Lower-middle class	35.88	Q2 median
Operative	Lower-middle class	28.77	
Service, exclude household	Lower-middle class	26.69	
Private household	Lower class	20.53	Q3
Farm labors and foremen	Lower class	18.64	
Labors, exclude farm and mine	Lower class	18.62	Minimum

We calculated the populations of the upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, and lower socioeconomic classes for each decade in order to explore the correlations between socioeconomic structure and millinery styles from the 1900s to the 1960s. We also used t-tests to test for any significant differences in millinery styles every two decades, in order to identify changes in millinery over time.

Results

Correlations Between Socioeconomic Status and Millinery

Results showed that millinery height and width were strongly correlated with socioeconomic factors. The absolute value of these coefficients ranged from 0.5 to 0.7, except for the coefficient for depth which was lower than 0.5 in absolute value (see Appendix A). The most positive significant correlations were between the lower SES group and millinery height/width, with correlation coefficients of 0.790 and 0.773, respectively. This means that hats became narrower and flatter as the population of the lower socioeconomic strata was reduced. We also found that the ratio of female to male workers was negatively correlated with millinery width and height, as demonstrated by coefficients of -0.536 and -0.526, respectively. This implies that hats became narrower and flatter as the proportion of female workers compared to male workers increased. However, this correlation was not found to be significant.

Time-Sensitive Periods in Millinery Style

Next we employed t-tests to compare average millinery width and height every two decades. The decades that showed significant differences in width ratio were as follows: 1900s and 1910s ($p = 0.000$); 1910s and 1920s ($p = 0.029$); 1930s and 1940s ($p = 0.023$). Significant differences in height ratio were found in: 1900s and 1910s ($p = 0.002$); 1920s and 1930s ($p = 0.024$); 1940s and 1950s ($p = 0.001$); and 1950s and 1960s ($p = 0.000$).

The results show that millinery width and height were reduced approximately every 20 years. Using the two World Wars as key time points, we can identify the four periods of change in millinery: The first period was from 1900 to 1910, during which time hats were significantly reduced in both height and width. In the second period from the 1910s to the 1930s, hats became significantly narrower in the first decade (1910s-1920s), and then flatter in the second decade as well (1920s-1930s). The third period was from the 1930s to the 1950s. Hats again became narrower during the first decade (1930s-1940s) and flatter during the latter decade (1940s-1950s). The

fourth and final period, from the 1950s to the 1960s, actually saw a significant increase in the height of hats. This is because at the time, the popularity of millinery was waning, replaced by the emergence of beauty salons and a focus on hairstyles. Milliners therefore employed bolder design and visual effects in an attempt to win back female consumers (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).
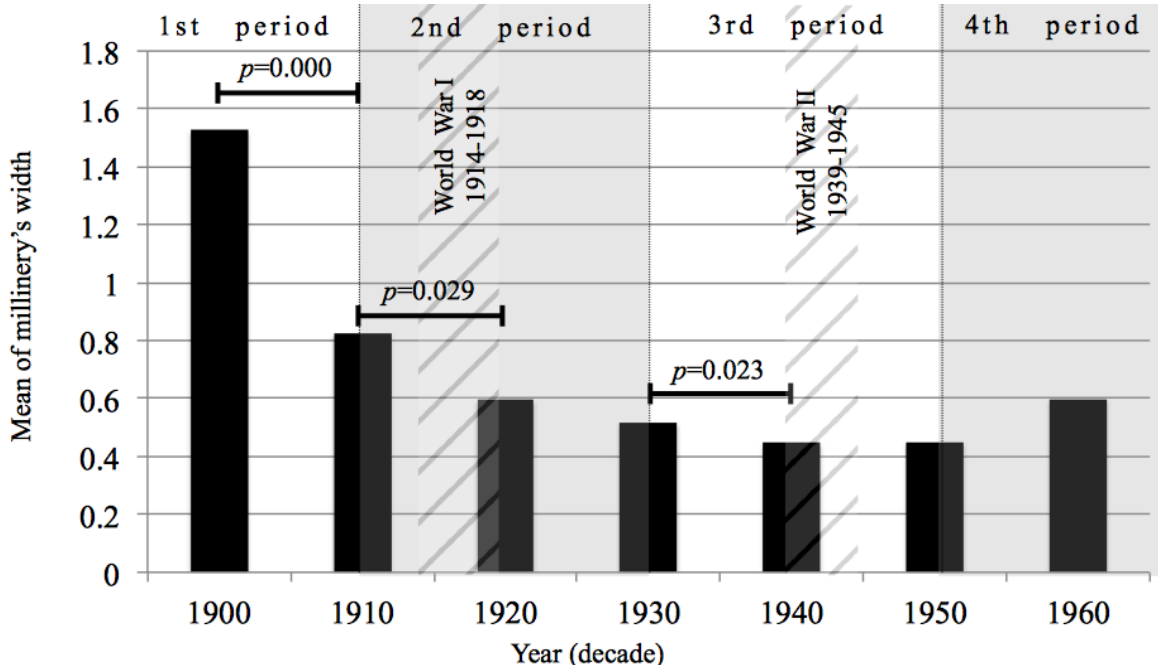

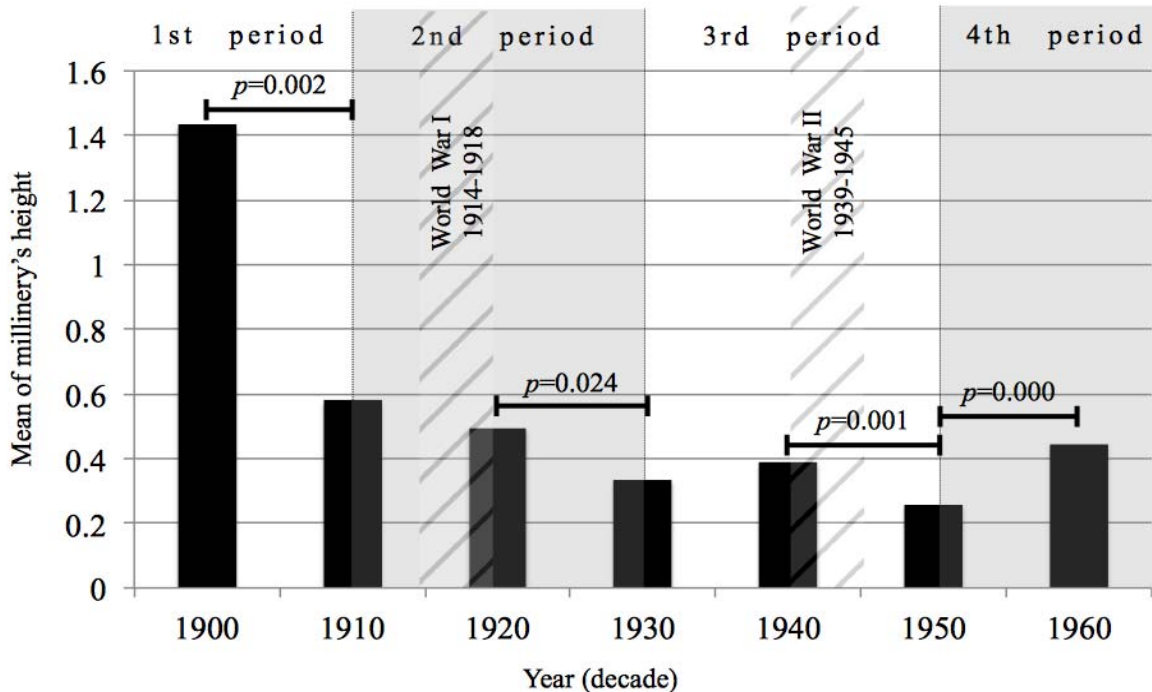*Figure 4.* Four periods of change in millinery width.

Figure 5. Four periods of change in millinery height.

Note that in the first period (1900-1910), there was a significant reduction in both width and height of popular millinery styles. In the second period, width was significantly reduced from 1910-1920 while height was significantly reduced from 1920-1930. In the third period, millinery width was reduced from 1930-1940. Height was significantly reduced from 1940-1950. In the fourth period (1950-1960), only the height of millinery was significantly increased.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our study highlights the following findings: First, it is evident that the population ratio of lower to higher socioeconomic strata is significantly correlated with millinery height and width. The low SES group changed the most significantly, compared to other socioeconomic sectors (as shown in Figure 6). Consumers in this class tended to favor wider and taller hats, while other groups preferred narrower, more understated styles. This result demonstrates that consumers from low socioeconomic backgrounds have a key influence on fashion and accessories, a result which differs from previous opinions that popular fashion is led by the influence of those from higher socioeconomic strata. Our data also suggest that women joining the labor force in the 1920s did not have as significant an impact on millinery styles as expected; this is in direct conflict with the viewpoint of many researchers who believe that the female workforce is a key driver of fashion (Moehling, 2005).
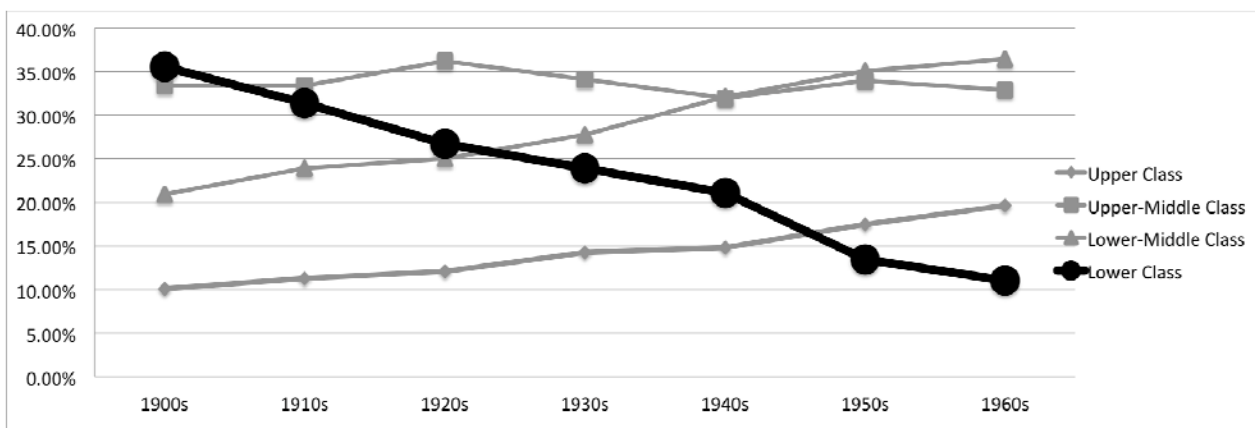
Figure 6. Socioeconomic changes from 1900 through the 1960s.

From the findings described above, we can infer that changes in the populations within various socioeconomic groups led to changes in millinery style. In the early 1900s, most of the population belonged to the lower class and had limited consumer power. It is easy to infer that Vogue magazine was not a publication commonly read by the working class. However, the target audience of the magazine was the top socioeconomic level, because this was where consumers of that magazine were concentrated. As only these individuals could afford accessories like hats, millinery came to be a symbol of status and power. Therefore, hats in this era were broad and tall, and intended to be conspicuousness. In the 1910s, however, the lower class began to be replaced by the burgeoning middle class. Hats became an accessory that many women could afford, and were no longer symbols of exclusivity, status, or power. Hats were therefore designed to be narrower and flatter, with more focus on practicality. As indicated, shifts in the population of the lower class significantly influenced millinery style. An influx of people into the lower classes generally means there has been a downturn in the economy. In such

times, only the upper class could be flamboyant in their clothing, the women wearing large and flashy accessories to flaunt their privileged status. However, as economic prosperity increased and more of the lower class progressed to the middle class, millinery style became narrower and more understated, with a greater emphasis on practicality. Another notable point is that following the rise of the middle class, the tastes and preferences of the upper class tended to be anti-mainstream. This explains why we found a low correlation between the upper class and popular fashion. As those at higher socioeconomic levels became marginalized, they tended to seek out unique styles to express themselves within their social circles. As seen today, there are a small number of luxury, non-mainstream brands that target only the upper echelon of society.

A popular conception among previous studies is that the entry of women into the workforce led to key developments in fashion, with clothing design becoming cleaner and simpler (Guild, 2012). Although we did find that as the ratio of female to male workers increased, millinery style became simpler and more practical, this correlation was not statistically significant. The relationship between a higher number of females in the workforce and changes in millinery style was not as marked as expected. This shows that changes in fashion were more attributable to wider changes in the overall socioeconomic structure. Gender change in the workforce was a part of these changes, but its influence was not as strong as expected.

From our study of millinery style, we draw the following conclusions: Fluctuations in the population of the lower class were significantly correlated with changes in fashion. When the lower class was the predominant socioeconomic group and economic inequality was more pronounced, the main consumers of millinery were upper class females. Therefore, hats were bolder and designed to be more conspicuous. As the burgeoning middle class became the primary consumer group, economic inequality gradually declined and greater emphasis was placed on fashion being practical. The preferences of the upper class became distinctly non-mainstream, reducing the correlation between their sensitivities and popular fashion. Our findings regarding alterations in millinery style as they associate with demographic changes are compiled in Table 2, in accordance with two different objectives for wearing hats: conspicuousness and practicality.

Table 2

Correlation Between Low Socioeconomic Groups and Millinery Styles

Economic strata	Target consumers	Millinery style	Objective
Growth in lower class	Upper class	Wide and high	Conspicuousness > Practicality
Reduction in lower class	Middle class	Narrow and flat	Conspicuousness < Practicality

Also, women entering the workforce was clearly not the only factor influencing millinery style. We did find that fashion changed after women joined the labor force; however, the influence of this factor was not as significant as socioeconomic developments. Women in the workforce were only a part of the general social changes that affected fashion. Third, we found that after World War I, millinery height and width were reduced approximately once every twenty years. Using the two World Wars as key time points, we identified four periods of change in millinery style (1900-1910, 1911-1930, 1931-1950, and 1951-1960), during which hats became progressively smaller. We reason that major events, such as war, quickly transform preferences for clothing and accessories, possibly due to psychological changes or the material shortages caused by conflict. Future research can make a more in-depth study of these issues.

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Appendix A

Millinery Height

	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	Correlation
Female and male ratio	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.28	0.33	0.38	0.47	-0.536
Upper class and upper-middle class ratio	0.3	0.34	0.33	0.42	0.46	0.51	0.6	-0.606
Upper class and lower-middle class ratio	0.48	0.47	0.48	0.51	0.46	0.5	0.54	-0.179
Upper class and lower class ratio	0.28	0.36	0.45	0.6	0.7	1.29	1.78	-0.476
Upper-middle class and lower-middle ratio	1.6	1.4	1.45	1.23	1	0.97	0.9	0.740
Upper-middle class and lower class ratio	0.94	1.07	1.36	1.43	1.52	2.52	2.99	-0.518
Lower-middle class and lower class ratio	0.59	0.76	0.94	1.16	1.52	2.6	3.31	-0.509
Middle class and other class ratio	1.19	1.34	1.58	1.62	1.79	2.23	2.26	-0.693
Middle class and upper class ratio	5.38	5.06	5.08	4.35	4.34	3.96	3.53	0.674
Middle class and lower class ratio	1.53	1.83	2.29	2.59	3.04	5.12	6.29	-0.514
Upper class and other class ratio	0.11	0.13	0.14	0.17	0.17	0.21	0.24	-0.620
Upper-middle class and other class ratio	0.5	0.5	0.57	0.52	0.47	0.51	0.49	-0.061
Lower-middle class and other class ratio	0.26	0.31	0.33	0.38	0.47	0.54	0.57	-0.679
Lower class and other class ratio	0.55	0.46	0.36	0.31	0.27	0.16	0.12	0.790

Millinery Width

	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	Correlation
Female and male ratio	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.28	0.33	0.38	0.47	-0.526
Upper class and upper-middle class ratio	0.3	0.34	0.33	0.42	0.46	0.51	0.6	-0.597
Upper class and lower-middle class ratio	0.48	0.47	0.48	0.51	0.46	0.5	0.54	-0.223
Upper class and lower class ratio	0.28	0.36	0.45	0.6	0.7	1.29	1.78	-0.481
Upper-middle class and lower-middle ratio	1.6	1.4	1.45	1.23	1	0.97	0.9	0.721
Upper-middle class and lower class ratio	0.94	1.07	1.36	1.43	1.52	2.52	2.99	-0.523
Lower-middle class and lower class ratio	0.59	0.76	0.94	1.16	1.52	2.6	3.31	-0.510
Middle class and other class ratio	1.19	1.34	1.58	1.62	1.79	2.23	2.26	-0.681
Middle class and upper class ratio	5.38	5.06	5.08	4.35	4.34	3.96	3.53	0.673
Middle class and lower class ratio	1.53	1.83	2.29	2.59	3.04	5.12	6.29	-0.516
Upper class and other class ratio	0.11	0.13	0.14	0.17	0.17	0.21	0.24	-0.617
Upper-middle class and other class ratio	0.5	0.5	0.57	0.52	0.47	0.51	0.49	-0.071
Lower-middle class and other class ratio	0.26	0.31	0.33	0.38	0.47	0.54	0.57	-0.660
Lower class and other class ratio	0.55	0.46	0.36	0.31	0.27	0.16	0.12	0.773

Millinery Depth

	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	Correlation
Female and male ratio	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.28	0.33	0.38	0.47	-0.073
Upper class and upper-middle class ratio	0.3	0.34	0.33	0.42	0.46	0.51	0.6	-0.168
Upper class and lower-middle class ratio	0.48	0.47	0.48	0.51	0.46	0.5	0.54	-0.103
Upper class and lower class ratio	0.28	0.36	0.45	0.6	0.7	1.29	1.78	-0.088
Upper-middle class and lower-middle ratio	1.6	1.4	1.45	1.23	1	0.97	0.9	0.156
Upper-middle class and lower class ratio	0.94	1.07	1.36	1.43	1.52	2.52	2.99	-0.057
Lower-middle class and lower class ratio	0.59	0.76	0.94	1.16	1.52	2.6	3.31	-0.101
Middle class and other class ratio	1.19	1.34	1.58	1.62	1.79	2.23	2.26	-0.054
Middle class and upper class ratio	5.38	5.06	5.08	4.35	4.34	3.96	3.53	0.174
Middle class and lower class ratio	1.53	1.83	2.29	2.59	3.04	5.12	6.29	-0.082
Upper class and other class ratio	0.11	0.13	0.14	0.17	0.17	0.21	0.24	-0.116
Upper-middle class and other class ratio	0.5	0.5	0.57	0.52	0.47	0.51	0.49	0.524
Lower-middle class and other class ratio	0.26	0.31	0.33	0.38	0.47	0.54	0.57	-0.133
Lower class and other class ratio	0.55	0.46	0.36	0.31	0.27	0.16	0.12	0.011

Julia Lovell as a Faithful Rewriter in Translating Chinese Literary Text: The Version of *A Dictionary of Maqiao* as a Case in Point

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As a professional translator, Chinese history lecturer and academic writer, Julia Lovell has made a lot of contributions in translating modern Chinese literary works into English. But the field of translation studies has not given due attention to her so far. Based on her own practice and understanding of translation, she presented the notion of faithful recreation as her translation principle. This article sheds light on how she implemented her translation notion in the process of her translation, taking her version of *A Dictionary of Maqiao* as a case to examine the effectiveness of her work under the guidance of faithful recreation. The discussion mainly focuses on the sound level, the grammatical level, pragmatic level, and original creativity.

Keywords: translation principle, faithful recreation, creativity, effectiveness

Introduction

Julia Lovell, the British writer and literary translator, is a lecturer in Chinese history at the University of London. She started learning Chinese during her Cambridge University study and in 1997 she studied at Nanjing University for one year as an exchange student. From this period, she became interested in modern Chinese literature, which intrigues her to devote to translating Chinese literary works in the later period. Her translation mainly focuses on the modern Chinese works, including Han Shaogong's *A Dictionary of Maqiao* (2005), Xinran's *Sky Burial* (2004), Zhu Wen's *I Love Dollars* (2006), Eileen Chang's *Lust, Caution* (2007), Yan Lianke's *Serve the People* (2008), and Lu Xun's *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China* (2009). But now for the invitation of Penguin group she is translating 西游记 (Xi You Ji, Journey to the West), one of the four major Chinese classic novels. But up to now, Julia Lovell's contribution in translating modern Chinese literary works has not gained due attention of translation criticism. In addition to translation, she also contributed a lot as an academic writer. Her own works mainly include *The Politics of Cultural Capital: China's Quest for a Nobel Prize in Literature* (2006), *The Great Wall: China Against the World 1000 BC-AD 2000* (2006) and *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China* (2011).

The English version of Han Shaogong's *A Dictionary of Maqiao* is her first work in translating Chinese novels. She recalled that "I still remember how immediately appealing I found Han Shaogong's writing when I read him for my Master's degree" (YANG, 2010). That is the reason why she chose to translate this book. Even

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after she finished translating this work, no commercial press is interested in publishing it. Only after Columbia University Press published it in a limited number of hard copy, commercial publishers became aware of its commercial potential and bought the rights for the paperback version. Julia later concluded that only when "they saw it (the book) worked, they were prepared to take it on. This is one way in which Chinese literature can enter the publishing mainstream" (YANG, 2010). *A Dictionary of Maqiao* has helped its author win Best Novel in Taiwan, China Times Prize, Shanghai Literary Prize, Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction by *Asia Weekly* and the second Newman Prize for Chinese Literature. The narrative method of this novel is highly praised as being creative by literary critics. "As its title suggests, the novel is structured as a dictionary" (HAN, 2005, p. viii). Under every seemingly dialect dictionary entries, readers can enjoy stories of historical events, people, plants, animals and foods, which form a closely related network of the episodes of Maqiao from pre-1949 to 1976, reflecting the historical changes of China and picturing lives of common Chinese people in this duration. When Julia Lovell wrote to Han Shaogong that she wanted to translate this novel, the writer gave her a "friendly but slightly bemused response, 'I am very happy that you wish to translate the book, but I'm afraid it will be terribly difficult'" (HAN, 2005, p. xiii). To a great extent, this novel is really hard to be rendered into English because of the quantitative uses of dialect and provincial custom in this book. In despite of the great difficulties, Lovell finished her translation successfully except five entries of the novel because she thought they are "so heavily dependent in the Chinese original on puns between dialect and Mandarin Chinese as to make extensive and distracting linguistic explanations necessary in English" (HAN, 2005, p. xiii). In general, the whole version is faithful to the original text. In this article, we want to delve into the skills employed by Julia Lovell guided by her principle of faithful recreation and discuss the effectiveness and losses of her translation work.

Julia Lovell firstly presented her translation principle of "faithful recreation" (LU, 2009, p. xliv) in *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* published in 2009. Before theoretically putting forward this translation principle, she has brought it into play in her translation practice, including the translation of *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, which attracted lots of readers for the translator's excellent work. The word of "faithful" here carries the meaning of the translator's being faithful to the original text while "recreation" means that she also exerts her creativity in pursuit of ideal translation. By doing detailed comparison between the original and target texts, we can find that the translator invested a lot of effort in keeping balance between being faithful to the original text and catering for the target readers' aesthetic expectation. On the one hand, she gave enough respect to the author of the original. Only "with the author's permission", she omitted "the following entries: 'Bayuan'; 'Lian xiang'; 'Liu shi'; 'Po nao'; 'Xian'; and the final paragraph of the entry 'Reincarnation'" (HAN, 2005, p. xiii). In the cases when "literal translation is unacceptable" (WANG, 2013), she still tried to "be close to the spirit of the original text by employing a literally unfaithful way" (WANG, 2013). Even in dealing with some aesthetic effects created by special Chinese linguistic devices, she tried her best to cling to the original or make suitable compensation. On the other hand, she consciously or unconsciously made use of recreation in the process of translation in order to provide target readers with "elegant and readable English" (WANG, 2013). The seemly contradictory strategies of faithfulness and recreation were fused together with name of "faithful recreation" as a principle to guide her translating. This article will demonstrate how the translator implemented her translation principle in translating *A Dictionary of Maqiao* from four aspects, i.e., faithful recreation at the sound level, faithful recreation at the grammatical level, faithful recreation at pragmatic level, and original creativity guided by faithful recreation.

Faithful Recreation at Sound Level

The study of a text at the sound level is concerned with the aesthetic effect made by the special pronunciation of words and word combinations. In some texts, especially in literary texts, there may be special sound devices "that can combine to special effect" (Fawcett, 2007, p. 11). In the original text of *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, the author makes use of some onomatopoetic words to increase the aesthetic value of this text at the sound level. Julia Lovell was especially prudent in dealing with the sound effect created by onomatopoetic words and some Chinese four-word phrases in her faithful recreation work. From the version, it is not difficult to find that the translator showed enough respect to the author in this perspective. Let us look at the following examples concerned with the translator's skills in transplanting the aesthetic values at the sound level.

Example 1:

ST: "凡此百虫，采天地精华，集古今灵气，是最为难得的佳肴。佳肴。啧啧啧……" (HAN, 1997, p. 35).

Literal translation: "All these hundreds insects, gathering heaven and earth's essence, collecting ancient and modern spirit, are most delicious dishes. Delicious dishes, Ze, Ze, Ze (pinyin, onomatopoetic word),…"

TT: "The hundred insects are thus, they gather the essence of heaven and earth, collect the ingenuity of the old and the new. They are the most elusive delicacies. Delicacies. Tsk tsk tsk…" (HAN, 2005, p. 36).

Example 2:

ST: 犁完最后一丘晚稻田，洪老板呼哧呼哧倒在滚烫的泥水里，再也没有爬起来 (HAN, 1997, p. 205).

Literal translation: Ploughed the last late rice field, boss Hong hu chi hu chi (pinyin) lied down in the hot mud, never climb up again.

TT: After having plough the last paddy of late summer rice, a panting and wheezing boss Hong lay down to sleep in the mud, never to clamber up again (HAN, 2005, p. 207).

In the original text, the author uses onomatopoetic words "啧啧啧 (pronounced as 'ze')" and "呼哧呼哧 (pronounced as 'hu chi hu chi')" to depict the image vividly in these two examples. In the first example the translator creatively coined a word "tsk" to represent the sound and onomatopoetic effects of the original Chinese words. In the second example, the translator partly compensated the sound effect of the original onomatopoetic phrase by using the "panting and wheezing", in which the suffix "-ing" was repeated as the rhetoric device of rhyme. The sound effect and vivid literary images were largely represented in the version.

In the original text the author is in favor of using many four-word phrases to describe the behaviors of people. Of course this linguistic form presents special aesthetic effect for readers. Such phrases may be used in different text types and they are "ideal for creative writing in that they trigger the reader's imagination" (Pellatt & Liu, 2010, p. 144). It seems that the translator was also fond of the aesthetic effect created by such four-word phrases and tried to represent the original effect in the translated version as shown in the following examples.

Example 3

ST: 万玉还是笼着袖子支支吾吾没有动 (HAN, 1997, p. 60).

Literal translation: Wanyu still put his hands in sleeves, zhi zhi wu wu (pinyin, means staggering) without movement (HAN, 2005, p. 62).

TT: Wanyu just stood there hemming and hawing (HAN, 2005, p. 64).

Example 4

ST: 我还看见一些面熟和面生的妇人，村里的和远处来的，去那里哭哭泣泣，有的还红了眼睛 (HAN, 1997, p. 66).

Literal translation: I still saw some familiar and unfamiliar women, from the village and other far places, go there ku ku qi qi (pinyin, means crying and crying), some even red eyes.

TT: I also saw women there, both familiar and unfamiliar faces, some form the village and some from far away, all come to weep and wail, eyes red from grief (HAN, 2005, p. 69).

In these examples, the four-word phrase "支支吾吾", "喊爹喊娘", and "大叫大喊" are common four-word Chinese phrases while "哭哭泣泣" is temporarily created four-word phrase by the author. These all contributes to describing the repetition of the same actions in the situation, producing aesthetic effects intended by the author. Because of the linguistic differences between Chinese and English it is very difficult even impossible in most cases to transfer the same effect into the target text. In order to represent the original text faithfully the translator employed alliteration and rhyme to compensate the sound effect. In example 3, alliteration and rhyme were used by the translator at the same time while in example 4 only alliteration used. Of course, "translating sounds is actually very difficult" (Fawcett, 2007, p. 13) but they deserve the translator's effort.

Faithful Recreation at Grammatical Level

Grammar is "the set of rules which determine the way in which units such as words and phrases can be combined in a language and the kind of information which has to be made regularly explicit in utterance" (Baker, 2000, p. 83). It is a relatively stable system that the language users have to follow. In *A Dictionary of Maqiao* the author employs some novel grammatical devices to show special aesthetic effects, which were sensitively identified by the translator and they were successfully presented in the version.

Example 5

ST: 吃鸡肉鸭肉牛肉羊肉狗肉鱼肉，还有肉——这是对猪肉的简称。吃包子馒头油饼油糕面条米粉糍粑，当然还有饭，就是米饭 (HAN, 1997, p. 12).

Literal translation: Eat chicken duck meat beef mutton dog meat fish meat and meat-this is pork's abbreviation. Eat stuffed buns steamed buns fried pan cakes fried cookie noodles rice noodles glutinous rice ball, of course, including rice, just is rice.

TT: Qia chicken duck beef mutton fish dog, and meat- this last was the abbreviation for pork. Qia stuffed buns steamed buns fried dough cakes fried crispy cakes noodles rice noodles glutinous rice cakes and, of course, rice (that would be boiled rice) (HAN, 2005, p. 14).

Example 6

ST: 总结出希大杆子道德品质败坏勾结地主恶霸资助土匪武装反对土地改革非常经商等等十来条罪状，终于将他定为反动地痞，一索子捆了起来 (HAN, 1997, p. 25).

Literal translation: Concluded that Long Stick Xi moral quality bad connect landlord bad guy economically support bandits counter land reform illegally do business and other ten plus crimes, at last made him a counterrevolutionary local ruffians, roped him up.

TT: They got someone highly leaned to mull it all over until he finally concluded that Long Stick Xi was guilty of moral bankruptcy plotting with landlords and tyrants colluding with bandits forcibly resisting land

reform illegal commerce, and so on, producing a list of crimes ten items long which, inclusion, made him a counterrevolutionary carbuncle who should be tied up double-quick (HAN, 2005, p. 27).

In these three examples, we can see that in the original texts, several related things are put together to form parallelism. The author deliberately deviates from the Chinese grammar by omitting the punctuation in narrating a serial of parallel things. In examples 5 and 6, commas are necessary in the grammatical narration of these underlined parts in the corresponding parts of Chinese and English versions. Such an ungrammatical narration device is a personalized skill coined by the author in order to create a special sound and psychological effects in the readers' minds. In the translated version, the translator successfully identified the author's intention and retained the same grammatical deviation, putting the original text into such ungrammatical expressions as the underlined parts in these two examples. In this way, the sound and psychological effects of the original text were faithfully transferred into the target text. To great extent the translator fulfilled the pursuit of equivalence in narration style presented in the original text.

Faithful Recreation at Pragmatic Level

As Mona Baker posited that in translation study we should pay attention "not only to denotative meaning but also to 'the way utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context'" (Baker, 2000, p. 217). In translation the translator has to be able to identify the writer's special communicative skill and its pragmatic effect. In many cases it is not very difficult for the translator to reach this target but it is hard to be transplanted in the target text. As we know, Chinese and English are from different language families. This makes the E-C and C-E translation more difficult than the translation between two related languages originated from the same origin, such as English and French. Thus, it is more difficult for translator in dealing with the pragmatic effects created by special linguistic expressions in *A Dictionary of Maqiao*. Please look at the following examples:

Example 7

ST: 他眨眨眼："不叫拖拉机？我没读多少书，是个流氓。" 他的意思是，他是个文盲，分不清坦克和拖拉机没有什么奇怪 (HAN, 1997, p. 180).

Literal translation: He blinked: "not called tractor? I didn't read too many books, I am a rascal." His meaning is, he is an illiterate, cannot distinguish tank and tractor no wonder.

TT: He blinked: "Isn't it called tractor? I didn't get much education, I'm illegitimate."

What he meant was he was illiterate, that it wasn't surprising he couldn't distinguish clearly between tanks and tractors (HAN, 2005, p. 182).

Example 8

ST: 有一次从公社干部那里，把毛主席语录"路线是个纲，纲举目张"，听成"路线是个桩，桩上钉桩"，有明显的错误，但因为"桩"字处于他的口，马桥人后来一直深信不疑，反而嘲笑我们知青把路线说成是"纲"，纲是什么？ (HAN, 1997, p. 180).

Literal translation: Once from the commune cadres, regarded Chairman Mao's quotation "Route is an outline, outline set subject unfold", heard as "route is a stake, stake on nail stake", exists apparent mistake, but because "stake" was from his mouth, Maqiao people later always deeply believe without doubt, but laughed us intellectual youths regarded route as "outline", outline is what?

TT: Once, listening to the commune cadres, he heard "<u>We must grasp the key to the road ahead</u> " as "<u>We must grasp the tree on the road ahead</u>", which was obviously wrong, but since "tree" came straight out of Benyi's mouth, Maqiao people trusted it implicitly and instead laughed us Educated Youth, saying we had to grasp the "key" to the road ahead- what was that supposed to mean? (HAN, 2005, pp. 182-183).

In example 7, the pronunciation of "流氓 (rascal)" is similar to "文盲 (illiterate)" in the original text. The speaker mistakes "流氓 (rascal)" with "文盲 (illiterate)", making a laugh stock for the listeners as well as showing the identity of himself as an illiterate. But if the translator literally puts these two phrases into English, the English version is sure to lose the pragmatic effect of the original text because it is impossible to produce the similar humorous effect by using "rascal" and "illiterate" in English. Therefore, the translator creatively changed the phrase of "流氓 (rascal)" into "illegitimate", which shares similar pronunciation of "illiterate" and can well retain the original pragmatic effect. In this case, the literal meaning of "流氓 (rascal)" is substituted by "illegitimate". The author successfully represented the original pragmatic effect by recreation instead of falling into the trap of word-for-word translation.

In example 8, the hero of the story makes a mistake in forwarding a quotation of Mao Zedong because of his ignorance and the similar pronunciations of "纲 (principle)" and "桩 (pile)" in Chinese. For the same reason as demonstrated in example 7, the translator tactically changed these pair of word into "key" and "tree" in order to represent the pragmatic effect. In such a case, it would be impossible for the target text to show the original pragmatic effect if the translator cannot do suitable adjustments in the process of translation. In contrast to the literal faithfulness, the process of recreation plays better part in representing the original pragmatic effect. In this respect, it is more like the principle shown in Nida's dynamic equivalence, which places priority on "the way in which the original receptors understood and appreciated the text" (Nida, 2001, p. 86).

Original Creativity Guided by Faithful Creativity

"Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text" (Lefevere, 2004, preface). The translator's creativity is inevitably involved in this process, especially in translating literary text. In seeking for faithfulness, Julia Lovell subjectively employed her own creativity in representing the original aesthetic effect in translating *A Dictionary of Maqiao*. In addition to that, the translator made use of creativity to add aesthetic value which does not exist in the original text. For example:

Example 9

ST: "什么科学？还不就是学懒？你看你们城里的汽车、火车、<u>飞机</u>，哪一样不是懒人想出来的？不是图懒，如何会想出那样鬼名堂？" (HAN, 1997, p. 40).

Literal translation: "What science? Just is learning laziness? You look at your city's car, train, <u>plane</u>, which is not lazy people think out? Not for laziness, why can think out that kind of devilish things?"

TT: "What d'you mean scientific? You mean lazy! Those city automobiles, railroads, <u>flying machines</u> of yours –name me one that hasn't been thought up by a lazybones! Who else but lazybones wouldn't thought up such a devilish set of names?" (HAN, 2005, p. 42).

Example 10

ST: 各种下流话可以让你大胆得让你<u>目瞪口呆魂飞魄散天旋地转日月无光</u> (Han, 1997, p. 94).

Literal translation: All kinds of low talks are bold to make your <u>eyes stare mouth stop</u> soul fly soul disperse sky swirl earth turn sun moon no light.

TT: The endless variety of low talk would make your <u>eyes pop, jaw drop</u>, mind blow, thoughts wander, make the heavens spin, the earth turn, and the sun and moon darken (HAN, 2005, p. 94).

As we can see in example 9, there is no deviated expression and special aesthetic effect in the original text while in the target text the translator creatively puts the word "飞机 (plane)" into "flying machines". The original word is just a common one carrying no added aesthetic value in the context. But the translator tactically rendered it into an uncommon phrase "flying machines", adding more aesthetic weight. In this case, "the translator's invisibility" (Venuti, 2004, p. v) was totally cast away, contributing to profiling a more vivid image of the undereducated speaker and creating better aesthetic effect in contrast to the original text. In this respect, it is apparently a successful example branded with the author's original creativity.

In example 10, the phrase of "口呆 (mouth stops)" is part of the Chinese idiom "目瞪口呆", which is employed by the translator to depict the exaggerated effect produced by some local people's low talks. If we put it into English literally, "目瞪口呆" should be "eyes pop, mouth stops". In this version, the translator creatively put it into "jaw drop", which not only vividly represented the image of this Chinese idiom but also added more poetic effect in this context compared with the original text. Such example shows the translator's proficiency in making use of her own creativity in literary translation. In this respect, her subjectivity is brought into full play skillfully.

Conclusion

By careful comparison between Chinese and English versions of *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, we can find that the translator successfully implemented her translation principle of faithful recreation, being faithful to the original text as well as taking target readers' expectation into serious consideration. Henceforth, the seemingly contradictory strategies of faithfulness and recreation are unified in her translating work. The principle of faithful recreation is similar to the notion "loyalty" put forward by Nord, which "commits the translator bilaterally to both the source and the target side" (Nord, 2001). Based on the correct understanding and being faithful to the original text's meaning and aesthetic effect, the translator also employed her own creativity to make the version elegant. In translating some special linguistic and cultural points, she took advantage of "flexible technique to let the readers understand the meaning" (WANG, 2013). Under the guidance of faithful recreation, the gifted translator successfully represented aesthetic effect of the original text to a great extent.

In an interview concerned with her translating Chinese modern literary works, Julia Lovell said that "my fundamental principle overall was, of course, fidelity to the original" (Abrahamsen, 2009). Meanwhile, she also attempts to "get closer to recreating the native speaker's experience reading the original" (Abrahamsen, 2009). In order to let the readers enjoy linguistic fluency, she tries to "avoid using explanatory footnotes wherever possible" (Abrahamsen, 2009). But when it was necessary she would not refuse using "footnotes, or even the occasional introductory note to add information that might be useful or interesting" (Abrahamsen, 2009) for the English readers. It is of no doubt that the translator fulfilled her pursuit very well. But we still can find some losses in this version due to the linguistic and cultural gaps between English and Chinese. I believe that such difficulties can be minimized if the translator made more effort in the course of translation. But such cases are unavoidable in most of the translation work because of the inherent uncertainty of literary translation.

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