

From the Ottoman Empire to pre-Islamic Central Asia: Theatre as an Ideological Tool

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Abstract

After Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the new Turkish Republic in 1923, the country went through a swift and radical transformation. The ruling elite made use of all possible tools to impose the ideals of the new Republic. Their main objective was to break the bonds with the Islamic Ottoman past to establish a new secular national identity. The essence of the new Turkish nation was found in pre-Islamic Central Asia. This view was supported with the help of the Turkish History Thesis, which asserted that the Turks are a supreme race, and their origins are from Central Asia. The state tried to propagate this thesis by various means. The most effective tool that could reach the illiterate people during that period was the theatre. Accordingly, the aim of this article is to explore how the state disseminated the Turkish History Thesis and the values of the new Republic through theatre. The emergence of this new narrative coincided with the tenth anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The plays, written in 1933, especially for this occasion, will be analyzed to determine how they support the Turkish History Thesis and the values of the new nation. Two plays, *Akın (The Raid)* and its sequel *Özyurt (Homeland)*, will be explored in detail to give an elaborate account of the ideology behind such plays written during that period.

Keywords: Turkish theatre, political theatre, Turkish History Thesis

After the Ottoman Empire was vanquished in World War I, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk launched the War of Independence (1919-1923) against Western powers. He founded the Turkish Republic in 1923 and established a new secular democratic nation. The new Republic experienced a swift and stark transformation. Many effective reforms were implemented in a short period to detach the new Turkish Republic from its Islamic Ottoman past. As a result, the Caliphate was abolished, and the Islamic law was discarded; a new alphabet was adopted, and women acquired extensive civil rights. These and many other reforms were carried out under the leadership of Atatürk in line with the Kemalist ideology. Atatürk's ideology was based on six tenets, also known as the six arrows of Kemalism. The six arrows on the flag of the Republican People's Party, which is the founding party of modern Turkey, represent these principles: Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Statism, Secularism, and Reformism/Revolutionism.¹ The ruling elite used all tools to disseminate the new Republic's ideals and create a new nation-state from the remains of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual empire.

The ruling elite's main aim was to break the bonds with the Ottoman past to establish a new national identity. In "the late Ottoman Empire the very term 'Turk' was a term of derision used for the unsophisticated and coarse peasant, tribesman, or small-town dweller" (Ahmad 78). They focused on changing this perception, and, starting with the 1930s, they focused on constructing a new understanding of being Turkish. In the late 1920s, Turkishness was not associated with race. As Soner Cagaptay notes, during that period, the nation was trying to restore its power after decades of wars. The 1930s, however, brought forth a significant shift with the rise of nationalism. The role of race was accentuated in defining the Turkish nation. This was "an important episode in Turkish history, whose legacy seems to have imprinted itself on modern Turkey" (Cagaptay, "Race Assimilation" 86). This

Understanding Arab American Identity through
Orientalist Stereotypes and Representations in
Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006)

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Abstract

Arab-American women's literature has emerged noticeably in the early years of the 21st century. The social and political atmosphere in post-9/11 America encouraged the growth of such literature and brought it to international attention. This diasporic literature functions as a means of discussing the Orientalist discourse that circumscribes Arab American identity and its effects in determining their position in the wider American society. As such, this article investigates the extent to which Edward Said's discourse of Orientalism is employed by Mohja Kahf in her novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) to project the stereotypes and misrepresentations that confine the identity of Arab and Muslim characters in the US society. This article suggests that post-9/11 Arab American fiction serves as a literary reference to such stereotype-based discourse in the contemporary era. The arguments in this article, while employing an analytical and critical approach to the novel, are outlined within postcolonial and Orientalist theoretical frameworks based on arguments of prominent critics and scholars such as Peter Morey, Edward Said, and Jack Shaheen, to name just a few.

Keywords: Arab American; Edward Said; Mohja Kahf; identity; Orientalism; stereotypes.

Introduction

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (2006) is an example of the kind of Arab-American women's literature that has emerged remarkably at the beginning of the 21st century. It is written in the form of a bildungsroman that revolves around the life of a Muslim Arab girl named Khadra Shamy and her journey of self-discovery. She comes to the USA with her parents from Syria as immigrants. Khadra grows up in a strict Muslim community in the city of Indianapolis where the children are brought up following rigid Islamic rules and rejecting all differences. The novel portrays the hardships with which Muslim characters of different nationalities cope in the USA and their endeavors to better position themselves in the wider American society. It discusses a wide range of issues and concerns that affect their daily lives—mainly political and cultural. As the novel progresses, Khadra goes through several experiences, which give her the opportunity to explore her true identity as opposed to the identity that she inherited from her parents and to reconsider the meaning of life from a different angle. Mohja Kahf weaves her novel in a way that shows the extent to which diasporic figures find it difficult to understand their identity and develop a sufficient sense of belonging given their dual identities. She is an example of the type of Arab-American author who discusses and assesses the discourse of Orientalism and its repercussions on her literary production – it is difficult for these Arab-American authors to produce their literature without challenging and assessing Western stereotypes and Orientalist assumptions that circumscribe their identity and self-understanding. This is because they personally confront such representational paradigms in their lived experiences.

Identity is a key word and problematic concern in diaspora studies. Madan Sarup reflects on the nature of identity and argues that “it can be displaced; it can be hybrid or multiple. It can be constituted through community: family, region, and the nation-

Ali Smith's *There But For The*:
Identity, Hospitality and Transcendence in the
Age of Surveillance

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Abstract

The aim of this essay is to prove that, throughout Ali Smith's *There But For The* (2011), the “narrative” subjective identity (Alphen 83) accessed via the face-to-face relation (Levinas and Hand 42), as well as through storytelling itself, is liable to be turned into archivable information under the pressures of a surveillance state in which its citizens are complicit. I will use this archival/ narrative identity dyad as articulated by theorist Ernst van Alphen in order to investigate at length the novel's staging of hospitality as corrupted by surveillance. I will oppose the notion of identity as information against Emmanuel Levinas's conception of the face-to-face relation (Levinas and Hand 42), whereby true hospitality depends upon the mutual respect one person has for the absolute singularity of the other, which involves personal information and the right to privacy. As it will become apparent, these identities lose or gain agency according to the engagement of the self with a newly arrived foreign alterity. Thus, the arrival of strangers throughout Smith's novel thematizes the scenario of hospitality in tension with the stranger as surveyor or as surveyed. The doubling of language, the self-editing of one's discourse and the risky openness towards the Other are modes of resistance that eschew the artificial categorizations upon which the archival identity is contingent. However, the bridge from interiority to exteriority is mediation.

Smith therefore develops a conception of secularized Grace that works by exploring the revolutionary potential of this very mediation and can disrupt the logic of tyrannical surveillance. Part of this approach to history and language is informed by the witnessing of the traces left on the bodies of martyred dissidents by unjust systems at their apex.

There But For The is narrated by four characters in the mediatic aftermath of a bourgeois dinner party in an affluent suburb of London that witnessed the sudden and unexplainable reclusion of Miles Garth into the spare room of his stunned hosts. The event, as well as those leading up to and following it, is recounted by a grieving nature photographer in his sixties named Mark; May, a rebellious old woman suffering from dementia; an unemployed, middle-aged Anna; and Brooke, a ten-year old girl and voracious reader. The essay will approach these characters' meditations upon the nature of identity as split between its narrative and archival forms.

Keywords: surveillance, archive, narrative, identity, hospitality, Levinas, grace, mediation, transcendence, revolution.

The Monitoring Apparatus: Complicity and Resistance

There But For The problematizes the logic and politics of surveillance, focusing on the ways in which they stifle the potential intimacy brought on by hospitality in all its unpredictable developments. To identify the modes of exploitation, as well as those of resistance as observed in the novel, I will use concepts from "The Decline of Narrative Identity and the Rise of Archival Identity," an essay in which Alphen convincingly asserts that the importance of archival identity is rapidly overtaking that of narrative identity in the modern era, making them compete as symbolic forms (73). He defines archival identity as "an objective exteriority," "an external body of archives within which we are caught and that compulsorily fabricate an objective identity for us"

Gandhian Fasting and Cultural Indigestion in Jeffrey Eugenides' "Air Mail"

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Abstract

"Air Mail" is one of the ten stories included in Jeffrey Eugenides' latest collection of stories, *Fresh Complaint*. Drawing on one of the characters in his third novel, *The Marriage Plot*, as well as on his own experiences in India working as a volunteer alongside Mother Theresa, "Air Mail" tells the story of young (and idealistic) Mitchell Grammaticus, who leaves the West in order to explore India, Bangkok, and a tropical island in the Gulf of Siam, where he finally succumbs to dysentery (as well as to thoughts regarding the futility of existence). Ripe in irony and biting sarcasm, coupled with a surprising tenderness and empathy, which are the landmarks of Eugenides' writing, the story is a tongue-in-cheek debate on the East-West cultural conflict, as well as on the numerous (false) conceptions Westerners harbor regarding foreign cultures, paradigms and ideologies.

Keywords: food, fasting, foreign, East, West, ideologies, asceticism, the spirit, sarcasm.

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Echoes of Sapphic Gods and Goddesses, Immortality, Eros and Thanatos in the Work of Modernist Women Poets

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Abstract

In the context of Modernism's constant return to the past that results in self-knowledge and innovation, certain women writers found Sappho's writings relevant for their own poetic endeavours. My article will mainly focus on the mythological aspects of both Sappho's and the modernist women's poetry. Invocations of and allusions to gods and goddesses and other mythical figures, which involve introspection and expressing certain erotic concerns in stylised ways, will be discussed in order to show how all these women poets innovated, and, in many different ways, significantly enriched the literature of their times. Critics have mainly focused on H.-D.'s poetry in relation to Sappho's, most likely because the modernist poet had also translated (or adapted, according to most scholars) a number of Sappho's poems. As regards other modernist women poets, such as, for instance, Amy Lowell or Marianne Moore, critics have refrained, for various reasons, from analysing their work in relation to Sappho's. There are very few critical accounts of Sappho's influence on their (and even H.-D.'s) poetry, and this article will, perforce, draw on these, but aims, all the while, to provide new and relevant insights.

Keywords: Sappho's poetry, Ancient Greek poetry, Modernism, modernist women poets, stylized and interiorized mythological concerns, literature as palimpsest.

On Telling the Truth: A Cognitive Stylistic Reading of Philip Larkin's "Talking in Bed"

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Abstract

This essay presents a cognitive stylistic analysis of Philip Larkin's "Talking in Bed," highlighting the linguistic functions that aid the reader in the meaning-making process. In the poem, the realization of truth dawns upon the persona in the final moments of a lingering introspection, shedding light on the reason for which he is lying in bed beside his partner, profoundly incapable of uttering a word. It seems to him, in the end, that truth is indispensable to human relationships. This essay represents a thorough attempt at textually analyzing the poem, broaching snippets of knowledge from multiple fields – philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and literature – all in an attempt to present a comprehensive interpretation of Larkin's poem. The aim is to further evidence the speaker's realization, that the articulation of truth is a vital element in a healthy relationship, and to provide an understanding of the stylistic technique most utilized by Larkin, namely, the linguistic deviation he usually deploys by the end of his poems. I argue that the ambiguity he instills at the end of this poem makes for a cognitive attempt at empathically communicating to the reader the sense of meaninglessness the persona suffers from throughout the poem.

Keywords: Philip Larkin, "Talking in Bed," poetry, stylistics, linguistics, cognitive stylistics, truth, philosophy, analysis, Jordan Peterson, telling the truth, relationships, deviation, ambiguity, defamiliarization

A Comparative Analysis of Translations of Lucian Blaga's Poetry into English

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Abstract

The complexity of Lucian Blaga's poetry is a matter of common knowledge. Part of this complexity is related to the elements of prosody that Blaga skilfully employs, to say nothing of the philosophical vein which infuses his writings, and which derives, understandably, from his philosophical work. Mention should also be made of the lyrical character of Blaga's dramatic works, which adds significantly to the effort of translating his writings into English, or any other language for that matter. In what follows, we intend to offer a bird's eye view of the volumes that have been translated into English and to analyse a selection of poems comparatively, in order to signal challenges and discrepancies, born in the process of transferring literary material from Romanian to English, and to point out what has been lost, and, if that be the case, what has been gained in the translation process.

Keywords: comparative analysis, Lucian Blaga's poetry, challenges, unbalance, fidelity, figures of speech, ambiguity, lyricism, rhyme, rhythm, polysemy

Preliminary Considerations

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, Lucian Blaga has been one of the most important poets of 20th-century Romanian literature, one of the thinkers who came up with a very original philosophical system.

Speech Acts across Cultures: Teaching Compliment Exchanges

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Abstract

Speaking a foreign language implies more than knowing its vocabulary and grammar. As such, teachers of foreign languages should keep this in mind and consider also other aspects than the ones mentioned. Attention should be paid to pragmatics and cultural issues, among others. The present essay aims to highlight the importance of raising foreign language students' awareness of national and international linguistic and cultural behaviours. It describes briefly the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, focusing on speech acts and their culture-sensitive features. Then, it turns to one of the most important types of speech acts, namely compliment exchanges. Taking into consideration the key role played in cross-cultural communication by the appropriateness of compliments and their expected answers, the article proposes several activities to do in class in order to (1) raise students' awareness regarding the importance of compliments for successful communication, (2) present them the usual patterns, topics, and cultural particularities of compliments, (3) familiarise students with possible communication threats, and (4) provide them with possible strategies to answer compliments. The activities are not restricted to students of foreign languages in general but are recommended also to those studying specialised subjects in foreign languages, such as communication, translation and interpreting.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication; cross-cultural pragmatics; speech acts; compliments; compliment exchanges; didactics; interlanguage pragmatics; successful communication; communication threats.

Introduction

Language, as well as its study, has been influenced and shaped by globalisation and internationalisation. Since language has adapted to communicate across cultures, scholars in the area have moved their attention to cross-cultural and intercultural research. Accordingly, linguistics and its branches have been studied across cultures (Boers; Pikhart; Suomela-Salmi and Dervin; Wierzbicka).

One of the branches of linguistics visibly related to cross-cultural and/or intercultural communication is pragmatics. Originated in the philosophy of language, pragmatics has been recently defined as “the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language” (Huang, *Pragmatics* 2). It mainly studies implicature, presupposition, speech acts, deixis and reference, sometimes overlapping with semantics. It appears that scholars make a distinction as far as communication across cultures is concerned. Cross-cultural communication tends to focus on pragmatic phenomena, which are analysed in different cultures in order to set up comparisons and predict possible misunderstandings. Intercultural communication, in turn, studies representatives of different groups while interacting in order to discover the way differences are negotiated (Archer, Aijmer, and Wichmann 110). As such, cross-cultural pragmatics presents “a systematic comparison of different cultures on the basis of studying different aspects of language use,” whereas intercultural pragmatics deals with “the interaction between speakers from different cultures, speaking different languages” (Huang, *Oxford Handbook* 10).

Within this framework, the present essay focuses on cross-cultural pragmatics, particularly on possible ways in which students may be presented with real-life situations of language in use across cultures and trained to perform successful communication acts.