Editorial Preface

From the Desk of Managing Editor…

At the Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies R&D it is our mission to provide an outlet for quality research. We want to promote universal access and opportunities for the international human community to share and disseminate scientific and technical information. We believe in spreading knowledge of computer science and its applications to all classes of audiences. That is why we deliver up-to-date, authoritative coverage and offer open access of all our articles. Our archives have served as a place to provoke philosophical, theoretical, and empirical ideas from some of the finest minds in the field. We utilize the talents and experience of editor and reviewers working at Universities and Institutions from around the world. We would like to express our gratitude to all authors, whose research results have been published in our journal, as well as our referees for their in-depth evaluations. Our high standards are maintained through a double blind review process. We hope that this edition of the Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies R&D inspires and entices you to submit your own contributions in upcoming issues.

Thank you for Sharing Wisdom!

Managing Editor JHCS R&D Volume 1 Issue 3 July 2016

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Constructing New Textual Relationships to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: The Longest Tattoo Chain Campaign through the Lens of Digital Practices

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Abstract

This article uses Deuze's (2006) Principals of Digital Culture (participation, remediation, and bricolage) to analyze Lithograph's Longest Tattoo Chain campaigns in which the company broke up Alice's Adventures in Wonderland into 2500 temporary tattoos that participants placed on their bodies and then took photos of. I specifically focus on the digital representations of the tattoos, examining how the Principals of Digital Culture get enacted in ways that show the continuity between print and digital texts as well as the ways that digital practices open up possibilities for new textual creations.

Keywords: Digital, Textuality, Remediation, Participation, Bricolage, Tattoos

1. Introduction

Manoff (2006) argues that "material differences between print and electronic media can be seen in the ease with which the elements of digital objects can be manipulated, combined, rearranged, allowing for new modes of textual creation" (312-13). While critics have asserted that print texts lose meaning when translated to digital texts, Manoff challenges this claim by illustrating the ways that digital spaces can provide opportunities for new kinds of textual creations that enhance, expand, and even challenge print texts. Hayles (2003) suggests that "the transformation of a print document into an electronic text" (263) is "a form of translation, which is inevitably also an act of interpretation" (263). This view positions translation as a process of active meaning making rather than just a passive recording of a text in a different medium/framework. These kinds of processes of creating new modes of text and of interpreting print texts are at the heart of digital culture practices in the current cultural moment. Explaining the nature of principals driving digital culture, Deuze (2006) argues that it "can be seen as an emerging set of values, practices, and expectations regarding the way people (should) act and interact within the contemporary network society" (63). He contends that these practices are

located both in "online and offline phenomena, with links to trends and developments predating the World Wide Web, yet having an immediate impact and particularly changing the ways in which we use and give meaning to living in an increasingly interconnected, always on(line) environment" (63). Citing participation, remediation, and bricolage as the three key principal expectations and practices of digital spaces, Deuze(2006) illustrates the impact of these practices on views of offline and online textual practices.

In this article, I draw on these three to understand the challenges to the perceived beliefs about the separation between print and digital texts. To illustrate the ways in which the three core practices are being enacted in a way that highlights the complexity of the relationship between the two mediums, I study Lithograph, an online company that sells literary-themed products like tote bags, t-shirts and temporary tattoos that feature literary quotes and images on them. Recently, the company invited people to be a part of the World's Largest Tattoo Chain in which Alice's Adventures in Wonderland was broken up into approximately 2500 individual quotes and put on temporary tattoos. Participants paid $1 to receive a tattoo and be a part of the campaign. The participants chose where on their bodies to place the tattoos, took photos of their tattoos, and then loaded the photos to Lithograph.com in sequential order of the original texts so that viewers/readers can still read the novel in its original order by viewing the digital pictures of the tattoos. The Longest Tattoo Chain gives rise to new, multiple fluid, and dynamic readings of Alice's stories both through the physical embodiment of the words (in the form of the tattoos) and through the contextual frameworks within which participants locate these words (through the stating of their photographs). In alignment with Manoff's(2006) arguments, this study illustrates the ways that digital affordances like photography and websites can allow for those new modes of textual creation (Manoff, 2006, 312)By studying the photographic representations of the temporary tattoos, we can see the ways in which digital objects are rearranged and constructed so as to embrace the playfulness that print texts like Alice's Adventures in Wonderland encourage as well as create new venues for re-thinking what dominant literacy practices are being enacted in digital spaces.

2. The Growing Number of Literary Tattoos:

While the history of tattoos is quite long and there is not room here in this article to tell it, a fairly recent trend in tattooing in Western cultures has been one that focuses literary works. "A new wave of literary-inspired tattoos is proving you can be a bit creative without ending up with a garish design. Tattoo artists the world over are being asked to immortalize their client's favorite novels, poems and fairytales, be it with a quote or a symbol" (Travers2015). Literary-themed tattoos, a subset of fandom/fannish tattoos (Jones2015)are becoming increasingly popular, which is, according to Talmadge& Taylor (2010), not surprising: "the increasing presence of literary tattoos illustrate that tattoos are becoming more mainstream now, as acceptable as pierced ears and daring haircuts, and almost as common. So, it comes as no surprise that people you might label 'bookish types'—those librarians among us who know the Dewey decimal number for poetry by heart . . . or booksellers—would join the not-so conformist wave, inking a permanent declaration of love of books and writing into their very skin" (ix-x). Further, Herndon (2014) explains the fascination with literary tattoos as such: "because that's the beauty of books—we are all touched by them. They speak to us and give us what we need in any given moment and can leave indelible marks on our lives, sometimes even changing them completely. And behind each tattoo is a different story, a different meaning, a different explanation of why that book or phrase is so important. There are so many stories to be told." Thus, literary tattoos can serve as a way to represent the impact that texts have on readers as well as providing them ways to present the stories in different ways, based on their interpretations of

the text and its significance to them and to literary traditions.

2.1 Skin as Challenge to Traditional Literacy Practices

Prior to the Longest Tattoo Chain project, the most ambitious literary tattoo project was Jackson's novella entitled Skinwhich was permanently tattooed on 2,095 different people's bodies, one word at a time. Skin, which is touted as A Mortal World of Art, is not meant to be read in book format or even read in its entirety in sequential order as most books are. Rather, the textexists onlyon participants' bodies—most of whom do not know each other and will, most likely, never meet. Each "word"—as participants in the project are called—is both isolated from one another ("words" don't know who the other "words" are necessarily) and yet connected through an embodied text project; they are one part of the story, even if they don't know the whole story. As Talmadge&Taylor (2010) highlight, "Skin doesn't exist anywhere but as tattoos on people who are scattered all around the world. Skin participants are members of a living, breathing work of literature" (52). Yet, as Campbell, one of the words, explains, "belonging to Skin is a metaphorical kind of belonging. I've met a handful of the other words, but that's only because I live in New York. A word who lives in rural Idaho may never meet another word, much less Jackson herself . . . The relationship is beautifully abstract" (Talmadge& Taylor, 2010, 52). Despite the separate-ness of the "words," feelings of connectedness seems to be a significant reason that people want to be a part of such a project. As Josef asks in her blog where she writes about her participation in Skin, "Can you imagine being a part of a living, global story?" Over 10,000 people applied to be a part of Skin, illustrating the great desire to be a part of something unique, permanent, and literary.

The Skin project collectively bridges the material world of the body and digital spaces because pictures of the tattoos are posted online—not in any sort of sequential or organized way (i.e. like a centralized website), but some of the "words" have taken pictures of their tattoos and presented them in various places on the Internet to make visible their participation in the project. They also sent pictures to Jackson who was part of a video project completed by Berkley Art Museum in which Skin was highlighted through random images of some of the tattoos, rather than presenting the texts in an organized manner that would reveal what the story is. The video is available both at the museum and online, thus being a digital artifact that bridges the material and the virtual. Digital spaces were used, then, to showcasethe project and the people involved in it, one that connected the "words" through story—not necessarily through a physical, embodied relationship. In these ways, Skin challenges relationships to texts and calls for different kinds of engagements and types of "reading."

3. Lithograph's World's Longest Tattoo Chain

Skin is a creative project that was, at one point, the most ambitious of its kind. However, Lithograph's Longest Tattoo Chain is now the largest literary tattoo project in the world, with 5,000 tattooed participants who have worn temporary tattoos of quotes from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. Lithograph's international campaign to create the World's Longest Tattoo Chain was started in 2015. The first campaign for tattoos from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland was so successful that the company offered the same promotion for the second book, Through the Looking Glass, a campaign that sold out even more quickly than the first one. The company'sfounder, Fein, describes the intentions behind the project: "To celebrate the importance of books in our lives, and to launch our collection of temporary literary tattoos, we asked book lovers on Kickstarter to help us create the World's Longest Tattoo Chain" (lithograph.com).This call and the philosophy inherent in it obviously attracted people's imaginations because of the great

response and quick sell-out of both Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass campaigns.

There are two significant differences between Skin and the Longest Tattoo Chainthat need to be considered in order to understand the significance of the Longest Tattoo Chain. First, the Alice quotes are temporary tattoos, meant to be worn for a short time rather than be inked on the body in perpetuity. A tattoo does not have to be permanent, though, in order to have long-term significance. The Alice quotes are meant to be worn long enough for the participant to take a photo of the tattoo and post it to a digital website. When temporary tattoos are presented in digital space (as they are with the Longest Tattoo Chain), a different sense of permanence is granted them and sustained through digital spaces.In other words, while the embodied presence of the tattoo is, on one level, temporary, the record of the tattoo and the ongoing use of the tattoo photos suggest a different kind of "permanence" that is constructed in digital spaces, one that relies on both physical and digital spaces in order to be enacted and engaged in. Second, the Longest Tattoo Chain Project intends for people to read the Alice stories in their entirety—on flesh. Skinis not meant to be read for the story but appreciated for the idea—i.e. the randomness and materiality of the project itself. In contrast, the Longest Tattoo Chain encourages people to actually read the stories in their entirety through presenting photos of the individual tattoos in sequential order in a durable digital space, thus emphasizing the importance of both more traditional methods and more digitally-afforded/forward-looking/unique approaches to and engagements with texts.By not eschewing the print-based logic, this projects shows how print and digital texts mediate each other and "play together."

The process to participate in the Longest Tattoo Chain was fairly simple. Whenpeople sent an email request to be a part of the project, they received a temporary tattoo that was a randomly selected passage from either Alice's Adventures in Wonderland or Through the Looking Glass.When participants received their tattoos, they decided where to place them on their bodies. They then posted a picture of their tattoos on lithograph.com. Even though tattoos were randomly assigned, each one was given a number so that when the participant posted her/his photo of the tattoo, it was in the correct place in the sequence of the stories. As is clear from this process, the project started in a digital space through an online company requesting participation, moved to physical embodiment as the participants received their tattoos and placed them on their bodies, and then moved back to a digital spacewhen they posted their photos online, intended to be read/viewed by people online. Through posting a picture of their tattooed words, participants were, in essence, creating an *embodied* version of the book. As Mumford (2015) explains, "when it's all finished, people will be able to read Carroll's fantastical tale across the skin of thousands of 'Alice' fans." We can learn a great deal about digital values/expectations and practices by studying those photographic representations of the tattoos becausethey illustrate the ways that traditional representations of literary texts are being enacted in a plethora of ways through new relationships between digital and physical spaces.

4. Tattoo Continuum: Participation, Remediation, and Bricolage

When studying the ways in which participants staged the photographs of their tattoos, we see a continuum of strategies, from ones solidly located in the printed textsto much more interpretive and abstract representations of the tattoos, illustrating how a personal decision to have a tattoo can actually be part of a collective re-thinking of what counts as "text" and as "valuable" and what is counted as a "correct" interpretation of famous literary works like Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Throughout this section, I draw on Deuze's(2006) three principals of digital culture because they are significant

concepts that have been frequently discussed in media and cultural studies. He argues that the key expectations that people bring with them to these networked environments are encapsulated into three key concepts: participation, remediation, and bricolage. Participation means that we are "active agents in the process of meaning-making" (68); remediation is when we "adopt but at the same time modify, manipulate, and thus reform consensual ways of understanding reality" (68);and bricolage is defined as when "we reflexively assemble our own particular versions of such reality" (68). Though using these concepts to analyze the key trends across the tattoo presentations in the Longest Tattoo Chain project, we can see the ways these practices are being enacted in digital spaces so as to not only impact/reform our conceptions of the separation between physical and online spaces, but also to create the possibility for relationships between print and digital spaces that emphasize key identity practices that circulate today in both online and offline worlds.

4.1 Relationships to Traditional, Print Texts

At one end of the continuum of the representations of the tattoos in the Longest Tattoo Chain arephotographs thattake a traditional approach to the print text. In this grouping, participants locate the temporary tattoo next to the pages in the print book where the quote is found. Participants who use this fairly traditional strategy rely mostly on the drawings of Sir John Tenniel, the renowned illustrator of the first edition of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. While there have been many other visual interpretations of the Alice in Wonderland works, the Tenniel drawings (besides the 1951 Disney movie and now, perhaps, 2010 Johnny-Depp version of the movie) are the most enduring of the images and central to our cultural imaginings of Alice. It is no surprise, then, that many of the photographs in the Longest Tattoo Chain include Tenniel's drawings. The famous drawings become a backdrop for the tattoos, thus locating the photograph clearly in a print-based tradition. Illustrative of this type of photographic representation, Tattoo #12 in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland ("Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!") is placed on the underside of a wrist, with the arm leaning on the page of a book where the quote comes from. The featured pageincludes a Tenniel illustration of the White Rabbit, who is the speaker of the quote. The book is resting in her lap as she sits outside on the grass, much like Alice was doing at the beginning of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.The photo of Tattoo #1692 ("said the Duchess, as she tucked her arm affectionately into Alice's") takes a slightly different approach by including another temporary tattoo next to the quote, a tattoo that is a copy of a Tenniel drawing of the Duchess. Even though the Duchess tattoo is abstracted from the book (and not located in the pages of the book), the tattoo is still clearly located in traditional representations of the original book (albeit in a clever way that aligns with the Longest Tattoo Chain project itself through telling the story through temporary tattoos).

4.1.1 Analysis

All of these strategies locate these representations in a relationship to and valuing of the original text and do so in fairly traditional ways, emphasizing a continuity between online and offline engagements with the text. Like all of us, the participants obviously have a great deal of experience with print texts and, thus, print-based expectations and values. Despite the flexibility of the Lithograph guidelines and the many options available to people creating in digital spaces now, these participants still chose this more traditional route, perhaps emphasizing these participants' strong relationship to the original text, even as they wanted to engage with a digital project that has the potential to challenge the very basis of print-based assumptions. But there are significant ways in which these more traditional representations extend our considerations of and engagements with the print

texts, thus challenging those assumptions/values/expectations. While the tattoo wearers on this end of the continuum stick close to the traditional images, they have the choice to participate in this way. The campaignallows the participantsto determine which image to useand in what context to place the tattoo, thus including the individual in an important part of the meaning-making process. Their active participation makes them co-illustrators and potentially even co-authors of sorts, thuschallenging the idea illustrator controlling the visual representations.

This type of participation and the ways it draws readers into a more co-constructive processties into the concept of Deuze's (2006) digital culture principal of participation. He refers to a "participatory authorship" (68), a concept which challenges the idea of a few individuals having control over the creation of public texts. Through their staging of the photos, participants become "active agents in the process of meaning-making" (66). Further, Deuze (2006) draws on Jenkins (2004, p. 93) who "calls this shift toward a more inclusive production process 'cultural convergence,' fostering 'a new participatory folk culture by giving average people the tools to archive, annotate, appropriate, and circulate content'" (Deuze, 2006, 67).Thus, the flexibility of the campaign allows participants to appropriate the print images, place them in a new context, and circulate their own interpretations of the text rather than simply repeating what is in the print text. As Deuze (2006) argues, "it seems clear that people not only have come to expect participation from the media, they increasingly have found ways to enact this participation in the multiple ways they use and make media" (68). The Longest Tattoo Chain project is an excellent example of how participants us the tools available to them to make meaning in new ways and circulate these new meanings broadly by locating them in digital spaces that can be accessed by more people than an individual's single tattoo usually is.

This grouping of tattoos also represents a type of remediation, which is another principal aspect of digital culture, according to Deuze (2006). Drawing on Bolter &Grusin's(1999) definition of remediation, Deuze (2006) describes this process in the following way: "we adopt but at the same time modify, manipulate, and thus reform consensual ways of understanding reality" (66). He points out that Bolter and Grusin "argue that every new medium diverges from yet also reproduces older media" (68). In this first grouping of tattoos, participants remediate the older media by adopting images from the print book and its images while, at the same time, modifying them in ways that capture/include both the new and old media, juxtaposes those media, and yet also show the continuity between them. Using the traditional images challenges tradition while at the same time locating the new approaches within that tradition. Whereas "tradition can be seen as the perceived safety or sense of security in sameness, similarity, routines, and deeply entrenched patterns of organization" (Deuze, 2006, 69)—and, I would contend, deeply entrenched patterns of thinking--remediation challenges that tradition through situating the traditional within the new. Instead of a clean break from tradition, though, remediation recycles and relies on what came before in order to create/present the new ideas. These principles can all be seen in the tattoos in this grouping.

4.2 Active Engagement with Story Lines

At another place on the continuum in the photographic representations of the temporary tattoos are those that create a completely new visual to re-create the scene/event referred to in the quote, a visual, though, that goes beyond what is presented in the original drawings or other interpretations of the book.In interesting ways, these photoslocate the tattoo wearer as part of the story, rather than simply a reader, suggesting a different set of the ways that digital practices can encourage participation and also remediate traditional print-based assumptions. In the photo for Tattoo #287 ("And four times

seven is—oh dear!"), the tattoo is featured on a hand that is figuring out the math problem the quote talks about, making the participant an active part of the story since she is echoing/engaging in the action in which the book character is participating.Likewise, the photograph of Tattoo #4774 ("And what it is that you do!") shows that tattoo on a hand holding a pencil to graph paper with one word written on it—"you." Like the previous example, this participant represents herself through the act of writing on paper—and writing a word that is in the quote but also could directly relate to the participants' identification with the text. Further, in the photograph of Tattoo #2396 ("The jury all wrote down on their slates"), the tattoo is placed on a hand that is framed by the sleeve of a white dress shirt and a formal suit coat. The hand holds a piece of chalk, poised over a blank chalkboard. Again, the participant is locating himself within the happenings in the text by presenting himself as an active participant in the process of the story, rather than just a reader. These participants becomeco-creators, not just viewers because they are actively "involved" in the story.

4.2.1 Analysis

This grouping of tattoosclearly highlights the concept of participation because the tattoo wearers are acting as "active agents in the process of meaning-making" (Deuze, 2006, 66) through actively situating themselves within the framework of the story rather than simply being passive readers of the story. In this way, the Longest Tattoo Chain project fosters "'a new participatory folk culture by giving average people the tools to archive, annotate, appropriate and recirculate content'" (Deuze, 2006, quoting Jenkins 2004 p. 67). More significantly, though, this grouping, like the first one, also highlights ways that remediationgets enacted. Bolter &Grusin(1999) argue that "what is new about new media comes from the particular ways in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media" (15). These photographic representations of the tattoos refashion the older media of the text by situating the reader/viewer next to the text. The participants stick close to the original stories by performing the actions in the stories, but they remediate the original text by providing their own multiple interpretations and engagements with the text. In terms of the tattoos in this category, they work both within the traditional system of the Alice in Wonderland stories because the photo stagings align themselves with the typical meanings associated with the quotes; however, these representations also work outside the system through the tattoo wearers' active participation in the story. Further, the photos refashion older media (the print text) using new technology (the photograph and the presentation of the photograph on the website). The old media is still present in the representations, though, thus showing the continuity as well as distinctions between the print and embodied interpretations.

4.3 Challenges to Tradition

On another point of the continuum are tattoo photos thatcompletely challenge the traditional print-based Alice in Wonderland texts. Through various strategies, the participants practice bricolage which is another key principal/value of digital culture as defined by Deuze (2006). Bricolageis the process of "remixing, reconstructing, and reusing of separate artifacts, actions, ideas, symbols, and styles in order to create new insights or meanings" (Deuze, 2006, 69). This kind of remixing and reusing can be seen in photographic representations of Tattoo #3849 ("There was something very queer about the water, she thought"). The picture features the tattoo on the inside of the forearm, with the hand holding a rainbow-colored bottle of Absolut Vodka. This image demonstrates the use of the available tools available to create something new that challenges not only the traditional drawings in

Alice in Wonderland works but also the meanings of the quote (i.e. "queer water" becomes Vodka). While there is a tangential link to the tattoo quote, the participant draws on other tools/artifacts that he/she has available to create a new interpretation of the text, one that changes (challenges, even) the original meaning of the text; this practice is the heart of bricolage. Another photo that takes a similar approach is the one that presents Tattoo #4912 ("'Can you do Division? Divide a loaf by a knife—what's the answer to that?'") in which an up-turned arm is held vertical to a canyon cut in a rock—representing a different kind of "division." Taking new tools/materials and reflecting on the quote, this photo extends the meaning of the quote and locates it in a different context, thus creating something new from readily available materials. In one of the most unique representations, the photo of Tattoo #3515 ("After we've brought them out so far") echoes these strategies. The picture (which is one of the most unique of all of the ones presented in both campaigns) features two faces (one male, one female) in close proximity to each other. The woman faces the viewer while the man's face is turned to face the woman. Both of them have stuck out their tongues, curling them in a seductive/sexualized way. This photo challenges the traditional definition of the story yet still relates tangentially to the quote—"brought them out so far." The original text does not refer to tongues (and certainly does not have sexualized undertones), so this representation takes the tattooed quote out of the context of the text and asks viewers to read the quote in a singular way, defined by the photo rather than through its relationship to the Alice stories. This picture, then, draws on available means to create a different meaning entirely. Further, at the far end of this grouping is the photo for Tattoo #5007 ("When the feast's over, we'll go to the ball.") which provides a picture of an Edwardian-dressed woman who is seated at a fancy table set with fine china. She is eating a turkey leg daintily, with tea and fruit set out on the table in front of her. Interestingly, the tattoo is not included anywhere in the picture. This picture draws on the quote of the non-visible tattoo by featuring a banquet of sorts, but it challenges the Longest Tattoo Chain project by not following the rules—by not featuring the tattoo on the body. Thus, this photo takes the available means to subvert the very purpose of the project in which the photograph (and its posting on the website) participates.

4.3.1 Analysis

The strategies in this unique grouping illustrate key parts of the process of bricolage. Vanevenhoven et al (2011) presentthe core elements of bricolage that Baker and Nelson (2005) offer: "In reviewing the literature on bricolage, Baker and Nelson (2005) characterize bricolage as a concept having three core elements: making do with what's at hand, taking on diverse or novel tasks, and accumulating and using diverse skills and resources" (Vanevenhoven et al, 2011 53). The representations in this grouping highlight all three elements. First, the participants make do with what's at hand by drawing on the parameters of the Longest Tattoo Chain campaign (except for the photo for Tattoo #5007 which subverts those parameters). They take things in their environment that are readily available to them (like a bottle of Absolut vodka) to create images that create new meanings. Second, through the available means, the participants take on a novel task—participating in a unique tattoo project that questions the digital/physical separation that is so commonly presented. The results of this participation are "diverse or novel" approaches to the tattooed quotes and thus, the text is read differently—in new ways that still engage with (or use as a jumping off point) the print text. Finally, the participants use diverse skills to create their interpretations of the quotes, constructing meanings that are not necessarily consistent with the original meaning of the text and invite the reader to re-consider the quote itself, outside of the context of the text. They also draw on technological affordances of digital photography and online spaces (i.e. lithograph.com) to not only present but

actually create the new meanings that challenge the readers.

5. Conclusion:

Studying Lithograph's Longest Tattoo Chain campaigns provides insights into the ways that key digital practices are being enacted to change and expand our cultural relationships to print-based texts and the assumptions that have historically accompanied them. Rather than digital texts being seen as a complete break from traditional practices/beliefs, though, this study shows how the two modes work together. When used in digital environments, the practices of participation, remediation, and bricolage put the digital texts in conversation with the print ones, even as the digital texts extend, re-create and even challenge those principles/values. As Hayles (2003) argues, the current moment offers great possibilities to rethink old and create new beliefs about/affordances given to text. She (2003) writes: "This opportunity is powerfully present in the implicit juxtaposition of print and electronic textuality. The game is to understand both print and electronic textuality more deeply through their similarities and differences relative to one another" (280).

Looking at the ways participants in the Longest Tattoo Project represented their relationships to the quotes they received illustrate a range of practices that are currently circulating in digital environments. The photographic representations of the tattoos powerfully juxtapose print and electronic/digital texts in a way that helps us see the ways that these kinds of practices impact our readings of and thinking based on print-based texts and provide the stage for new engagements with classics like Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass.

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Jane Austen's London

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Abstract
Jane Austen depicted realistically the miniature world of countryside England: her novels' plots mainly develop in the provincial estates and country houses of the landed gentry. However, in her published works Austen focuses also on an unpredictable and chaotic London and establishes an opposition between life in the town and the more peaceful and valuable life in the countryside. The town is often mentioned in her novels and plays a central role in the formation and experiences of many characters. Austen's representation of the capital, her physical depiction and moral evaluation of it, shall be specifically confronted both with some of the period's historical reports and with the eighteenth-century writer's personal experience of it. According to her novels, London's positive aspects and sources of fascination are shops and theatres. On the other hand, the town is simultaneously presented as a dirty, chaotic and unhealthy milieu which can be a source of distraction from serious matters for its inhabitants and visitors by means of its numerous forms of entertainment. London can also corrupt the individual by relaxing his/her costumes and inducing him/her into many vices.
Keywords: Jane Austen, London, town, Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility.

1. The Country Village and the Town

It is a truth universally acknowledged that in her six novels Jane Austen reproduces mainly the small world of Southern England, portraying realistically many of its characteristic details, from the various societal habits of the landed gentry to the houses' decor and the surrounding countryside. Such a provincial world constitutes the basis of her completed works, the main setting for the development of her novels' plots, what Gillian Russell describes as "her exploration of the more 'quiet' sociability of the English provinces" (2011, 180).[i] It is a very marginal space, characterized by estates, parks and country houses, which coincides with a very precise geographical area of England that does not include the North and the areas most influenced by the industrial revolution, as Franco Moretti has noted (1997, 15-16). The heroines of Austen's novels reside inside of this area, usually moving from a close community living in a small and rural centre to the most open society in a major city such as Bath, Brighton or London.

Nevertheless, as Susan Morgan argues, Austen's fictional world is not as static as it could appear. Indeed, it is not an exclusively domestic universe; rather, Austen presents a mobile and itinerant picture in which her heroines remain rarely in the "country village". The examples are

numerous, from *Northanger Abbey* which "sports a heroine who is on the road for almost all of the novel" (Morgan 2000) to *Mansfield Park*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*, all of which begin with a heroine who is "forced out of the familiar and into the greater world" (Morgan 2000) because of her family's acute financial problems, and who often continues to travel afterwards. In *Pride and Prejudice*, instead, Elizabeth lives at Longbourn with her family for most of the narrative, but she undertakes two crucially significant journeys that facilitate the evolution of the plot and the development of the protagonist's perception of the world (Morgan 2000). In the first journey, she discovers that Darcy's disinterestedness is only apparent and that he is actually in love with her. During the second journey, after encountering Darcy in his own mansion at Pemberley, Elizabeth confides him the shameful truth of Lydia's flight with Mr. Wickham, a problem Darcy himself shall solve. As Penny Gay notes, "one major component of the domestic lives Austen creates for her heroines is their lack of domesticity, their wandering feet, the way they are drawn outward [. . .] toward a beckoning larger social world" (2001, 56). These characters' mobility thus reproduces the typical mobility of the time's country gentry, but it also reflects Austen's own (reluctant) social wanderings, from Steventon to Bath after her father retired, and then, after he died, her shifting from place to place with her mother, her sister Cassandra, and her friend Martha Lloyd before finally settling at Chawton.

London is frequently mentioned in Austen's works. Austen herself repeatedly visited the city during her life, the first time with her parents in 1788 and then as a guest of her brother Henry and his wife Eliza (respectively in Cork Street, St. Michael's Place, Sloane Street, Henrietta Street and Hans Place). In all of her novels, London is often referred to merely as "the town". In *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, "Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day" (2013c, 8). In *Emma*, Mr. Weston is "so constantly occupied either in business in town" (2013a, 9). Similarly, in *Mansfield Park* Lady Bertram explains that she "gave up the house in town, which she had been used to occupy every spring, and remained wholly in the country" (2012a, 20). Possession of a house in London certified "the presence of great incomes, usually those belonging to the prosperous landed gentry", as Edward Copeland has indicated (2011, 130). Such an income was more than 4000 pounds a year. It was a habit for the landed gentry of the period to spend part of the winter in the capital in order to experience "few weeks enjoyment of the great world" (2013b, 152), as Sir Walter and Elizabeth Elliott affirm in *Persuasion*.

2. Shopping in the Capital

For Jane Austen's heroines as well as for the women belonging to the period's landed gentry the "enjoyment of the great world" consisted mainly of the activities of shopping and theatre-going. During the age of Regency shopping was indeed a typically feminine and fashionable occupation. Alison Adburgham argues that, during the first decades of the nineteenth century, "luxury [in London] fills every head with caprice [. . .] and shops become exhibitions of fashion. In the spring, when all persons of distinction are in Town, the usual employment of the ladies is to go a-shopping, as it is called" (1964, 74). Jane Austen herself visited frequently London's shopping areas. She used to acquire many goods near Covent Garden and Leicester Square, especially at clothes shops such as *Layton & Shears* and *Grafton House*, as one of her letters testifies: "instead of saving my superfluous wealth for you to spend, I am going to treat myself with spending it myself. I hope at least that I shall find some poplin at Layton & Shears that will tempt me to buy it" (qtd. in Le Faye 1995, 152). In another letter, addressed to her sister Cassandra, she lists the

clothes she has acquired for her mother, Martha Lloyd and her other cousins: "I am sorry to tell you that I am getting very extravagant & spending all my Money; & what is worse for you, I have been spending yours too" (qtd. in Le Faye 1995, 120).

Austen's personal habits are an epitome (and a consequence) of the commercial spirit of the capital and its wealth. As Robert Porter points out, in fact, since the beginning of the previous century and thanks to the numerous sailing ships anchored in the Thames, "London's quays were herding a staggering 80% of the country's imports [. . .] Everything came to London" (1996, 218-19). By the eighteenth century, London was not only the most populated city in England with almost a million of citizens but also the preeminent city in the whole western world (Russell 2011, 177) and "the centre of international trade and finance" (Ackroyd 2001, 573). The city's shops were the most numerous and luxurious. Specifically, the finest and smartest streets where people used to stroll were: Bond Street, Piccadilly, the Mall, St James's Palace and Oxford Street (Le Faye 2002, 69). Already in 1786, the latter was described by Sophie von la Roche – a German novelist who travelled extensively throughout Europe and published her travelogue *Sophie in London* - as "a street half an hour to cover from end to end, with double rows of brightly shining lamps [. . .] and the pavement, inlaid with flag-stones, can stand six people deep and allows one to gaze at the splendidly lit shop fronts in comfort" (qtd. in Adburgham 1964, 71). Von la Roche also affirms that the shops are structured and arranged so that

> every article is made more attractive to the eye than in Paris or in any other town, [. . .] women's materials [. . .] hang down in folds behind the fine high windows so that the effect of this or that material, as it would be in ordinary folds of a woman's dress, can be studied. Amongst the muslins all colours are on view. (qtd. in Porter 1996, 144)

Shops were also the major sources of light in the main streets where the purchase of goods was practised: as a traveller noted in 1785, "not a corner of this prodigious city is unlighted ... but this innumerable multitude of lamps affords only a small quantity of light, compared to the shops" (qtd. in Ackroyd 2001, 442).

The feminine occupation of going "a-shopping" is reproduced very closely in Austen's works. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the narrator specifies that "the first part of Mrs. Gardiner's business on her arrival, was to distribute her presents and describe the newest fashions" (2013c, 135-36). Later in the novel, Kitty and Lydia are delighted to show their purchases to the rest of the family; the latter justifies the choice of a bonnet she has recently acquired by saying: "Oh! But there were two or three much uglier in the shop; and when I have bought some prettier-coloured satin to trim it with fresh, I think it will be very tolerable" (2013c, 212). The same fascination for London's elegant boutiques is described in *Sense and Sensibility*, in which Edward affirms: "What magnificent orders would travel from this family to London, [. . .] in such an event! What a happy day for booksellers, music-sellers, and print-shops!" (2010, 90). The experience of going "a-shopping" is then presented in *Pride and Prejudice* as one of the main advantages of the life in an urban environment, although London is not favoured against life in the country. Indeed, Mrs. Bennet argues: "I cannot see that London has any great advantage over the country, for my part, except the shops and the public places. The country is a vast deal pleasanter" (2013c, 40).

3. Theatres

Another source of fascination for both Jane Austen and her characters were contemporary theatres. As Amanda Vickery states, in fact, "genteel Georgian women were indefatigable consumers of all kinds of public entertainment in London and the provinces" (qtd. in Russell 2011, 178). Austen herself "was extremely familiar with drama, players and theatre practices" (Harris 2011, 39) and she often visited Covent Garden, Drury Lane and the Lyceum. At Drury Lane, she had the chance to watch the notorious actor Edmund Kean performing Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Kean, who had debuted in London on March 1814 (Brockett 2002, 288; Harris 2011, 45), was by then, in Austen's own words, "more admired than ever" (qtd. in Le Faye 1995, 164 and 166). Similarly, many of the characters of her novels enjoy going to the theatre in both London and the provinces: Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice* likes the Little Theatre in Haymarket (2013c, 307), whereas Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility* visits Drury Lane (2010, 171). The Bennett sisters describe their visit to the capital by narrating that "the day passed most pleasantly away: the morning in bustle and shopping, and the evening at one of the theatres" (2010, 148). In *Northanger Abbey,* "the Allens, Thorpes, and Morlands all met in the evening at the theatre" in Bath (2012b, 58).[ii] On another occasion, Catherine is worried to encounter the Tilneys (whom she thinks she has probably offended that same day), but she has no excuses to avoid her "societal duty" and therefore "to the theatre accordingly they all went" (2012b, 79). In *Persuasion*, Charlie is very proud to have anticipated his mother's wishes by securing a box for the following night and says: "A'n't I a good boy? I know you love a play, and there is room for us all. It holds nine. [. . .] We all like a play. Have not I done well, mother?" (2013b, 205)

4. Unhealthy Air

London is, however, not only praised for its good qualities and pictured in good terms by Austen. One of the negative aspects of the capital that emerges from her novels is the town's dirt and unhealthy air. As Liza Picard points out, the town was in fact "notorious for its smutty and unhealthy air. Sea coal burnt ingrates, for the brewing, baking and boiling trades, in potters' kilns and in dyers' yards created an 'impure and thick mist' which left visitors choking and wheezing" (2000, 116-17). The cloud of black smoke hovering over London was mainly due to the accelerated urban industrialization experienced from the late eighteenth century onwards (Kasuga 2013, 14 and 52). Black smoke became a part of the negative iconography of the capital during the eighteenth century (Kasuga 2013, 129) and was mentioned by many literati and travellers. In 1748, for instance, the Swedish traveller Pehr Kalm recorded the view from St. Pauls with the following words: "the thick coal smoke, which on all sides hung over town, cut off the view in several places" (qtd. in Kasuga 2013, 98). In 1810, an American visitor affirmed: "the smoke of fossil coals forms an atmosphere, perceivable for many miles [. . .] This smoke forms a cloud which envelopes London like a mantle, a cloud which suffers the sun to break out only now and then" (qtd. in Simond 1968, 85-86). Such a depiction of London is indubitably very different from William Wordsworth's eulogistic terms in "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802", in which he affirms that "Earth has not anything to show more fair" with the capital's "Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples" lying "Open unto the fields, and to the sky".

The air of the city is depicted literally as unhealthy by Austen as well. Many of her characters complain about the air pollution. Sir Lucas alludes to it in *Pride and Prejudice*: "I had once some thoughts of fixing in town myself [. . .] but I did not feel quite certain that the air of London would agree with Lady Lucas" (2013c, 23-24). In *Emma*, Mr. Woodhouse addresses his

daughter Isabella on the subject: "Ah! My poor dear child, the truth is, that in London it is always a sickly season. [. . .] Nobody is healthy in London, nobody can be. It is a dreadful thing to have you forced to live there! So far off! – and the air so bad!" (2013a, 99). Isabella replies by evidencing her privileged residential position in the West End, whose difference from the Eastern part of the city she remarks:

> No, indeed, *we* are not at all in a bad air. Our part of London is so very superior to most others. You must not confound us with London in general, my dear sir. The neighbourhood of Brunswick Square is very different from almost all the rest. We are so very airy! [. . .] we are so remarkably airy!" (2013a, 99-100).

Austen thus reproduces in her novels the social distinction between West and East London that was created after the Restoration when thousands of people moved to the residential district of the West End, which became the most elegant and fashionable area of London. The structure of the city at large was modified: London's inhabitants experienced a new kind of social segregation in which the hierarchy determined by income was replicated in the topography of the city, as Peter Ackroyd argues (2001, 677). The American traveller Louis Simond notes such a geosocial classification by commenting:

> the trade of London is carried on in the east part of the town, called, par excellence, 'the City'. The west is inhabited by people of fashion or those who wish to appear such; and the line of demarcation, north and south, runs through Soho Square. To have a right to migrate from east to west, it is requisite to have at least £ 3000 sterling a-year. (1968, 31)

Ackroyd further specifies: "The inhabitants of St James's, notwithstanding their life under the same laws and speak the same language, are a distinct people from those of Cheapside" (2001, 741-42).[iii]

The topographical divide of London is represented also in *Pride and Prejudice*, in which the modest Gardiners reside in the East End (certainly the less refined area of the city then) whereas the well-to-do Darcy lives in the elegant West End. As Franco Moretti argues, the two families "live at the opposite poles of the city, they meet and like each other, they even become friends: but this occurs in Derbyshire countryside. In London, they never meet" (1997, 86). The very structure of the capital thus seems to prevent the encounter between different social classes, as Mrs. Gardiner herself states:

> We live in so different a part of town, all our connections are so different, and, as you well know, we go out so little, that it is very improbable they should meet at all, unless he really comes to see her. And *that* is quite impossible [. . .] Mr. Darcy may perhaps have *heard* of such a place as Gracechurch Street, but he would hardly think a month's ablution enough to cleanse him from its impurities were once to enter it" (2013c, 137).

By contrast, the countryside is praised for its healthy and pleasant environment, its fresh air and natural beauties. S.M. Abdul Kaleque evidences that "Fanny wants to go back to Mansfield Park in the hope of enjoying fresh air and other bounteous gifts of nature" (2005). In *Emma*, Mr. Woodhouse insists on the difference between London and Hartfield by stating: "Ah! my dear, it is

not like Hartfield. You make the best of it – but after you have been a week at Hartfield, you are all of you different creatures; you do not look like the same" (2013a, 100). Later in the novel Emma praises the fact that "Surry is full of beauties" (2013a, 265). Her interlocutor Mrs. Elton affirms that "It is the garden of England" (2013a, 265), an affirmation partly contradicted by Emma herself, who believes instead that "many countries [. . .] are called the garden of England, as well as Surry" (2013a, 265).

The countryside is also set against the town as a morally healthier environment where solid values are cultivated. Indeed, as Melissa Burns argues, "Mansfield Park itself is shown to be a place of quiet contemplation, cleanliness, but also social order" (2005). Such an order is exemplified by Fanny, whose upstanding character, patience and moral superiority are opposed to the licentiousness of Maria and Julia Bertram. Nevertheless, as Kaleque notes, "Austen makes it clear that physical facilities become useless if moral values are not properly cultivated. [. . .] physical facilities will be charming only when there is a correspondence between outward beauty and the inner life" (2005).

5. A "Scene of Dissipation & Vice"

The bad reputation of the dirty and chaotic capital was exacerbated by the fact that London was also seen as the symbol (and possible cause) of a moral and metaphorical dirt. This was affirmed by Jane Austen herself, who wrote to her sister Cassandra in 1796: "here I am once more in this Scene of Dissipation & Vice, and I begin already to find my Morals corrupted" (qtd. in Le Faye 1995, 7). A reference to the wantonness of values in the capital is explicitly made in *Sense and Sensibility* when the character of Mr. Willoughby finally confesses - and attempts penitently to justify - his deceitful behaviour towards Marianne. He explains that Marianne's note has awakened his remorse and attributes the distraction of his guilty conscience to live in the capital: "time and London, business and dissipation, had in some measure quieted it [my conscience], and I had been growing a fine hardened villain, fancying myself indifferent to her" (2010, 309). Willoughby's experience of London is, therefore, all the more set against Marianne's investment in London as a source of hope. Indeed, she decides to spend the social season in town with the express intention to meet Willoughby and openly cultivate her love for him. As the narrator reports,

> Whenever they went, she [Marianne] was evidently always on the watch.
>
> In Bond-street especially, where much of their business lay, her eyes were in
>
> constant inquiry; and in whatever shop the party was engaged, her mind was
>
> equally abstracted from everything actually before them, from all that interested
>
> and occupied the others. Restless and dissatisfied every where her sister could
>
> never obtain her opinion of any article of purchase. (2010, 155)

Later in the narrative, Marianne's disillusion is exacerbated by her being forced to stay in London for two months after she has discovered Willoughby's (profitable) engagement with Miss Grey. She comes to despise the town and longs for the countryside, which is connected in her thoughts to peace and freedom: "Marianne's impatience to be gone increased every day. She sighed for the air, the liberty, the quiet of the country; and fancied that if any place could give her ease, Barton must do it" (2010, 264).

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the "town" is equally depicted as a milieu that can corrupt people's minds. Elizabeth, in fact, considers London as a source of distraction and one of the factors that could influence negatively the relationship between her sister Jane and Bingley. Indeed, "the united efforts of his two unfeeling sisters and of his overpowering friend, assisted by the attractions of Miss Darcy and the amusements of London, might be too much, she feared, for the strength of his [Bingley's] attachment" (2013c, 125). Certainly, the misconduct on the part of male characters such as Willoughby and Bingley is due to their inconsistency. However, it is inescapable to notice that their misbehaviour is associated to the metropolis. We can thus agree with Gillian Russell when arguing that "the salons of London are places where love dies" (2011, 181). Russell's affirmation could be applied also to the case of Lucy in *Sense and Sensibility*, who moves her affection from Edward to his younger brother after encountering – and dancing with – the latter in London. As Tony Tanner points out, in fact, "London, the world of liberty, amusement and fashion, has no redeeming qualities. [. . .] if Mansfield, at its best, perfects people, London, at its worst, perverts them" (2012, 479). This is epitomized by the behaviour of Maria, who leaves her husband Mr. Rushworth in utter disregard of her family's name and of her own honour. She destroys her character and reputation by having an illicit affair with Mr. Crawford. In *Mansfield Park*, London is considered as a source of both distraction and corruption. Fanny is happy to hear about the departure of her rejected pretender Mr. Crawford from Mansfield. The fact that he goes to "the town" is particularly significant for her because she is convinced that "London would soon bring its cure. In London, he would soon learn to wonder at his infatuation, and be thankful for the right reason in her, which had saved him from its evil consequences" (2012a, 320). London corrupts Tom Bertram as well: he ignores his father's recommendations and spends much of his time enjoying society and drinking, a vice which further compromises his health after the fall from a horse. On the other hand, the character of Jane considers London as a useful source of distraction that can help her to heal from the pain caused by her unreciprocated love for Bingley.

The association between London and corruption is established particularly through the depiction of the rich and materialistic Crawfords who, as Colleen A. Sheehan suggests, "are not only themselves corrupted, but they are bent upon dominating the wills and corrupting the souls of others". Mr. Rushworth does not have a good opinion of the Crawfords and plainly says that they "are no addition at all. We did very well without them" (2012a, 101). This very phrase seems to be realized later on, when Henry Crawford's departure from Mansfield becomes a relief for both Maria and Julia Bertram: "He was gone [. . .] gone from the house, and within two hours afterwards from the parish; and so ended all the hopes his selfish vanity had raised in Maria and

Julia Bertram" (2012a, 191). Mansfield Park is set against London as a more healthy environment for the minds of the Crawfords themselves: Mrs. Grant reprimands Mary Crawford when affirming that "You are as bad as your brother, Mary; but we will cure you both. Mansfield shall cure you both – and without any taking in. Stay with us and we will cure you" (2012a, 47). Later in the novel, this seems to be indirectly confirmed by Mary herself, who presents London as a social environment characterized by gossip and vain chatter: "you cannot have an idea of the *sensation* that you will be occasioning, of the curiosity there will be to see you, of the endless questions I shall have to answer" (2012a, 356).

Conclusion

Studies on Jane Austen's depiction of life in the country abound, whereas very little critical attention has been paid towards the writer's representation of the capital. Nevertheless, though discontinuously, the relevance of London in the life of the characters is asserted in all of Austen's published novels. The capital offers a good lesson for many of her heroines: Marianne clashes against the sad truth in London; Jane becomes disenchanted in her love of Mr. Bingley; Fanny's excellence and exemplary behaviour are set against the misbehaviour of the Crawfords (who come from London) and are further revealed after Tom's and Maria's misconduct in the town. The latter is therefore compared to the countryside, both in a favourable and a negative way. London's commercial life, its shops and theatres are praised, whereas its unhealthy air and bad moral influence are profoundly criticized by Austen. Certainly, from such a picture rather emerges a preference for the life in the province, as the personal experience of Austen herself suggests. Although she constantly reminds us of London's dangerous (immoral) influence and of the relaxation of costumes that it causes, the nineteenth-century writer also seems to suggest (whether through the direct experience of Marianne and Jane or through the reported tales of many characters) that to spend the winter season in the vibrant social life of the metropolis and to live and walk among its busy streets is a useful and formative experience.

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Endnotes

[i] According to Russell, sociability was based on the concentrated social interaction of a specific community characterized by intimacy and "an intensity to its significance as a melting pot for the British elite" (182). This is well epitomized in *Persuasion*, whose narrator specifies that "after the party has collected, all that remained was to marshal themselves, and proceed into the Court Room; and be of all the consequence in their power, draw as many eyes, excite as many whispers, and disturb as many people as they could" (170). In *Northanger Abbey*, the social habits of the characters are (ironically) defined as "regular duties" and are so enlisted: "shops were to be visited; some new part of the town to be looked at; and the Pump-room to be attended, where they paraded up and down for an hour, looking at everybody and speaking at no one" (15). Discourses are presented as frivolous and superficial: "in all probability not an observation was made, nor an expression used by either which had not been made and used some thousands of times before, under that roof, in every Bath season" (60).

[ii] As Gillian Russell has pointed out, Bath (in which Austen herself resided from 1801 to 1805) provides the example of another version of the "fashionable world" which is "a laboratory of Georgian sociability" (182).

[iii] The contrary opinion was expressed later in the century by Charlotte Brontë, who affirmed: "I have seen the West End, the parks, the fine squares; but I love the City far better. The City seems so much more in earnest; its business, its rush, its roar, are such serious things, sights, sounds" (qtd. in Ackroyd 457).

Multiculturalism and Transnational Formations in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*

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Abstract

This article seeks to prove that Tony Kushner's depiction of the ambient multiculturalism in America results into transnational formations in his play, Angels in America. The paper deviates from other works that generally highlight the multiculturalism that pervades the play in that it undertakes an in-depth analysis of the multicultural dimension of Kushner's play as well as sheds light on its transnational consequences. The postcolonial and postmodern theories highlight the heterogeneity and fragmentation typical of the cultures presented in the play hence multiculturalism and transnationalism.

Keywords: *Multiculturalism, transnational formation, Tony Kushner*

1. Introduction

The rich multicultural endowment of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*[1] has attracted much critical attention. In "Alla, Angli, and *Angels in America,*" Allen J. Frantzen notes that the prominence of migration and movement away from racial purity are basic elements of Kushner's thesis about change (Bloom 92). This is because Kushner's play brings together characters from different nations, having different sexual inclinations, religious convictions, and political leanings. The contiguity in which they live affects the purity of each of them as they become hybridised.

Jonathan Freedman refers to this same concept of multiculturalism without mentioning the term in "Angels, Monsters, and Jews: Intersections of Queer and Jewish Identity in Kushner's *Angels in America.*" In this article, Freedman posits that Kushner offers "the image of a redeemed community in the guise of a utopian Americaness in which the nation is reconstituted in the image of a postnuclear-family made up of quarrelling outsiders" (Bloom 113). The utopianism of the late

[1] Actually called *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* but the edition used bears just this title.

twentieth-century American family (the "postnuclear family") alluded to by Freedman in this quotation derives from the fact that it is one that brings together characters of diverse horizons. And although he uses the term "quarrelling outsiders" to shed light on their differences that stem from their dissimilar cultures, Freedman refers to them as a "family" all the same— a word that connotes togetherness. Clarifying the degree of diversity characteristic of the characters that the dramatist brings together, the critic mentions the construction of "a redeemed America that can gather gay and straight, black and white, Mormon, Christian and Jew into a collective identity" (ibid). This mixture of different sexual inclinations, races, and religious convictions is cross-cultural hence the notion of multiculturalism.

Like Frantzen's and Freedman's articles, this paper is interested in Kushner's proclivity for multiculturalism in *Angels in America*. But unlike their works, the article attempts to investigate the different contours of this author's multicultural streak. It further sheds light on the transnational formations that result from the cross-cultural contacts. Hence, the paper hinges on the premise that Kushner's multiculturalism in *Angels in America* results into transnational formations. It endeavours to answer the following questions: How does Kushner depict the prevalent multiculturalism of America in *Angels in America*? What are the different transnational formations that result from it? The postcolonial and postmodern theories will be used as critical theories for the analysis of Kushner's play.

2. The Postcolonial and Postmodern Theories

According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in *The Postcolonial Reader*, postcolonial literature resulted from "the interaction between imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices" (1). This allusion to the cross-breeding amongst cultures that results in hybridity, mutuality of cultures, and syncretic is central to the analysis of *Angels in America* which presents America as a contact zone where many cultures rob off each other. The ensuing hybridization could be linguistic, cultural, political, racial etc (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin 109). Multiculturalism and transnational formations accrue from this interaction of people from other nations and their diverse cultures in a given nation called the contact zone.

A simple definition of "multiculturalism" features in "The Most multicultural: A Tale of Mothers and Sons" (*The Crucible of Cultures*). In this article, Harry J. Elam defines this word as "the concept of embracing cultural difference" (113). Such "embracing" entails the renegotiation of the relationship between cultures in ways that avoid attempts either to unify or to hierarchise them to borrow from Siobhán Shilton (57). Consequently, pluralism and heterogeneity are inherent to multiculturalism. Even more illuminating and central to the analysis of Kushner's masterpiece in this paper is a definition of the term by Olga R. Kuharets. This critic avers in *Venture into Cultures: A Resource Book of Multicultural Materials and Programs* that, over the last 20 years, the term multiculturalism has become increasingly amorphous. She, however, adds that in many cases,

> It is used to denote a movement that deals with a host of issues involving African Americans, Hispanics, and Native American peoples,

> either individually or in various combinations, along with issues involving women, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities. (viii)

It is patent from this definition that multiculturalism is concerned with issues that pertain to gender, sexual preferences, and physical handicaps. It is therefore not limited to national or transnational realities that accrue from cross-cultural contact. Incidentally, Kushner skillfully interweaves these different strands of cultural differences in his play. The consequence of this cross-culturalism is a number of transnational formations.

In "The Transnational Turn: Rediscovering American Studies in a Wider World" published in *Journal of American Studies* Robert Gross argues that transnationalism "captures a world of fluid borders, where goods, ideas, and people flow constantly across once sovereign space" (378). As suggested by the prefix "trans-", the transnational therefore transcends delimitations prescribed by national borders. That is probably why Gross adds that transnationalism is concerned with the world where newcomers sustain a cosmopolitan consciousness, while older minorities, notably African Americans, reconceive themselves in international terms (ibid). In other words, no culture is dominant nor inferior in the encounter of cultures evoked here. Thus, there is no danger of one culture being totally engulfed by another. Rather, the different peoples— as is the case of African Americans mentioned by Gross — are compelled to redefine themselves against the backdrop of the cosmopolitanism concomitant to the international scenery hence the notion of the transnational formation.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines "formation" as "the act or process of forming something or of taking form." It equally adds that a formation is "something formed." Both of these definitions are handy for the elucidation of the meaning of the term "transnational formation" in this paper. While the first definition captures the process of cultural cross-breeding of distinct traits, artefacts, and practices of people from different nations who are contiguous to each other, the second focuses on the consequence of this cross-breeding that results from their contiguity. The term "transnational formation" therefore refers to the dynamics involved in (as well as the end-product of) the interaction amongst people from different nations.

The pluralism and fragmentation inherent to multiculturalism and transnationalism point to postmodernism as a suitable critical theory for the analysis of *Angels in America* in this work. In *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, Steven Connor states that the postmodernist theory is the response to the important changes that have occurred in politics, economics and social life; changes that can be characterised by "delegitimation" and "dedifferentiation" (3). Delegitimation means that authority and legitimacy are no longer concentrated in the centres while dedifferentiation suggests that polarities no longer exist. Simply put, centre/margin dichotomies that establish the first as superior, legitimate, standard, etc and the second as inferior, illegitimate and substandard cease to exist in the postmodern context.

Postmodernism, therefore, rejects grand, supposedly universal narratives and references individual perception and group construction. This postmodernist stance is

reminiscent of Kushner's pluralistic depiction of America's cultural reality. As the postmodernists argue that there is nothing like universal claims of truth, ethics, or beauty, so does *Angels in America* show that there is no American culture per se but rather a diversity of cultures in the United States of America. Postmodernism advocates the re-appropriation and re-contextualization of familiar cultural symbols and images. In postmodernism, as is the case in the world of the play under study, everything is decentred, provisional and fragmentary.

Jean Baudrillard evokes this pluralistic and fragmentary trait of postmodernism by contending that social reality no longer exists in the conventional sense, but has been supplanted by an endless procession of simulacra (167–182). This means that social reality (and in the case of this paper, culture) is not unique because the individual's perception or the group's construction of what culture is determines which culture is the "American culture" in *Angels in America*. The same ambivalent and undecidable approach to the meaningfulness of language accounts for the fact that the play is written in language typical of postmodernism. The different tenets of the postcolonial and postmodernist theories examined in this section enable this article to both highlights the diversity of cultures in Kushner's play and the different transnational formations they form as a result of their contiguity.

3. Multiculturalism in *Angels in America*

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* has a cast of about fifteen human characters who hail from diverse horizons and differ in a variety of ways. These characters are Hannah Porter Pitt, her son (Joseph Porter Pitt), and his wife— Harper Amaty Pitt. As indicated by their names, these three are family. And although the playwright does not overtly state their nationality, their surnames "Porter Pitt" suggest an Anglo-Saxon ancestry. The author instead insists on their religious conviction. They are Mormons who are otherwise called The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints. According to Andrew Jackson in *Mormonism Explained: What latter-Day Saints Teach and Practice*, Mormonism originated from the early-nineteenth century visions and revelations of Joseph Smith who was its founder, first president and prophet (17). As part of America's second Great Awakening around the Western frontier region of New York that proceeded from zealous Christian revivals, they are generally an exclusive group of people who practise isolated communal living at one time (54). This implies that a Mormon faithful to the teachings of Mormonism would not freely interact with people of other religious convictions.

Yet Kushner puts these Mormons side-by-side with a good number of Jews in this play. Characters like Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz, Louis Ironson, Roy Cohn, the late Sarah Ironson and Ethel Rosenberg are all Jews. Being a Jewish American is not just a race. It is equally a religious conviction. According to biblical tradition, Jews are God's chosen people in the Old Testament from among whom the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came to save mankind. But Jews differ from Christians in that they do not believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah and are still awaiting the coming of their savior. They, therefore, reject the grace he offers and continues to live according to the

Mosaic Law. Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz, referred to by the playwright as an orthodox Jew, sheds light on the dichotomy between Judaism and Christianity (represented here by Catholicism). This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Louis: Rabbi, I'm afraid of the crime I may commit.

Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz: Please, mister I'm a sick old man facing a long drive home to the Bronx. You want to confess, better you should find a priest.

Louis: But I'm not a Catholic, I'm a Jew

Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz: Worse luck for you, bubbulah. Catholics believe in forgiveness. Jews believe in guilt. (*He pats the coffin tenderly*)

(Kushner[2] 1.5.31)

The exchange above results from the fact that Louis, is prey to pangs of guilt because he abandoned his grandmother (Sarah Ironson)— whose funeral he is attending— long before she died. Worse still, he is also considering abandoning Louis (his gay lover) who is sick. He would, therefore, like to know what the Jewish Holy Book says about a person who abandons people he loves when they are in great need. It is apparent that the Rabbi thinks that Louis has the sin to confess and, not being able to recognise him as a Jew, suggests he meets a priest to do that. Louis's statement that he is a Jew prompts the Rabbi to establish a major antithetical difference between Catholicism (representative of Christianity) and Judaism. While Christians believe in the saving grace of God, Jews believe in judgment, guilt, and condemnation. Yet in addition to putting a restrictive group of people like the Mormons and the Jews together in his play, the dramatist brings people who subscribe to antithetical religious beliefs (like the Jews and the Christians) together. Prior Walter is an example of such a Christian. He is a WASP— White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

But then, the playwright more especially emphasises the racial definition of this character whose Anglo-Saxon origins he highlights through the apparitions of Prior's forbears— Prior 1 and Prior 2 who lived in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively. Prior 2 stresses the English tradition of genealogical consciousness when he refers to a "family as long-descended as the Walters" (Kushner 3.1.93). In connection to this, Frantzen notes the fact that Kushner chooses to trace the lineage of this family right back to the eleventh century in "Alla, Angli, and *Angels in America*" (Bloom, 83). He even proceeds to add that Prior is made to represent "the Cultural monolith of WASP America, fixed and unchanging" (Bloom, 89). Yet, this writer opines that Prior's mention of the Bayeux tapestry suggests some

[2] The first part of *Angels in America* which is titled *Millennium Approaches*. In this edition, it runs from pages 1-125.

intermingling with Norman blood of Prior's race a few lines later (ibid).

After associating Prior to the culture of stasis typical of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP), Frantzen comments that— through this character's family line— Kushner rewrites the history of Norman Conquest of Anglo-Saxon England in 1066 (Bloom, 84). He contends that the claim that the Walter's name was stitched into the Bayeux tapestry, though unfounded, implies that the Prior Walters were not a pure breed but were of Anglo-Norman stock. In other words, somewhere along the family line, there was intermarriage or cross-breeding between an Anglo-Saxon ancestor and a Norman. Such a claim is plausible for two reasons. Firstly, Prior 1 makes it clear that two bastards had featured in the family's lineage (Kushner 3.1.92). He refuses to include them in the family's genealogical record and that is why he tells Prior Walter that he is the thirty-second of the family line instead of the thirty-fourth as the latter's mother had told him. Secondly, Frantzen sheds light on the fact that the Bayeux tapestry is a Norman relic in the long tradition of French historians and politicians (Bloom, 86). Connecting the Walters' name to the tapestry, even erroneously, suggests that Kushner is hinting at some cross-breeding along the Walters' family line.

Another race that the author brings into this cross-cultural encounter is the African American race. Belize is African-American in the play. He is a Black, the descendant of a black slave who had been transported to America. Meanwhile, the nurse Emily is an Italian American. This is patent in Act Two Scene Two when she tells Prior her nationality. Meanwhile, Harper desires to have an Eskimo as a husband when she imaginarily travels to the Antarctica. Although her journey is not real, the dramatist so bridges the gap between the real and the imaginary that he lists the Eskimo amongst his cast. From the racial point of view, therefore, Kushner brings together Jews, Anglo-Saxons/Anglo-Normans, African-Americans, Italian-Americans, and even Eskimos.

Another platform for multiculturalism in the play is gender boundaries and sexual inclinations. There is a whole host of queer men in the play: Roy Cohn, Louis Ironson, Belize, THE MAN IN THE PARK and Prior. Joseph Pitt is married to Harper and one would think that they are both heterosexual. But his liaison with Louis at one point in the play shows that he is bisexual. Also, by all indications, the older generation incarnated by characters such as the late Sarah Ironson, Hannah Pitt, Walter Prior's ancestors are all "straight." This can be deducted in the play from a number of clues. In the 6th scene of Act Five, Prior encounters late Sarah Ironson and Rabbi Chemelwitz on the streets of heaven. He decides to betray Louis by telling her that her grandson is gay. It is obvious (at the burial scene of Sarah) that Louis has hidden the fact that he is gay from his family (Kushner 1.4. 25-26). Louis's late grandmother's reply is that the boy had always been mixed up even in childhood (Kushner[3] 5.6. 269). Hannah Pitt is simply shocked by the idea that her son is gay when he calls her to say so and concludes that he is just being ridiculous because he thinks that his father had not loved him (Kushner 2.8.81-82). Finally, Prior 1 does not

[3] Having as title *Perestroika,* the second part of *Angels in America* runs from page 126-280 of this edition.

seem to understand the concept of gay when he comes back as a ghost. He insists that Prior Walters ought to have a family, and states that he had twelve children by the time he died (Kushner 3.1. 92-93).

Besides the parameters of religious denominations, racial definitions, gender boundaries, and sexual inclinations on which Kushner's interplay of cultures hinge in this play, there are other factors like political leanings and economic systems. Characters like Roy Cohn, Martin Heller— who is presented as a Reagan administration Justice Department flackman— and Joseph Pitt (otherwise referred to as "Royboy") are all Republicans. Roy boasts of the fact that he can call the White House and talk to President Reagan and, better still, to Mrs. Reagan anytime he wants. He also mentions his arch hatred for Communism that pushes him to scheme for the death sentence of Ethel Rosenberg because this Jewish matriarch somehow betrayed the regime by showing allegiance to Communism (Kushner 3.5. 113-114). Opposed to this Reaganite clique are advocates of liberalism, reminiscent of the Democrats, like Louis and Prior. Louis jilts Joe when he investigates Prior's declaration that his new lover is a Reaganite and is Roy's "boy." He is irked by Joseph's subscription to the republican conservatism that causes him to militate for decisions that sanction gays and penalises the masses (Kushner 4.8. 239-244). He even accuses Joe of being Fascist (Kushner 4.8. 243). Contrary to Joe's leanings is Belize's reference to Louis as an "arrogant, sexual-political Stalinist-slash-racist flag-waving thug" because of the latter's tirades on questions such as race, politics, and economic policies (Kushner 3.2. 100).

This analysis corroborates Freedman's claim that Kushner's play evokes a community "composed of various forms of others" (Bloom, 113). He describes this community as one made up of the Mormon, the Jew, the black male drag queen, the WASP man, and the queer Jew (ibid). In conformity with Kuharets's definition of multiculturalism used in this paper, the work studied handles a host of issues that pertain to race (Jewish American, African American, Italian American); issues involving gender and sexual identities (heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual), and even religious convictions and practices (Mormonism, Judaism, and Christianity).

It is interesting to note that Kushner adds supernatural entities as part of his cast in this play. In addition to the Angel that severally visits Prior, six other angels sit in council with it in Act Five Scene Five. Equally significant is the fact that these angels are named after the continents of the world: Antarctica, Oceania, Asiatica, Europa, African, Australia (Kushner 5.5. 260-262). The Angel that visits Prior represents the American continent. Ghosts, as well as disembodied and imaginary beings, are also characters in the play. Prior 1, Prior 2, Ethel Rosenberg, and even Roy Cohn (at one point) are all ghosts that feature in the play and interact with the living like any other ordinary character. Meanwhile Mr. Lies and Angel's Disembodied Voice are examples of imaginary characters. Thus, *Angels in America* can be read as the paroxysm of multiculturalism whereby the earthly and the heavenly; the dead and the living; the real and the imaginary intermingle. As the playwright artfully juxtaposes these characters and gets them to interact with each other, their interaction results into many transnational formations which this paper will presently examine.

3. The Consequent Transnational Formations

The first obvious transnational formation that accrues from the melting pot described in the preceding section is the alienation that results from the characters' hybridisation, heterogeneity, and syncretic. In *Critical Multiculturalism: Rethinking Multicultural and Antiracist Education*, Stephen May posits that the hybridity theory advocates the rejection of totality and foundationalism and "its replacement by a plethora of local identities" (24). To make this point clear, May avers that hybridity lends itself to a politics of difference which he finds commensurable with multiculturalism (ibid). The consequence of hybridization is not the total engulfment of one culture by another. Instead, it is the fragmentation of cultures as each culture robs off the other and the different people from these cultures become "multiple agents."

A clear instance of this situation is at Sarah Ironson's burial in the first scene of the play. Rabbi Chemelwitz clearly notes that the dead woman is totally different from her children and grandchildren. He refers to her as "not a person but a whole kind of person" (Kushner 1.1. 16). He proceeds to explain what kind of person Louis's grandmother was by adding that she is amongst the migrants who brought the cultural identity of the Jews from the villages of Russia and Lithuania and fought hard for her descendants not to get corrupted by the cultures of the other immigrants (ibid). But the Rabbi admits that Sarah's struggle is vain as he admits that "pretty soon… all the old will be dead." In fact, he refers to her as "the last of the Mohicans"— the title of James Fenimore Cooper's novel of adventure that heralds the extinction of the natives of the American continent.

The alienating effect of the presumed mainstream culture is alluded to in *Angels of America* when the rabbi wonders whether Eric, the name of one of Sarah's grandson, is a Jewish name (1.1.16). In effect, he refers to all her descendants as people with "goyische names"— "goyische" is a Jewish/Yiddish term used to refer to something that is not Jewish. To solve this problem, Louis is "Lou" when he is with his family (4. 4. 25-26). But when he is in his cosmopolitan environment, he prefers to be called "Louis." He even gets offended with Belize and finds the latter anti-semitic because he had called him "Lou the Jew" three years before (Kushner 3.2. 101). Even more interesting is the fact that Louis chooses to become "Louise" (the French feminine variety of his name) when he is luring Joe into an amorous escapade with him (Kushner 1.6. 36). He stresses the very last sibilant sound of the name. In addition to doing this, he feints when Joe offers him a handshake and prefers to give him a peck on the cheek before exiting (ibid). Thus, Louis is various "Lou," "Louis," and "Louise." This fragmentation results into a split identity and pluralism.

It is significant that the name "Louis" becomes "Louise" because he acts the role of the female partner in his homosexual relationships. For instance, he asks the MAN IN THE PART to put on a contraceptive and make love to him and the latter does so (Kushner 2.4. 62-63). The fact that he attempts to use both this man and Joe to replace Prior suggests that he is the "female" lover in his gay relationships. Likewise, Joe is an irreproachable and "straight" Mormon to both his wife and mother until he

decides to tell them that he is gay. This is because the crush he has on Louis is such that he wants to hold onto their relationship and is ready to give up everything for it. It is only then that Harper understands what his numerous walks to Central Park had been about. It can be inferred that, like Louis who has sex with the stranger in the Park, Joe has been doing same in order to both gratify and hide his homosexual impulses. He hides behind Republican conservatism and Mormonism at the court where he works and for the benefit of Roy Cohn. But when he reveals his real identity to Roy and the latter orders him to break off with Louis and makeup with his wife, he attempts to carry on with the mask of respectability.

Roy Cohn himself is another guy who hides behind the Republican conservatism of the Reagan government. When he is diagnosed with AIDS, he attempts to suggest that he has been infected by a whore in Dallas but his doctor—Henry— specifies that it is not a female whore. And much to Roy Cohn's displeasure, he unmasks the latter by adding that Roy has had sex many times with men (Kushner 1.9.50-51). Like the pervert and hypocrite that he is, Roy threatens to destroy his doctor's reputation and practice if it is made known that he has AIDS. He orders Henry to say that he has liver cancer and tells Joe the same lie. He is so keen on hiding behind the veneer of respectability that he prefers to consider himself a heterosexual man who sleeps around with guys rather than acknowledging his homosexuality (Kushner 1.9. 52). He is another character who has a split identity.

It is evident from this analysis that May's assertion that "multiple, shifting and, at times, nonsynchronous identities are the norm for individuals" is apt (May, 24). The paper has already shown how these characters swap one identity for another whenever their surrounding requires that they do so. These identities are nonsynchronous because, as portrayed, these characters cannot display all these cultural traits at the same time. But in addition to these facts, these identity traits are incompatible. Neither Mormonism nor Judaism condones homosexuality. The Mormon's adhesion to biblical prescriptions and the Jew's subscription to the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament ought to deter these characters from contracting gay relationships. It is recorded in Leviticus 19:22 of the Holy Bible that, "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman: it is an abomination" (Revised King James Version). The conservatism of the Republican government ought to be another deterrent to its adepts such as Roy and Joe.

Meanwhile, the prudery typical of the Anglo-Saxons as well as Prior's Protestantism equally ought to inhibit him from indulging in gay practices. But both do not. He was Belize's former lover and is Louis's present lover. At one point of the play, he too puts on a female identity when he decides to wear makeup in order to "hide" from the reality of his newly discovered disease (Kushner 1.7.37). Meanwhile, Belize is not only gay. It is equally said that he is a former drag queen. A drag queen is defined as a traditionally male person who dresses in drag and acts in female gender roles with exaggerated femininity. This points to the fact that, though a man, Belize also experiences shifts of identity when he has to act out such a role and as the "female" partner in his past love relationship with Prior.

A new family construct thus emerges from transnational bindings and realities.

Freedman refers to this family as the queer family, "a family-as-nation metaphor for a nonprocreative family and nation that includes all forms of family in a new national narrative" (Bloom, 115). Benilde Montgomery's description of this family prototype in "*Angels in America* as Medieval Mystery" partly elucidates Freedman's statement. She notes that Kushner's construction of families shows that the traditional prototype is wounded: Sarah Ironson's grandchildren have become assimilated; Joe's father could not love him; Joe abandons Harper; and Roy notes that the Reagans are not really a family because there are no connections amongst them, no love, and they do not even speak to each other except through their agents (Bloom, 130).

Unlike this traditional family, the new family prototype is neither constructed along bloodlines nor racial definitions. According to Montgomery, it is one in which Roy's "fathers" are "Walter Winchell, Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy most of all" (Bloom, 130). Roy is equally a father to Joe. Hannah poses as the "new matriarch" of this family in replacement of late Sarah Ironson. Unlike the latter, she is liberal enough to smoke cigarettes as well as give necessary support to Prior (a homosexual) and to her addicted daughter-in-law. To borrow from David Savran in "Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism: How *Angels in America* Reconstructs the Nation," Joe is her real son and Prior is her surrogate son (Bloom, 25). The fact that she shows more love and sympathy to her surrogate son is really proof that "biological descent counts for nothing" in this new family definition as earlier noted in this paper.

The ambivalence and undecidability that characterise the notions of identity and the family are echoed in the ambiguity that surrounds the play's genre and the author's use of technics such as the double roles assigned to characters and the use of split scenes. John Clum compares the play to "a Shakespearean romance" in *Acting Gay: Male Homosexuality in Modern Drama* (314). Meanwhile, Janelle Reinelt associates it to the avant-garde theatre that bears the imprints of Artaud (Bloom, 59). Such different categorizations of the same play justify Savran's observation that *Angels in America* is "a promiscuously complicated play that is very difficult to categorize generically" (Bloom, 17). Interestingly, both Clum's and Reinelt's classifications are tenably applicable to Kushner's play which merges features of traditional drama (Shakespearean and Sophoclean plays) with those of modern drama (Brechtian plays). Thus, Savran's characterisation of the play as "a promiscuously complicated one" is justified.

Pluralism and ambivalence are also conveyed by the double, and sometimes three or more roles, which the characters are made to play. For example, the same character acting the role of Hannah Porter Pitt is expected to also act out the roles of Rabbi Isidor Chemelwitz, Ethel Rosenberg and Henry— Roy Cohn's doctor. This implies being able to be four different people in one play. And this is even more challenging because the actor/actress acting out the roles will have to shift from being a Mormon matriarch to being an orthodox Jew. Next, he/she will have to play the part of the ghost of an elderly Jewess who comes back to live to seek revenge on Roy. Finally, he/she will have to be the medical doctor who diagnoses Roy of AIDS. The shifts of personality may not occur in exactly this order but according to the order in

which these actors/actresses climb on stage. Once more, Kushner's little regard for racial definitions and gender boundaries is obvious— he gets the same character to indiscriminately play the roles of Mormon/Jew and man/woman in the case of Hannah here. All his characters have two or more roles to act out in this play.

The same multiplicity recurs in the dramatist's recourse to split scenes. Six of these scenes feature in *Millennium Approaches* and four are found in *Perestroika*. Charles McNuly evokes the significance of these scenes in reflecting the play's undecidability when he opines in "*Angels in America*: Tony Kushner's Thesis on the Philosophy of History" that "Kushner uses split scenes to make more explicit the contrapuntal relationship between these seemingly disconnected narratives" (Bloom, 48). The seemingly disconnected narratives this critic identifies in the "Kushnerian territory" are racism, sexism, homophobia, moral erosion, and drug addiction. For example, the first split scene in Act One Scene Five that juxtaposes Joe and Harper in their home in Brooklyn and Louis and Rabbi Chemelwitz at the cemetery augurs Joe's and Louis's respective break from Mormon respectability and Jewish orthodoxy. These two men later become a homosexual couple in the play. By thus blending the otherwise irreconcilable, Kushner achieves "the dissolution and the blending of identities" to borrow from Reinelt (Bloom, 64).

The combined effect of the different nationalities of these characters and their little inclination towards respecting traditional gender boundaries affects the language they speak. Rosenwald Lawrence quotes Meir Sternberg as commenting in *A Multilingual America: Language and the Making of American Literature* that literary art finds itself confronted by the formidable mimetic challenge— that of representing the reality of polylingual discourse through a communicative medium which is normally unilingual (1). Kushner faces this challenge and chooses to resolve it in his own unique way. His play is mostly written in English but this English varies from Standard English, working class and slang English, African American English, and what Rosenwald quotes Leon Kobrin as referring to as "Yiddishized English" (83). In addition to this, Kushner punctuates his text with other languages such as Yiddish, Italian, and French. It can be said, in a nutshell, that the language used in the text is a transnational formation.

The first time Prior Walters speaks in Act One Scene Four, his English is standard. He responds to Louis's allusion to the rabbi in these words, "A definite find. Get his number when you get to the graveyard" (25). This refined English is in keeping with his Anglo-Saxon ancestry which Louis traces to the coming of the Puritans on board the Mayflower (Kushner 2.3. 57). But being the thirty-second of the Walters's lineage (without counting the bastards) and having lived in America all these years, Prior easily switches to using slangs such as "Feh" and "dyke." According to *The Dictionary of American Slang,* "Feh" is a word of Yiddish origin; an interjection that expresses disgust. Meanwhile "dyke" is the slang word for lesbian. It is obvious that Prior's work as occasional club designer and caterer as well as his homosexual relationship with Louis— a Jewish American— very much expose him to this working class and slang variety of the English Language. Other characters through whom the dramatist achieves linguistic transnational formations are Rabbi

Chemelwitz, Emily, Prior, and Belize.

As an orthodox Jew, Rabbi Chemelwitz either speaks "Yiddishized English" in the play or simply speaks Yiddish. An instance has already been cited where the rabbi describes the names of Sarah's descendants as "goyishe names" (goyishe being a Yiddish term). Moreover, Freedman notes that the syntax of the language spoken by the rabbi in Sarah Ironson's eulogy is "stage Yiddish" (Bloom, 106). He is also one of those who speaks downright Yiddish in the play as is the case when he quotes King Lear (Kenig Lear), "Sharfer vi di tson fun a shlang iz an umdankbar kind!" (Kushner 1.5.31). It is only when Louis states that he does not speak Yiddish that the rabbi translates King Lear's famous statement that deplores a child's ingratitude into English. Meanwhile, Emily speaks Italian to Prior in his hospital room (Kushner 3.2.104).

But it is in the speaking of the French language that these characters' blurred notion of sex distinction is most evident. It is common for the gay characters to use the feminine article, pronoun, or genre of a word to refer to a masculine person or entity. This can be seen in Act Two Scene Five in the exchange between Prior and Belize:

> Prior: Miss Thing.
> Belize: Ma Cherie[4] bichette.
> Prior: Stella.
> Belize: Stella for star. Let me see. (*scrutinizing Prior*) You look like shit, why
> yes you do, comme la merde!
> Prior: Merci. (Kushner 2.5.65)

"Bichette" used to address Prior here is not proper because he is a man. And since in the French language the genre of a noun determines the genre of its determiner and any adjective used to qualify it, the feminine possessive "ma" and descriptive adjective "there" have been used to both determine and qualify the word "bichette." Hence, as a man, Prior ought not to be called "bichette." But since Belize and Prior are both gay and were lovers in the past, it can be deduced that their sexual inclination and past experience as lovers conditions their language use in this excerpt. Belize fondly refers to Prior as "bichette." Prior likewise chooses to disregard Belize's masculinity. He refers to him as "miss" and calls him "Stella." Transnationalism is also achieved in this extract because French is spoken here by an African American and an Anglophone American and not by a Francophone American. The play is strewn with such code switches from English to the different languages listed in this analysis.

4. Conclusion

In view of the above analysis, it can be concluded that Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* delineates a pluralistic world encapsulated in the notion of multiculturalism.

[4] Thus written without the "accent aigu" by the playwright

The play's cast comprises people of diverse races, who have different religious convictions, sexual inclinations, and political leanings. And since no single cultural artefact or practice totally engulfs the other, the accruing multiplicity creates ambivalence and undecidability. Delimitations such as national borders, individual identities, gender boundaries, and linguistic entities have given way hence the emergence of new forms and fluid concepts. The second and third sections of this paper have examined these different cultural strands and the transnational formations that result from them. It can be inferred that, by equally blending the earthly and the heavenly, the dead and the living, as well as the natural and the supernatural, Kushner's play heralds the coming of a new era. This might be the age in which the American will be as ambivalent as Kushner's angel that is neither mammal nor bird, neither male nor female because of cross-cultural encounters. "Angels in America" can, therefore, be read as a metaphor of the American of this new age.

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How Cultures Talk: A Study of Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication

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Abstract:

Humans are unique and so is culture. Humans behave differently when there is a change in the environment and so is the case that when cultures alter, the way of using language, or better still, the way one talks, alters as well. In some cultures, posing a direct question is considered rude, while in other sitting together in silence, without talking, is a norm. These alterations comprise differing interpretations of various components of speech that apply across cultures. Dell Hymes, an anthropologist, urged that there should be a comparative study of speaking, which he called the *ethnography of communication.* The paper would try to analyze the idea that being able to speak one's native language error-free in terms of grammar does not imply that one is competent in the language, but it should also be noted that having a good grasp of the social norms is equally important, if not more important, as well. Also, the paper would focus on Hymes' analytical framework which helps in analyzing the language without much cultural bias. His acronym SPEAKING: Situation, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms and Genres; is intended by him as universal characteristics of speaking.

***Keywords**: Culture; Ethnography of Communication; Speaking; Language; Norms*

It is acknowledged that having a true ability in a language is not only a matter of having a command over the grammar but also of having a spontaneous understanding of certain social norms. In this paper, the authors want to examine this particular notion in detail. The process of speaking alone does not make us comprehend the totality of meaning; rather our understanding of the meaning depends on largely on the context in which those words are spoken. Dell Hymes, a famous anthropologist propagated this idea and was instrumental in establishing the fact that Linguistics only analyzes the grammatical patterning. So, being able to analyze phonemes, morphemes etc. was interesting but incomplete because he observed that the way people use language, what people use speaking for, differs from culture to culture.

For Hymes, linguistics ought to be about language-use as much as about the grammatical essence of language. And this ended up being a formal paradigm for his introduction to the technical term i.e. *ethnography of communication* (Troike, 2003). In this particular theory, the idea is to focus as to what it is to use language in different cultures and how will it change according to the change in its geographical locations and its cultural reflections. One can easily infer that the languages used in many western countries are different from the very basic usage of language in other parts of the world. The amount of variety is much more than one might think; grammar is only a part of competence in a language.

What Hymes was pointing at was that the way people use language is vastly different from place to place. For example, the! Kung, these are the people who live in the Kalahari Desert (Southern Africa) and obviously they have a harsh lifestyle and it conditions certain traits. Their traits, for instance, have been conditioned according to their environmental surroundings. They know that the natural atmosphere for them is not friendly, as they have to struggle very hard for each and everything. That is why they do not want any man-made atmosphere (way of speaking, for instance) to be unfriendly. The kind of escalation which leads to boil-over is looked down upon. Hence, among them there is no such thing as arguments in an open way. As soon as there seems to be any kind of disagreement brewing, a very set kind of speech and a very set kind of exchange is used to resolve disputes (Lee, Hitchcock, 2001). There is not much equivalence to that in the Western culture, except actually if one has a kind of couple's therapy, then one can learn a certain way of speaking to resolve disputes. When these !Kung people are hungry and that happens a lot because these people rely on hunting to eat, and really on many occasions one is just not going to find anything to eat, there is a kind of trance-like speech that they go into to indicate that they are hungry. Majority of the people employ such trance-like speech and it is not weird, because everyone is doing the same thing. That is what one does as a member of the culture. They don't utter the words like "I am hungry". One of the reasons why they don't utter such words is because it would become repetitive and that would not only annoy others, who are hungry too, but also it would demoralize the entire community.

For! Kung people, making up stories just for fun is unheard of. It does not make sense to them as to why would anyone make a story about a King and a Queen or a rabbit and a tortoise etc for no particular reason. These are the people who do not make such

kinds of stories. But among these people, the stories that are told have a certain common set of characters that reinforce various cultural rights and hopes that the people have. And so language for them is very different than it is for us. They use it in different ways (McWhorter: 2008).

In the island of Timor (Southeast Asia), which is quite small, it has many languages. Amongst many languages used in this region, there is a particular language referred as "Roti". The people speaking this language are very talkative people and for them silence is a disturbing phenomenon. Silence to them is synonymous with something wrong or unpleasant event/matter. Other examples that can be cited in this context are of the western Apache (Arizona, USA) who are basically very reserved in their interaction with strangers or the Danes (Denmark) who are extremely comfortable with silence, in the sense that they can just sit around and not speak anything for long periods of time (Wardhaugh, 2006).

It is interesting to note that among these people- the Rotis, the Western Apache, the Danes- Indians are like the Rotis. The people in India talk a great deal more to fill in spaces. If anyone is silent for a long time then the other people might think that something is troubling the person. This obviously varies massively within the multicultural India. A major reason for such diversified approach is that geography and history play a very important role in determining the use of language. For example, the Western Apaches generally do not talk when they meet new people because they have been at the receiving end of the massacres by the colonizers. It is quite possible that they have internalized such an event in their mass psyche and are hence, hesitant in meeting and interacting with new and strange people. Similarly, the Rotis, like the Indians, have a high density of population and that makes them interactive in nature. They get to see a lot of people and that is the reason they have the habit of talking a lot. Indian culture is filled with examples showing how the other cultures came to India and they were influenced by it; one reason for their influence is because Indians have a long history of dialogues and debates. Shankaracharyas in the Ancient Indian tradition used dialogue as a way of understanding other people's beliefs and ideas. Similarly, the Bhakti Movement in the Medieval Indian tradition also held dialogue as a very important tool for understanding and interacting with others.

Another very important aspect of culture that reflects variations in their treatment of language is the space in which "Questions and Requests" take place. For example, in Madagascar (Southeast Africa) the language that is spoken is Malagasy and it is interesting to note that Malagasy is an Austronesian language. The home to people speaking Austronesian language is actually the South East Asia, Philippines, Indonesia. One might ponder that some African language might be spoken here for it is in the vicinity of Africa but for some reason what they speak in Madagascar is not a language related to Swahili; instead, they speak a language which is very closely related to Indonesian languages. It is very much clear that these people were not put there and Madagascar did not drift across the Indian Ocean so quickly that it was a matter of continental drift. So, the reason could be that these people sailed there for years and they may have done it in their boats and they got to Madagascar, healthy

enough to procreate and now they are there. Apart from others who are inquisitive to know about this adoption of an altogether different language by Madagascar, it is all time puzzle for a linguist. They wonder as to how these Austronesian speakers went to that island and inhabited it, speaking a strange language to that region and referring it as Malagasy.

In this particular language one does not make a direct request, but if one does it then it symbolizes a kind of invitation to fight/ challenge/ threat to the other person. Making a direct request embodies as an act of rudeness in this culture. For example, if one were to make a statement like "Open the door", it is grammatically correct, but culturally it is not acceptable in that social context, for one is making a *direct* request. People somehow of that culture think that they are being commanded to do so. What can be done in this context is probably to use a passive construction of the language. Instead of saying "Go and open the door" one can say "Let the door be opened". The mentioning of the person is too direct for them. For some other cultures it may appear abnormal, but for them, it is very natural, that is how things happen in Malagasy.

These sorts of things made Hymes come up with an idea that one can take speaking as an occasion where speaking happens in any culture and one can apply a certain basic schema to it. His idea was that the first thing one might look at, if one comes up with a culture-neutral analysis of what speaking is and how it varies from culture to culture, is a *situation*. There are various kinds of situations, there are situations which are marked by speech and there are situations which are marked by the absence of speech. For instance, refer to the kind of conversation that happens during a ceremony or a party or may be a reunion. The conversations in these situations are marked with extreme informal content and that is well accepted rather appreciated in the some context whereas, for the western apache, there are no such talks or jokes. So, there is a situation and within that situation there are events within and they may be called as the communicative part of a situation. For some people overlapping conversations is not normal, but for some it is absolutely normal. In fact, for the latter, not having an overlapping conversation is an act of abnormality. All these differences in the language pattern and its discourse make sense only because of their different socio-cultural and geographical background.

Beyond this, Hymes came up with an analysis of what he refers to as *components of speech*. The idea was to look into meaning and language without any cultural bias, at the way people converse and inferring that it is not based on sound rather its foundation lies in the speech used. Hymes came up with the acronym, SPEAKING- S for Situation; P for Participation; E for Ends; A for Act sequence; K for Key; I for Instrumentalities; N for Norms and G for Genres.

The *Situation* involves the setting. It involves the physical place or the time. There is a scene which involves the specific activity; be it a card game or a poetry recital or something else. So, when one is analyzing an episode of talking and non-talking in a culture, the first thing to notice is the situation in which that particular conversation took place.

The second point of focus is that of *Participants*, who are not always as simple as someone is talking and someone being addressed. In fact, it is not like that at all,

because there are intermediaries in a conversation. A Chief in many cultures will only speak to his or her subordinates through some kind of address or, who speaks through. And as formulaic that can seem to us, notice that for example, if the Head of the State is found to have committed some heinous kind of act then he might speak to the public only through a lawyer. Suddenly, the Head of the State becomes silent. Another example can be a film star who will talk only through their press agent, if some untoward incident has happened. So, *Participants* can be more layered than just *I am talking to you*.

Then *Ends* is the goals and the outcomes that are desired out of a particular conversation. For example, in a marketplace, bargaining is what the shopkeepers try to do. Sentences are constructed like "You are trying to rob me in broad daylight", "Oh my God, so costly!"- These are the commonly used sentences for bargaining. Or in a break-up dinner, there are certain specific patterns which reflect the "ends" or the goal i.e., of ending the relationship when the dinner ends. Sentences like "Look honey, I have something important to tell you", or "I have to focus on my job/study" are used. Not just these sentences on their superficial level but also the tone of the speech matters a great deal.

Then the *Act Sequence* is what forms of speech act are couched in terms of whether they are set phrases that are used within this act. For example, when there is a break-up dinner, how is the grammar going to be? Will it be a direct quotation or indirect quotation? Let us say, one is doing a sermon, the priest might say, Jesus said "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone." (Bible- John 8:7). That is how one is going to say it, in the sermon. It is not said like "Jesus said that you should not cast the first stone if you are without sin". In other words, one quotes him directly. We say, "Jesus said" and then the preacher imitates him.

The *Key* is the manner. Is it jovial, as in a comedy routine in a clown or is it solemn such as at in a funeral, where one does not laugh? These are things that are important in describing things. The surroundings have so much influence and power, and even without it directly doing anything to you, it does many things: like the way one dresses, thinks, or even speaks. That is the reason, in a circus, say for example, people have a mental make-up that they are going there to enjoy and have a good time and they will laugh out loud; their dress also reflects happiness. On the other hand, in a funeral, people are sad-faced; they do not speak loudly, unless they are crying. There is silence all around. The dress, too, is mostly dim and dark.

Instrumentalities refer to the channel of communication; it could be just talking face to face, or it could be talking on the phone or banging the drums or it could simply be writing, if one is using the standard dialect or if one is using the non-standard one etc. These things change. In Pop Songs, it is assumed that one will use informal, colloquial, non-standard dialect. The singers would suddenly be "tellin" instead of "telling", saying "em" instead of "them". These jargons are not overplayed by the target audience for they expect such deviations in tune with the creative liberties that music, poetry and other forms of creative expression may adopt. It was, however not true, maybe a hundred years ago. There was a time when in the early history of pop songs, it was considered a big deal to use "ain't" in it; it also had the power of selling

the song. So, we must keep in mind that these things change depending on the acceptability of the society.

Then, there is *Norms* so that gets into the conversational styles; if you have gaps or you avoid them. It even includes the intonation patterns.

Finally, there are the *Genres* to which a conversation belongs to- if we are talking about proverbs or if we are dealing with myths; is it a commercial message or is it just casual?

With the detailed description of the acronyms of SPEAKING, it is now relevant to further elaborate on Hymes' idea of *ethnography of communication*. His idea is that each one of this component is something that one can consider equivalent to the *phoneme*. All cultures are dealing with these components in one way or another. The issue is that variations are between them. Hymes' idea was that there are *emic* distinctions i.e., the situation as differentiated from the participants as differentiated from the instrumentalities. And there are *etic* distinctions i.e., the basic stereotypical generalizations about human behavior; like the Danes don't talk and the Rotis talk too much, that sort of thing (Floyd, Jeanni- Youtube, Internet). So, his idea would be in Malagasy, the way the requests are couched differ in Act Sequence from the ones in English. So to say, "Let the door be opened" is different in terms of grammatically how one conveys requests, just as cultures will differ within a sermon using a direct quote or indirect quote.

In Antigua, the Caribbean island, when people do informal debating, they overlap over one another and are repetitive. This is considered normal and it is not chaotic for them. Not doing such a thing might look strange to them. But our notion of what an interruption is in that kind of setting is different. Their norms are different, it does not mean that they are not "normal", it just means that their norms are different and how they are using the language in that particular *emic* department, differs in an *etic* way. We need to understand concepts like *normal* or *abnormal*. Generally, it is stated that abnormal is anything which deviates from the norm. But the real question is- what *is* the norm and who decides it. Poststructuralist thinkers would not go by that definition because all these definitions are socially constructed and any construction is built on top of something. That something on which it is built upon is the margin. Those who hold power and authority, they construct and spread a definition and soon it becomes *meaning* at the cost of killing other definitions. So, in the case of norms, as to what is normal or what is abnormal, those who have the power, they have defined and spread the norms according to their own vantage point of view. Anything or anyone that goes against such definition is considered *abnormal*. So we have to keep in mind such terms and concepts before understanding the cultural issues.

In the case of Panama (Central America), there is a Native American culture called the Cuna and every few days the people there listen to a speech by their chief who discusses politics, history or religion. During the course of his speaking, there has to be a responder (*apinsuet*) and the responder keeps saying "so it is", *teki*. That has to be there, the chief can't give much if there is no one to respond in that particular way. One reason for such a kind of behavior is that the chief somehow wants an appreciation of the people and since if all the people respond while the chief is

speaking then it would amount to the disturbance in his speech; hence, we have one responder who acts like the mouth-piece of the people. The language style that the chief uses are a special kind of style- highly elaborative. And then the chief signals that the speech is over by lowering his voice, not raising it (Sherzer, 1991). We are used to hearing things like "Bharat Mata ki… JAY", instead they have "BHARAT Mata ki jay".

That is the way it happens with Cuna people too. If we are looking at them, the idea would be to do an *Ethnography of Communication* analysis and look at how language is used in various situations and it can make things look exotic but it is interesting to note how exotic we are in some ways. Imagine how odd it is that we have a tradition of stand-up comedy where someone stands in front of an audience and entertains for 10-20 minutes. This seems peculiar to some. Another case would be when we see a political debate. When we listen to the speakers, we understand what the politicians are saying and it makes sense to us, as far are the language structure and grammar is concerned, but we still have hours and hours of T.V. news shows repeating the whole thing and rephrasing it again and again and the news anchors tell us what we have already heard and understood.

Harold Garfinkel, a sociologist, on a similar line of Hymes focus, founded the field of ethnomethodology which focuses on how people interpret events and conversations through their experiences and expectations. A fundamental aspect of this interpretive ability is that it is developed by participation in a particular society, within particular contexts and certain events. Language is recognized as a key medium through which such interpretation is actually achieved (Garfinkel, 1964). In a series of experiments, Garfinkel had his students do some really interesting research to show how much we rely on social consensus to make meaning of our conversation. What he wanted to do was to examine what happens when we don't adhere to expectations that we bring to conversations. Essentially what he suggested was that his students become linguistic troublemakers. So, he had his students purposefully violate some of our conventional rules that we bring to a conversational event. In one such experiment, for example, he had his students talk to their friends in a normal conversation; something that they normally do. Then, while acting like it was entirely natural he had them insist that their conversational partner clarify the meaning of every day common remarks. Here is an example of one of the experiments:

(S) Hi, Ray. How is your girlfriend feeling?
(E) What do you mean, "How is your girlfriend feeling?" Do you mean physical or mental?
(S) I mean how is she feeling? What's the matter with you?
(E) Nothing. Just explain a little clearer, what do you mean?
(S) Skip it. How are your Med School applications coming?
(E) What do you mean, "How are they?"
(S) You know what I mean.
(E) I really don't
(S) What's the matter with you? Are you sick?" (Allan, 2013)

It turned out that the students were really able to frustrate their conversational partners

quickly, but not surprisingly. So it can be inferred that sometime we take a conversation for granted that requires us to do a lot of processing to be actually successful.

As an anthropologist, Hymes was extremely interested in the connection between language and society. He wanted to look not just the grammatical system itself but at a whole range of other types of competencies about how, when and where we use language. The ethnographic approach that was pioneered by Hymes sought to understand the social and cultural knowledge and the values that underlie how we use language in social situation of a variety of types. And by drawing on the insights of this approach, we can now better understand how members of a speech community learn to communicate and how situational factors are constitutive of speech event itself. Likewise the work of Hymes and others gave us a very useful tool for exploring cross-cultural communication, because it is keenly sensitive to the fact that cultures will vary on how they value and perform on different aspects of talk. Who we are certainly impacts on what we say. Connecting to other people after all, is the ultimate goal of human communication. Conversation, or in other words, connected, co-constructed speech, is always tied to particular people and particular activities and particular places. And these people we converse with come with their own linguistic baggage and their expectations about what is going to be said and what is going to be done. So, who we talk to and where and why we talk is really important in shaping our linguistic contributions. Different speaking events have very different linguistic behaviors that are technically associated with them. We learn to tailor our speech approximately as part of our general cultural socialization. Now, this in turn creates and sustains linguistic organizations of specific speech events as being recognizable and "normal" by other members of that society. For example, these three statements conjure up a mental image (Fridland, 2015):

1. You will not go there, Counselor, or you will be charged with contempt.
2. Please eat your veggies if you want dessert
3. I now pronounce you man and wife.

It is quite easy to construct the mental images after reading these statements. Even out of context one gets a clear sense of the event, the setting and their participants that would be appropriate for each of these. The first sentence is in the court; second in a family setting, may be by a mother and third by a priest. All of these are part of our learned language routines. We don't just know how to construct such sentences; we also know what context and events they typically describe. We use this information to interact and engage as members of a society.

This knowledge refers to what is appropriate and is known as Communicative competence. It is essentially using language in a socially informed way to achieve our communication goals. To do this, we must have more knowledge about grammatical system. We must understand where and how to use language in a particular context. It includes the knowledge of linguistic and social conventions. Think about how participants in a particular culture cooperatively create norms for various speech events. Daily activities like going to a doctor, dealing with the children, dating, or attending a business meeting; one can see how these shared acts of communication

actually help construct our social reality for a particular group or society. It lets us know our own and particularly others' actions.

To interact successfully requires a social consensus; a social consensus, that we are going to act in particular way and be properly understood because we are acting within those confines. Now this consensus allows us to infer much more than we actually explicitly say when we have a conversation. So, for example, when I say to a colleague who is chatting at my office door, "Hey, you need something?" what I actually mean "Hey mister get moving, I have to work". Hopefully we both understand the meaning of the sentence. That is why we use contextual norms, the setting and the knowledge of participants to actually understand the intent of the conversation.

How one says something has important implications for what others think they hear or what they perceive. How we use language changes greatly depending on when, where, why and to whom we are speaking. One needs to understand that language use involves a whole lot of communicative process, not just on its own single individual system. That is why we need to look at language more holistically. It is essential to understand how bigger units of talks, built up and structured in a conversation, are used as a form of social organization. After all humans are social creatures and our picture of language in society would be dolefully incomplete if we did not explore what is involved linguistically when we actually converse with one another, because sometimes we do that. It is important to note that when one speaks in a social setting, one's speech is not just an individual act, but also how one's speech is shaped in response to the other person's. So, it is necessary to take a neutral or rather inclusive stand/stance before being judgmental on any cultural practice. It is possible/ probable that the geographical/social/cultural background is the cause of their behavior in a particular fashion. Instead of judging things with just one universal lens, it is better to see the subjective differences; and instead of binding them into the canons of what is *normal* or what is *abnormal* it is imperative to notice and accept the fact that our world is made up of various social and cultural constructs which need to be respected and responded accordingly.

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OF INSIGHT

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Abstract:

Creative writing is based more on manifestation rather than on expression. It does not inform rather reveals, so it bears no reference. The present article is the outcome of creative writing meant for lay readers. As such freestyle is the methodology adopted so that pleasure of reading can be enjoyed by the common mass. As you know well that Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the immortal essayist, wrote many essays and notably, Of Love, Of Friendship, Of Ambition, Of Studies, etc. The myriad-minded genius rightly pointed out that all the words of the dictionary can be the themes of essays one can write. But little has been done, in this regard since his death, in order to finish his unfinished monumental works. In fact Bacon's way of presentation i.e., his unique style kindled the imagination already in me and encouraged me as well to write essays, in the light of creative writing, thus to get relief through catharsis.

Insight is the ability to see into the true nature of something. It means a deep understanding of the inner nature of some specific thing. It is to realize clearly the absolute nature of things, especially by intuition. It implies democratically imaginative access to thinking. It is the power of mental penetration into character, circumstances, etc. It crowns a person with far-sight. Such a person is a gifted one. Either he inherits it or gets it through many endeavors or both simultaneously. A person having insight is very rare. He creates a difference with others. Also, he can claim appreciation for the same. He can easily be isolated for his rare individual style of critical analysis of anything or thinking as well. All cannot be the owner of such rare power. Very few fortunate persons acquire it. Further, thinking is akin to physical pain. Very few persons can bear it. This answers why we see very few persons having insight around us. Insight is the reward or outcome of practical knowledge. A person acquires it through knowledge. He is a not a common but complete man. It is alias and akin to wisdom. He is exclusive in nature. Insight learning is direct learning without process of trial and error. He is not a quack, rather a master having mastermind. Thus it manifests perfection of the concerned character. Also, insight means household goods, furniture, etc.A coward or a guilty mind is reluctant to grasp the hidden truth. They are afraid of the truth.They live with lie die with a lie. They like not to know the fact. They are happy with superficial knowledge. Sometimes they exist with half or partial truth. Therefore to them, insight implies apprehension lest they know the truth. They like not to be enlightened. They refuse to illuminate their darkness of ignorance. They appreciate the doctrine ignorance is a blessing. A little learning is a dangerous thing. This type of half genius is dangerously more than a non-genius. A psychologist opines it as awareness of one's own mental attitudes and behavior. A man having insight is not a common man. His behavior is quite uncommon. He is quite indifferent to the mundane existence. As such he behaves differently. For he seldom cares for the profit and loss account of life as a whole. So as per psychiatry it is the recognition of one's own mental disorder.

Insight implies clarity of thought. A person gains it through experience. Its appearance may be sudden but it cannot be achieved overnight. It is the outcome of sincere and long meditation. It stands on a solid base. A wise person possesses this quality seldom a fool. Insight laurels the learned with uniqueness. All does not have insight. Only a blessed soul is enriched with this immortal light. Some communities are noted for having insight; some others do lack of having it. It is the most valuable weapon of an ambitious person to defeat the opponent and thereby win the battle in every sphere of life in general.Intelligence is mundane but insight is divine in nature. An intelligent person is recognized through his sagacious-looking. But insight is manifested through its silence, polite and deep eyes having inner significance. Intelligence offers instant gain, insight paves for multiple returns in future. Intelligent people is just like restless spring that comes out of a hill and insight whispers the river to surrender to the sea, its inevitable destiny as predestined by eternity. Where intelligence ends insight begins. So intelligent people may be restless but

insight renders a person calm, quiet and slow but with steadiness. Thus all insight is intelligent but all intelligent may not have insight.

A selfish person always tries to win. But a wise person welcomes defeat with a smiling face. It is easy to gain but difficult to hold it. A winning person suffers from tension. But a defeated soul enjoys peaceful sleeping having no tension at all. To this sacred heart, win means defeat and defeat mean win. This perception of the holy soul is quite novel. It is a are individual style. The pathetic plight of the ailing humanity pains Him much. He mourns for them and prays to the Almighty for their rescue and relief. Such a wise person has insight into human character. A book full of remarkable insights conquers head and heart of the readers through its eternal appeal. A person gains an insight into a problem when he faces the hard reality. In a patriarchal society, women are tortured by their husbands and other members of her in-laws. An unfortunate woman of such a society is given an unpleasant insight into what life would be like as his wife. The moment a sensible person sees such an unlucky woman he gains an insight into her state of mind. Insight enables a scholar to know the obscure matter of knowledge. He tries to gain the unsaid and unheard fact of medieval life. A lover is guided by heart, not by head. Emotion controls his motion. He has no insight. So he loves. Those who have insight can never love. They are afraid of taking any kind of risk. Seldom can they know that no risk no gain implies high-risk high gain? Thus they are deprived of the warm feeling of love. But they enjoy secure life. Insight saves them from the tension of uncertainty. They prefer to take zero risks instead of high gain which is next to impossible.

OF APPEAL

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Abstract:

Creative writing is based more on manifestation rather than on expression. It does not inform rather reveals, so it bears no reference. The present article is the outcome of creative writing meant for lay readers. As such freestyle is the methodology adopted so that pleasure of reading can be enjoyed by the common mass. As you know well that Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the immortal essayist, wrote many essays and notably, Of Love, Of Friendship, Of Ambition, Of Studies, etc. The myriad-minded genius rightly pointed out that all the words of the dictionary can be the themes of essays one can write. But little has been done, in this regard since his death, in order to finish his unfinished monumental works. In fact Bacon's way of presentation i.e., his unique style kindled the imagination already in me and encouraged me as well to write essays, in the light of creative writing, thus to get relief through catharsis.

The appeal is a deeply felt, usually urgent, request. It manifests complete surrender. Here emotion guides a man rather than intellect. The man is basically proud. He likes not to pray. He is so confident and the worshipper of independence. None wants to live on the mercy of others. There are two types of persons. One likes to torture; the other likes to be tortured. They are master and slave. The slave always appeals to the master. A master likes oiling. He satisfies his egoistic attitude through sycophancy. A judicious brain seldom boasts. For he knows pride goes before a fall. So a fool becomes proud seldom a wise. In the court a person argues till his argument is based on logic. If logic fails then a judicious brain appeals and sometimes conquers the head and heart of the judge through politeness. But a dull headed person shows anger to the judiciary system and be deprived of kind consideration. The man is not supreme authority. His Fate is beyond his control. So a person becomes the prey of misfortune infinite times during his entire lifespan. As such, for the sake of his mere existence, he is bound to appeal each and every step from cradle to grave. So human life may be called an episode of appeals or series of appeals. The appeal is an art. All cannot approach properly. This needs style. This style differs from person to person. To acquire this style it needs much practice untiringly and sincerely. The practice of such traits offers a character its uniqueness. These characteristics are responsible for building up personality that determines the individual difference. All appeals may not be successful. It depends on its feasibility. Feasibility depends on approach and attitude. Besides these, complexion, age, status, environment, mood of the master, etc. are its controlling factors.Nationalist leaders appeal for calm during the communal riot. An organization appeals to the government for financial support. A philanthropist appeals on behalf of the famine victims. The police appeal to the crowd not to panic. It is an earnest request for help or sympathy. Mother appeals to the doctor for early recovery of her ailing child. The appeal is to be attractive or interesting. An appeal may not have an equal impact to everybody. A beggar begs alms. Only a kindhearted or religious minded person gives alms. Such a person considers that it is his social responsibility to help the downtrodden people. But a shrewd miser does not donate rather he tries to investigate the justification of begging of the concerned beggar. He tries to raise voice against this unique profession that titillates the sentiment of the public to achieve its commercial success.Idea appeals and thereby convinces someone. All paintings do no have universal appeal, but an ideal appeal has. Any new fashion appeals to the emotional youths first and gets an immediate response. It persuades somebody to do something by suggesting that if they want to be good, just, reasonable, etc they must act in a particular way. It appeals to somebody's sense of justice. If someone wants people to return to the negotiating table, he has to appeal to their better natures, not annoy them further. It is to ask somebody in authority to make a decision, or to change one made by somebody less senior than them. A captain appeals to the umpire for decision. Without appeal, an umpire seldom declares that the batsman is out. The benefit of

doubt always goes in favour of the batsman. Here appeal has no effect. It is to take a legal case to a higher court where it can be judged again. Someone likes appeal and appeals. Someone appeals not, if likes not. They are so snob and seldom appeal lest their status is degraded. Body language manifests its appeal through gestures and postures. Sex appeal is of this type. It is the quality of being attractive in a sexual way thus to entice for the vulgar purpose. This type of unhealthy motif is detrimental for social chastity. Also, this appeal corrupts the innocent souls. Eyes have silent appeal. It is noted for its uniqueness. This is the greatest one among all kinds of appeals and can claim appreciation for being the most successful as is especially experienced and practised by lovers. This silent appeal of eyes is more penetrating than eloquence. Only an expert can read the language of that unique appeal. It lasts long like nostalgia.The appeal is of various types having different degrees and dimensions. These are expressed in different means and styles. Plead is applied to formal statements in court answering to allegations or changes, carries into general usage the implications of entreaty by argument. Sue implies respectful or formal solicitation for relief, a favor, etc. Petition implies a formal request, usually in writing and in accordance with established rights. Pray and supplicate suggest humility in entreaty and imply that the request is addressed to God or to a superior authority. Supplicate in addition suggesting a kneeling or other abjectly prayerful attitude.The appeal is both an important and serious matter. So wise people consider it with due seriousness. It must be humble enough to conquer head and heart of the appellate authority. Any successful writing should appeal to the intellect and emotion of the readers. Some books demand intellect of the readers. Here the readers are numbered. Some books are meant for lay readers and naturally, appeal to the emotion. Such books become a best seller. The books those become the cocktail of intellect and emotion in different proportion experience demand accordingly The readers are not bound to read all writings. It is the responsibility of the author to write judging the interest and intellect of the readers. Most of the authors neglect this vital issue. They write as per their whims. This answers why the libraries are becoming merely the storehouse of large still books. An editor examines the appeal of the writings very meticulously. Any lacunae if exists compels him to reject the manuscript mercilessly since he knows not to compromise with quality. So he appeals to the author not to submit any sub-standard submission.