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Editor's Preface

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On behalf of our contributors, reviewers, editorial board, and editorial team— we warmly welcome you to the third issue of *Essence & Critique: Journal of Literature and Drama Studies*. *Essence & Critique* publishes academic articles and book reviews written by leading academics, early career researchers and independent scholars who specialize in cultural studies and/or have a background in performance, theatre and drama studies. The work published is intended to be accessible to everyone and at the same time reflect upon key issues and emerging trends in literature and literary criticism while extending existing conversation. Each work that is filtered from the theoretical and practical knowledge of the authors and passed through the filter of field expert referees and editors will be included in the scope of this journal, which aims to close a gap in the world of literature and drama studies.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the issue writers, our associate editors, our book review editors, our international advisory board and especially our editorial assistants for their contribution in delivering this issue. This issue consists of an intellectually dynamic range of materials, discussing works of writing that are not widely represented within our received canon. We are excited about the breadth of illuminating scholarship in this issue and we would like to invite new writers to join us as we offer a platform for them to present their groundbreaking academic work.



Social Issues in the Kuwaiti Play ‘*The Bird Has Flown*’: Hybridity, Gender, and Belonging

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ABSTRACT

Many theatre scholars have focused on Arab dramatists and yet theatre in Kuwait has not received enough scholarly attention. One Kuwaiti dramatist (writing during the twentieth century) has paved the way in presenting issues of identity, hybridity, and belonging. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Surayyi’s influential play *Ḍā‘ āl-Dīk* (1971) was translated into English (*The Bird Has Flown*). This article offers a close reading of the English translation and interrogates issues of identity, family, and belonging in Kuwaiti society during the twentieth century. The play’s hero, Yousef, is the son of a Kuwaiti father and Indian mother. Arriving to Kuwait, he tries to assimilate but ultimately fails, leaving behind a tragedy. The article traces Yousef’s coming-of-age narrative and analyses the play’s showcasing of social issues.

KEYWORDS

Kuwait, identity, hybridity, theatre.

Theatre in the Middle East has not received much critical attention in scholarly works although it has a rich history to consider. Theatre scholars have delved into the history of Arab theatre and offered extensive analyses (Robin 12). Much scholarship has focused on the Arab world (mostly Egypt and Syria) and its engagement with Western theatre (Amine 146). Less critical attention has been paid to Kuwait's position with the rise of the theatre in the Arab world during the first half of the twentieth century. Recent scholarship revolves around only one Kuwaiti dramatist, Sulaiman al-Bassam, who founded Sulayman Al-Bassam Theatre (SABAB) Kuwait in 2002. al-Bassam has an international reputation for his adaptation of classic Shakespearean works such as *Richard III: An Arab Tragedy*, *The al-Hamlet Summit*, and others. While al-Bassam's work is globally significant, there is a largely neglected area of Kuwaiti Theatre that needs critical attention. Historically, Kuwait was pioneering in the field of theatre amongst other Gulf countries. Kuwaiti theatrical origins began in 1933, when the Kuwaiti pioneer Abd al-Aziz al-Rasheed wrote and directed the first play in the Gulf on the stage of the

— 4 — Ahmadiyya School, and in 1939 another play was performed by students, “Islam Omar Ibn al-Khātāb” (Al-Shammari 3; Al-Ojairi 4). The play was supported by Palestinian teachers at the time who helped the play come to life (Al-Shammari 3). Several theatre groups were established in the 1960's: including the Public Theatre Group (1957), the Arab Theatre Group (1961), the Arabian Gulf Theatre Group (1963) and the Kuwaiti Theatre Group (1964), according to Michalak (165). All of these theatre groups began to stage plays written primarily in standard Arabic and not in Kuwaiti dialect in order to reach the largest audience. Theatre in Kuwait was a major social influence and most plays presented social critiques and commentaries, similarly to theatre in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world, where theatre served as an outlet for social and political expression (Badawi 12). Kuwaiti dramatists were preoccupied with social injustice, political repression, socioeconomic class differences, and the rapid urbanization of Kuwait. In Kuwait, there are two types of theatre, *āl-Masraḥāl ijīmā ī* (Social Theatre) and *āl-Masraḥāl-tārfīhī* (Milalak-Pikulsa 172). For the purpose of this article, the Social Theatre offers insight into Kuwaiti society's clash with modernity and the quick changes taking place during the twentieth

century, specifically in the 1970's.

The focus of this paper is Kuwaiti dramatist Abd al-'Aziz al-Surayyi's play 'The Bird Has Flown' (*Ḍā' āl-Dīk*). Written in 1971 and first performed in 1972, the play was written and performed in Kuwaiti dialect, but al-Surayyi later revised it to Arabic *fūshā* for publication. Revising it to standard Arabic allowed the play to be read and accessed by neighbouring Arab countries. This is the only Kuwaiti play to be translated into English and the English translation of the title is 'the bird' although the word 'Dīk' literally means rooster. According to Mikalakis-Pikusa, Abd al-Aziz al-Surayyi has left his literary imprint on Kuwaiti theatre:

The greatest literary output among Kuwaiti authors falls to the credit of 'Abdal-Aziz al-Surayyi...In his plays he stresses the importance of the artistry of utterance thanks to which his works can be considered as universal for the whole Arab world...The hero is always the most important in his works...the characters in the majority originate from the middle class (167).

Al-Surayyi has written numerous plays including *āl-jūw* (Hunger), *Indāhu Shāhādāi* (He has a Degree), *Fulūs wā Nufūs* (Money and Souls), among many others, the last being an adaptation of Arthur Miller's play *The Price*, which he adapted in 1988 to the Kuwaiti stage and was performed in 1988 and recently in 2020 at the Shaikh Jaber Cultural Centre. His career as a dramatist is noteworthy and has included supervising the Arabian Gulf Theatre Group, supporting youth theatre endeavours, written screenplays for television and radio, and served as a judge for theatre festivals in Kuwait. Most of his plays were directed by late Kuwaiti director Saqr āl-Rushood, including *The Bird Has Flown*. They had a long history of collaborative work and continued to work together until al-Rushood's early death in 1978.

In *The Bird Has Flown*, Yousef is on a self-discovery journey and is in conflict with his external environment. Al-Surayyi's protagonists are mostly on a mission to find themselves amongst the rapid changes in Kuwait. Yousef's character stands out from other plays that al-Surayyi wrote as he is a complex character with opposing beliefs and values, struggling with

hybridity and identity issues that cause conflict within the family. The hero's journey culminates in a tragic ending, as the hero escapes the pressures of hybridity, assimilation, and Kuwaiti societal expectations. As al-Surayyi's work can be viewed as a cultural artefact, this paper offers a literary analysis of the play as depicting Kuwaiti society's understanding of identity and hybridity in post-oil Kuwait, gender politics, and the question of belonging.

The play's hero, Yousef, is on a journey to find his identity and his home in Kuwait. Estranged from his father for thirty years, Yousef was left behind when his Kuwaiti father decided to divorce his Indian-British mother, Theresa. Theresa's father was Indian and her mother was British, but she meets Yaqoub in India, where she gives birth to his son, raises him, and then moves with him to Britain. Years later Yousef arrives in Kuwait looking for his father and demanding to know his true heritage. Yousef wishes to forge a connection with the country, its traditions and ways of life, but struggles to belong to a place in which he cannot learn the dialect, nor understand the intricate family dynamics. Regarded as immoral and too foreign by his Kuwaiti family, his brother, Salem, tries to help Yousef integrate into his native culture, while his sister Fatima attempts to teach him Arabic. Yousef lands himself a job as a company consultant and seems to be settling in. The game-changer is meeting his cousin Sara (Sou Sou), with whom he makes love. Although Sou Sou is his brother's love, Salem is unaware of this infidelity. Not only was Salem defrauded by this illicit sexual relationship, he is also later indicted of raping Sou Sou and is forced to atone for his assault by marrying her.

Yousef decides to disassociate himself from the subjugation of his family and leaves after writing a note of apology. The family are at a loss as to the reasons for his departure and cannot understand what they consider to be a betrayal of their trust. The play raises many questions about modernization and its effects, the uncertainty of identity, the implications for differences in language, and the social constructs of gender stereotypes. Of note is the play's prophetic title, the rooster alludes to Yousef, the lost son, separated by a difference in cultural upbringing. The rooster is an interesting choice as this animal is symbolic of potency. Yousef, having committed

a sexual indiscretion, returns to Britain, leaving the audience transfixed on the family’s misfortune. The “bird” or rooster, flies away, escaping Kuwaiti society’s expectations of him. The rooster (Yousef) is lost, gone, and has not found anything valuable in his search for home or identity; everything is lost instead.

Before moving to a textual analysis of the play “*The Bird Has Flown*” we need to examine Kuwait’s engagement with neighbouring countries and trade, in order to contextualise the play’s depiction of social and economic realities. In her case study of Kuwait’s media history and contemporary situation, al-Salem surveys Kuwait’s history succinctly:

Kuwait had been, for many centuries, an independent sheikhdom living on trade, fishing, and pearl harvesting. In the early eighteenth century, tribes such as *al-Utūb* and *al-Sabah* fled to Kuwait from the Arabian Peninsula, away from danger and dispute with other tribes. After they had settled in the town of Kuwait, the small town developed into a commercial hub and began to thrive because of its location overlooking the head of the Arabian Gulf. This led Kuwait to become one of the most prosperous countries in the region (164).

Kuwait’s prosperity began in the post-oil, but the country also experienced an increase in general trade due to the pearling boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In her excellent study on Kuwait’s history of urban development, al-Nakib traces Kuwait’s urbanization and position pre-oil discovery and post-oil in 1932. Al-Nakib gathers that “Kuwait’s first period of commercial prosperity came during the Persian occupation of Basra, where the British East India Company’s factory was located, beginning in 1777” (26). In the early half of the twentieth century, many Gulf merchants set up trading businesses in Bombay, India. Many Kuwaiti merchants played an important role in the development of pearl trade. Even after the discovery of oil, these merchants continued their general trade and businesses. Cultural exchange was part of the reality in this contact zone between Kuwait and India. For instance, many of these merchants spent many years in Bombay and as such a school was set up by the Government of Kuwait:

The Kuwait School in Bombay was established by the Government of Kuwait after a visit to India by the former Shaykh of Kuwait in 1952. The school helped to maintain Arabic culture and education for the boys and girls of Arabs living in Bombay (13).

Kuwait's cultural engagement with Bombay spans many decades and it is this precise history that plays a role in *The Bird Has Flown*. As mentioned earlier, theatre in Kuwait offered a mirror to lived realities and problems facing society. Using humour to poke fun at the characters' is a technique that dramatist al-Surayyi uses to engage the audience and examine larger social issues that otherwise would be difficult for the audience to respond to. Similar research on humour in Iranian theatre has been conducted and shows the audience's reception of humour in a conservative society. As Beeman suggests, in Iran, and to a larger extent Middle Eastern performance: "Comic performance are the norm, and in the clearest measure of success, in the estimation of both performers and audience, is the amount of laughter produced among spectators" (510). Watching the live performance of *The Bird Has Flown* presents the roaring laughter of the audience, at times stopping the performers from continuing the dialogue. Part of the success of the play is its comical and satirical dialogue, its play on Kuwaiti dialect (which gets lost in the translated text) and the performers' facial expressions. Audiences especially enjoy the protagonist's frustration with the intricacies of the Arabic language and Kuwaiti proverbs. The more confused he gets, the more the audience laughs at the linguistic and cultural clashes. The play deals with a dark reality through a comical lens that allows the audience to respond favorably.

The Bird Has Flown became the most popular play and iconic in Kuwait and the Gulf and this is evidenced by its translation into English for a more global audience. The English translation of the play is carefully done by Salma Khadra Jayussi, and the text primarily captures the plot and main dialogue, while a lot of humour and cultural idioms are missing. I will examine the song at the end of the play which is left out entirely from the play's translated text. The song became part of the play's recap of its main themes and plot, sung by the actors and actresses as

they remain on stage after the final scene. The character of Yaqoub, dramatized by Abdulaziz Almasoud, is the father of Yousef, the main protagonist of the play. Yaqoub begins to croon the song in the final scene, lamenting the loss of his rooster, the fated ending that has fractured the family. The lyrics offered here are my translation:

Yaqoub (Yousef’s father): The story has happened between Kuwait and England, I lost my Rooster, my rooster is lost!

Chorus (all actors and actresses on stage): Who looked for him?

Yaqoub: I bought my Rooster, but Theresa stole him from me!

These lyrics, sung in Kuwaiti dialect, are catchy and offer the audience a chance to connect with the symbolism behind the usage of the lost rooster. The symbol of the rooster allows al-Surayyi to emphasise the play’s focus on the lost hero. The lyrics rhyme and have a comical effect (also partly due to the actor’s performance) although the content of the song is critical and tragic. The audience roars with laughter, claps, and sings along as the performers summarize the main events of the play through the well-crafted lyrics. Although the play offers a social critique, its use of song and humour is effective in engaging the audience. The song is still widely popular.

Family dynamics are also emphasized throughout the play, as Kuwait is a collectivist society that values family and kinship. The portrayal of a tightly knit family through character and dialogue works to reveal the narrative backstory. As Yaqoub recalls his past, a nostalgic atmosphere hangs over the stage, evoking a longing for a pre-oil Kuwait, a different time. As Yaqoub belongs to the older generation, he has stories to tell that his daughter, Fatima, is eager to heed. The dialogue between these characters reveals previously hidden details and enhances the mood. Yaqoub narrates his journeys to India of more than thirty years previously to his daughter, who asks about his relationship with Theresa. He indicates that he used to leave the country for “four, five months, sometimes even eight. I went on like this for years” (Act I, Scene 1, 219). However, his social status indicates that he would have been representing the merchant elite. The

large house, financial security, and focus on the family's wealth and business allows us the audience to infer his socio-economic position in society is the result of trade and business. Al-Nakib asserts that:

The merchants' elite status stemmed primarily from their control of the town's pearling, shipping, and trading industries... The majority of the town's population consisted of laborers. Most laborers were sailors and pearl divers who worked on board the merchants' trading and pearling ships (28).

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Yaqoub's narrative is pushed forward and revealed to us by his daughter's many questions, and the audience is able to feel Yaqoub's yearning for his lost youth, as he stares into space and recalls the Indian setting, his strength, and his love for Theresa. It is in this contact zone between two different cultures that the play's main conflict takes place. Mary Louise Pratt used the term "contact zones" to describe those spaces where cultures meet and negotiate these contested spaces, often times in an asymmetrical relationship of power (38). What comes out of this contact zone is Yousef, who is a hybrid, existing between multiple spaces. Yousef's arrival to Kuwait after his father's narration of events propels the play's action forward, shifting the focus to Yousef's conflict of identity and belonging.

The actor playing the role of Yousef is Kuwaiti actor Mohammad Al-Mansoor, who has physical features that would have resembled a foreigner (light skin and a full head of blonde hair). Al-Mansoor was also a leading actor in the first Kuwaiti film *The Cruel Sea* produced in 1972. The film was a major success and continues to be part of Kuwait's cultural history. Both roles placed al-Mansoor in the limelight. Al-Mansoor's role as Yousef was pivotal in his acting career and is a role that remains etched into the audience's and critics' collective memory. Even today, when discussing the potential of Kuwaiti youth, Yousef's name is mentioned to allude to 'lost youth'(Al-Shammari 3). Al-Mansoor's performance as Yousef is superb and realistic, portraying the broken language of Arabic, the confusion with his father's requests to dress and speak like Kuwaitis do, and his facial expressions convey his obliviousness to Kuwaiti culture

and social norms.

Many scholars have written about hybridity and it is Postcolonial scholar Homi Bhaba’s definition which remains essential to an understanding of hybridity and third space (“Anxiety in the Midst of Difference” 125). Bhaba’s understanding of identity is that it is never fixed, “identity is never an a priori, nor a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of totality” (131). If as Bhabha suggests, identity remains in a state of flux, then Yousef’s identity is malleable and shifts to be able to accommodate the new culture he finds himself in. Yousef lives a sort of “hybrid mutation” that he embodies through his language, behaviour, and values (136). For instance, Yousef’s request for pork invokes a taboo, which elicits wrath from his father and siblings (Act I, Scene II, 225). While Yousef struggles to explain why he likes pork, his father bursts into racist recriminations and calls Yousef a “pig” and “scoundrel” (225). The disappointment in his son’s non-Muslim choice of meat is the first instance in which Yaqoub misunderstands Yousef’s alternative cultural upbringing. The father constantly upstages Yousef, which results in raucous hoots of laughter from the audience. This wry humour is dependent upon certain cultural and linguistic prompts. Yousef initially responds only to ‘Joe’, shortening for Joseph/Yousef, but later tries to accommodate his family’s wishes and begins to acknowledge the name of Yousef and to wear the traditional Kuwaiti costume, the dishdasha. He also attempts to learn Arabic, with the help of his sister, Fatima, who is presented as nurturing and empathetic. In spite of his linguistic and clothing readjustments, Yousef’s attempt at assimilation into Kuwaiti society is rather chaotic. Yousef finds himself positioned as Other amid both his family and the audience. It is this Self/Other binary that is the focus of the play. Yet the audience empathizes with Yousef because he provides a third path towards identity. It is in this recognition of the blurriness of boundaries, of us against them, that a third space opens up. Al-Surayyi’s stage opens up a third space where nations and identities are in dialogue. Bhabha describes this third space as: “the non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures opens up a cultural space - a third space - where the negotiation of incommensurable

differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences” (Cosmopolitanism 132). Yousef is the hero of the play who pushes against every boundary between Self/Other and presenting his experience allows the audience to consider other experience. According to Postcolonial scholar Edward Said, one way to deal with these polar experiences between East and West is to “think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant.” (28) These discrepant experiences between Yousef and his father, Yousef and his brother Salem, and East and West are placed on stage for the audience to reflect on. Yousef attempts to “emerge as authentic through mimicry” and yet the final scene has him abandoning this performance of identity and mimicry. There is no way out for Yousef except to return to another home, England, after his attempt at assimilation has failed. Having left the family with a shock that cannot be healed, Yousef’s journey culminates in an ending that leaves the family heartbroken, his father and Uncle (Sou Sou’s father) in tears, lamenting the loss of the rooster.

Critic Joseph Massad clarifies the ideas attached to the Arabic *turāth* (Literally: legacy).

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“The term *turāth* refers today to the civilizations’ documents of knowledge, culture, and intellect that are said to have been passed down from the Arabs of the past to the Arabs of the present” (17). For Massad, *turāth* was set up against modernity and, unsurprisingly, Western ideals and globalization. In al-Surayyi’s work (232-234), the rapid urbanization of Kuwait was set up against the traditional and conservative Kuwaiti culture. Most clearly, it is personified in the way that the characters act as foils to each other. Yousef’s brother, Salem, is the traditional and responsible Kuwaiti, embodying masculinity that his father (and society) approves of. This usage of Salem as the foil character is accentuated when Sou Sou falls for Yousef and is unable to stop comparing the two men. She is attracted to Yousef’s dress code (pants and a shirt, symbolising his Western background) and the way he speaks, although it is broken Arabic. He is unlike Salem, who struggles to speak to Sou Sou due to his reserved nature and Kuwaiti upbringing. The dichotomy between male and female characters is foregrounded. Salem also functions as the savior, the one who will fix his brother’s mistakes and selflessly put his own

feelings to one side in order to save the family’s reputation and honour. In contrast, Yousef taints the family’s honour and leaves them behind, refusing to marry Sou Sou, who gave herself to him, despite the family’s request. Similarly, Sou Sou is contrasted with her cousin, Fatima (Yousef and Salem’s sister), who is to her culture. Sou Sou’s choice to be called Sou Sou rather than Sarah is one small act of defiance that confuses Fatima and leaves her bewildered. Sou Sou insists that these are “old-fashioned names” (Act I, Scene II, 232) Fatima shakes her head and refuses to follow the trend of shortening one’s name because it is inconsistent with Arabic tradition. She epitomizes feminine wisdom, shying away from engaging with the public sphere, and remaining responsible for the family’s reputation throughout.

Sou Sou’s character is an archetype for the modern girl, standing in sharp contrast to Fatima, speaking boldly about her desire to meet Yousef, and makes no attempt at hiding her fascination with him: “They say he’s typically English...blue eyes...I’d like to see him” (Act I, Scene II, 233). Sou Sou is regarded as the ‘badgirl’ who dares to flirt with Yousef. When she first meets him, she takes an active role and approaches him, touching him, and he starts laughing nervously. It is Sou Sou who takes on a more active role and the curtain closes as their bodies get closer. This is not mentioned in the play’s translation but is evident in the actual performance of the play. Sou Sou stands as the femme fatale figure who dares to transgress the boundaries of cultural ideologies of women’s decency and behaviour. Kuwaiti scholar Haya al-Mughni’s study of women status in Kuwait pre-oil and post-oil examines the rapid changes that took place after oil was discovered. From the 1930s women were excluded from the outside world, regulated only to the domestic sphere. Women in Kuwait “lived their lives from birth to death in the mud-walled town. They knew nothing of the seafaring voyages, of the charm of Indian cities” (44). Having no preconceived notions of the world beyond Kuwait, women remained unaware of the possibilities beyond the family home. Fatima’s mother, Sharifa, is unaware that her husband had taken another wife in India, all these years. To her, there was nothing beyond Kuwait and she had no suspicions prior to the arrival of Yousef to Kuwait, thirty years later. The generational gap

and differences are apparent with Sou Sou's insistence on seeing what an English blonde man looks like. Sou Sou is more daring and likes to explore the world around her. In Act II, the audience finds out that Sou Sou has not returned home and was with Yousef at Ahmadi. Ahmadi is a city in Kuwait where the expat community usually resides, close to the oil companies such as Kuwait Oil Company. Through the characters' dialogue, we know that Yousef works as a Consultant for the oil company in Ahmadi. When Fatima asks why she was not invited to Ahmadi along with Yousef and Sou Sou, his response is that "it's not your kind of place...you're too proper" (Act II, Scene I, 236). In Yousef's view, along with the audience, Fatima is too traditional and dignified to visit Ahmadi, but Sou Sou is not. Sou Sou is presented as the archetype of the 'bad girl', a common archetype in drama. In her influential study on female representation and archetypes in theatre, Lesley Ferris contends that:

Archetypal Images of Women in Theatre are broken down into a number of categories such as Penitent Whore, Speechless Heroine, Wilful Woman, Golden Girl and Women Acting Men (79).

Many feminist scholars of theatre have examined the representation of women in theatre, especially the 'new woman.' The 'new woman' in theatre was essentially a daring, bold, subversive figure who threatened the patriarchy and challenged male figures (Goodman12). While most studies dealt exclusively with women in Western theatre, the idea of the 'new woman' is embodied in Sou Sou's character. Sou Sou's embracing of modernism and a more liberal culture allows her room to approach Yousif and she is also the one who drops him off back to his house. Women in Kuwait were driving during the 1970's and had gained much economic freedom but it is still considered a reversal of stereotypes with Sou Sou driving Yousef (Tetreault and de Gay 412). When Fatima learns of this, she is shocked and does not say anything. When asked what has happened with Yousef, Sou Sou asserts that she fell in love with him and "gave myself to him...that's what happened and I do not know what the consequences will be" (al-Surayyi 237). She does not cry the same way that her father, Abu Abdallah, cries and

laments her honour. For all of the men in the family, Sou Sou’s honour and reputation resides in her body, and her body is the property of the collective. It is a patriarchal and misogynistic ideology which permeates the play and considers women to be symbols of the family and the nation. Losing control over Sou Sou’s body and sexuality is a threat of loss of control of the nation to modernity.

The representation of women in Arab theatre has been largely regulated by male dramatists, and ‘the written text remained the property of men though it was often inscribed on women’s bodies and voices.’ (Selaiha and Enany 641). Reading *The Bird Has Flown* as a Kuwaiti play offers us a view of gender and women’s bodies as the site for familial reputation and honour. Sou Sou is tainted because her act of love becomes an act of disgrace and ignominy. Although each partner is stigmatized after copulating out of wedlock, it is only Sou Sou who is to be disgraced by wearing a scarlet letter unless Yousef marries her. Her father refers to her as a “*bālwā*” (burden, *my translation*) at the end of Act III. This part of the play is not translated and is left out of the entire text. Both Sou Sou and Yousef are stigmatized, punished, and regarded as sinners and traitors, having shamed the family. Feminist critic Sara Ahmed aptly notes that “Family love may be conditional upon how one lives one’s life in relation to social ideals... Shame secures the form of the family by assigning to those who have failed its form the origin of bad feeling (‘You have brought shame on the family’)” (107). In Kuwait and collectivist societies, family love is always conditional on securing the family’s honour and avoiding any ‘shameful’ acts. Gendered relationships are aptly performed as the father feels shamed, burdened, and hates both his daughter and Yousef (his daughter is blamed for being a woman and a burden). The father plays the victimized role of the shamed father who cannot face society after his daughter loses her ‘honour.’ There is much to unpack here and there remains a gap in the literature regarding women’s honour in Kuwaiti families as it is still a taboo subject that remains hidden. The words virginity and honour are not explicitly referenced in the play and it is up to the audience to piece the pieces of the puzzle together, with Sou Sou’s allusions of “gave him

myself” as she covers her face.

In the play, the ‘contact zone’ has produced problematic tensions that are left unresolved in a dramatic ending that includes sombre music and tears shed by the entire family. This play offers an intricate and complex look at Kuwaiti society and its understanding of the Other, women, and the nation. Similar narratives exist today, but nothing has received as much critical attention as a contemporary novel by Kuwaiti novelist Saud al-Sanousi. *The Bamboo Stalk* was published in 2010 and later won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction. It was the first novel written by a Kuwaiti author to receive an internationally prestigious prize. Al-Sanousi’s novel received worldwide recognition and was translated into English. This facilitated its global reception and critics have commented on its popularity and rise to international literary recognition (McManus 239). The novel was later adapted into a Kuwaiti television serial airing during Ramadan 2016. The serial was a close adaptation of the novel and yet Kuwait television refused to air it due to its controversial representation of citizenship issues, hybridity, and identity politics. Viewers watched it on other channels such as Dubai TV. Al-Sanousi comments in an interview with *Arabli*:

The original idea was to write on India, as it is much closer to Kuwait than the Philippines. I even traveled to India, but I couldn’t finish working on that idea – Gulf citizens just don’t look that different from Indians. When I was in India, people would speak come up and speak Hindi to me – same thing in London. So if the protagonist was half-Indian, it wouldn’t pose a huge problem for him. Even the Kuwaitis, in the age of sail before oil, used to go and marry people from India. That didn’t pose a big problem for society, and it wouldn’t provide much of a central problem for the novel.

al-Sanousi’s commentary lacks critical and reflexive awareness of identity politics on a larger scale. It also does not acknowledge the canonical play *The Bird Has Flown* as being the first to introduce the topic of hybridity in Kuwait. Nevertheless, *The Bamboo Stalk* now seems to be the literary depiction of Kuwait that most readers know, and it certainly echoes al-Surayyi’s

examination of a hero who occupies a hybrid space. al-Sanousi’s hero is Jose/Isa, who is of Kuwaiti-Pilipino parentage. Jose, like Joseph/Yousef, comes to Kuwait on a journey of self-exploration and a search for heritage, identity, and belonging. He searches for his father and paternal lineage, coming into close contact with his grandmother, aunt, and other women in the family. As the novel progresses, issues of women’s rights, marginalization, and citizenship privileges are exposed. Isa, like Yousef, recognizes that assimilation will include changing one’s dress code, speaking Arabic (Kuwaiti dialect), following close customs and traditions of the family, and mirroring cultural ideologies which he refuses to believe in. He begins to suffer in this contact zone between Kuwait and the Philippines. He is constantly met with racial discrimination, an inability to assimilate and returns to the Philippines to continue his life there. Unlike Yousef, Isa does not leave behind a tragedy, but simply decides to stop trying to assimilate and accept that the Kuwaiti part of his identity has to be left behind. The novel then, like *The Bird Has Flown*, examines social issues in Kuwaiti society and offers a hero who ends up escaping, thus, a lost rooster.

Al-Surayyi’s work has left a marked impression on Arabic culture and has influenced the literary output of other writers such as al-Sanousi’s laureate of International Prize for Arabic Fiction. Al-Surayyi has produced more plays that mirror Kuwaiti society and to a larger extent, the Gulf region’s encounters with the West and modernization. His contribution to theatre and social critiques are unmatched. His plays ought to be translated into English, as lingua franca, to reach a global audience and theatre scholars. These plays are significant in their representation of Kuwaiti social issues, modernization, and gender. Because theatre mirrors society, these productions can offer insight into the changes, challenges, and obstacles in contemporary Kuwaiti society. More critical attention needs to be paid to literary output from Kuwait, while tracing the historical and social changes in the arts and culture movement in the 20th century.

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BIO

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‘The Humours’ Revisited: Kenneth Grahame's Mole, Toad, Rat and Badger. (A modern appreciation of *The Wind in the Willows*)

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the four main characters of Grahame’s children’s classic according to the theory of the four humours. Mole is described as the melancholic, Toad as the sanguine, Rat as the phlegmatic and Badger as the choleric. It is an attempt to move away from the characters’ being described according to their positions in Edwardian class society, which has been the general interpretation so far. This investigation is based mainly on Hallesby’s (1940) highly practical concept of the four humours but it also takes into consideration its anthroposophical version and, where appropriate, concepts as old as the Middle Ages.

KEYWORDS

children’s literature, character, the four humours, Kenneth Grahame, society, identification

1. Introduction

Ever since its publication in 1908, *The Wind in the Willows* (*WW*) has had its faithful readers, especially among adults, who have adopted the book for themselves (Oppermann 2005, 172). Reasons for this are manifold; apart from its nostalgia, *The Wind in the Willows* has been called “one of the most perfect wish-fulfilment books of all times” (Lippman 410). It is also highly entertaining, and therefore, such sentences as “Stop driving like Toad!” directed to a somewhat reckless driver, come as no surprise. An article in *The Guardian* (Jun 09, 2014) states that “*The Wind in the Willows* deserves recognition as a novel in which adult readers will find wisdom, humour, entertainment and meaning, as well as many passages of great literary power, together with characters who live on in the English literary unconscious” (n.pag).¹

One of the highly recognized topics concerning *The Wind in the Willows* is the class system which has frequently been discovered in Grahame’s work, and which generally serves to explain certain qualities of the characters. In 2017, McCooney and Hayes (50) still emphasize this sociological structure of *The Wind in the Willows*: The fellowship in the book is “limited and always hierarchical in nature, usually relating only to the novel’s central characters ... Toad and Badger are the gentry, Rat and Mole the bourgeoisie, and the stoats and weasels the proletarian mass” (48, 50). Smyth (45) identifies “the class basis of the conflict with which the text closes ...: various conservative elements (landed gentry, old aristocracy and bourgeoisie) combine to quell the discontented lower orders as represented by the weasels, stoats, and ferrets”. Both annotated editions comment on the class system in Grahame’s book (e.g. Lerer 18, 36, 79; Gauger xxix, 1-2, 12, 20). The strongest statement in this context, however, is Robson’s (80): “the Badger is an aristocrat: *nothing else can account for the invisible authority he yields over the River Bank as well as the Wild Wood*” (emphasis added). Although I accept his interpretation, and the sociological approach in general, its exclusivity as the only explanation of Badger’s authority I do not.

In this contribution, therefore, I would like to attempt another approach which also interprets the characters’ special qualities but is not limited to any allusion to the Edwardianor, in fact, any social system: the concept of the four humours. In contrast to the Edwardian class system, which has been outdated since WW I (and which should be difficult to apply nowadays with such social classes as the landed gentry and the original bourgeoisie practically no longer existing), the four humours are still present in many minds. A short survey of the Internet reveals

¹ This adoption by adult readers goes so far that, in Germany, the book has been called unsuitable for children because animals who, contrary to nature, are able to talk, were said to make the kids put down the book – it was too early for them to understand such unnatural behaviour (Osberghaus, 45). This judgment, in my opinion, is extremely far-fetched (especially with the traditions of the beast fable and the fairy tale considered!), especially in a guidebook on suitable reading for kids. It also stands in a strong contrast to Jacques’ introduction to Gauger’s annotated edition: “And why not? Why shouldn’t moles whitewash ceilings, rats paddle boats, badgers sit snoozing in armchairs, and toads have hilarious escapades on various forms of transport?” (xi).

914.000 Google hits for “choleric” 1.490.000 for “phlegmatic”, 25 million for “sanguine”, and 77 million for “melancholic”. With such a high number of hits, it can also be assumed that most readers of *WW* are roughly familiar with the descriptions which fit these character qualities, so that they will be able to recognize them in the four central characters. Even though the knowledge and use of the single names for the temperaments does not necessarily mean that the four humours are known as a complex system of character qualities, it is likely that these qualities are connected to these names – more or less stereotypically. Furthermore, whereas the Edwardian class system might be known to Grahame’s readers on the Island, it is not as well known outside of Britain. The four humours, in contrast, have been part at least of Western culture from Antiquity onwards. Thus, readers from outside Britain will also be able to recognize the hierarchy among the four main characters, and their typical qualities, by using this concept. In short; even though the concept’s medico-psychological meaning is outdated, parallels between Galen’s version of the concept and modern psychological approaches to temperamental studies are still valid (Rothbart 2012, 5), the names of the four temperaments, and, supposedly, their descriptions still are so present in common knowledge that they can even nowadays be recognized in the four characters’ qualities.² In my opinion, as much as each of the four main characters in Grahame’s work represents a certain social class (see Lerer18), he also represents one of the four humours; melancholic, choleric, sanguine and phlegmatic.³ This approach was justified by Breitingner (240) in 1984:

The four main characters; Toad, Mole, Water Rat and Badger, are obviously anthropomorphised (they are “ourselves in fur”), in correspondence to the traditions of the fable and the beast tale, and *also to the concept of the four humours from the 17th and 18th centuries*. According to this, Toad is the extrovert, loud and easy-going, Mole is the down-to-earth introvert, and Badger the active organizer.⁴ (Breitingner 240, emphasis added)

In order to develop this approach further, I will work mostly with Ole Hallesby’s *Temperament and the Christian Faith* which, despite its relative age and religious contents (which are

² Since I have found both “temperaments” and “humours” in the sources I used, I decided to use both terms synonymously.

³ That the characters are not simply seen as representing different Edwardian classes is excellently proved by Michael Thompson, for whom “Mole” represents “the Cockney Indigenes, the invading trendies, and the recent immigrants” of certain London quarters (39); none of which corresponds to the lower bourgeoisie, to which Mole generally is counted.

⁴ “Die Hauptfiguren der Erzählung, die Kröte, der Maulwurf, die Wasserratte und der Dachs tragen erkennbar menschliche Züge (sie sind “ourselves in fur”) in Anlehnung an die Fabel- und Bestiarientradition sowie an die *Temperamentlehre des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*. Die Kröte ist der extrovertierte, laute Leichtfuß, der Maulwurf der Introvertierte, Bodenständige, der Dachs der Aktive, Arbeits- und Organisationsfreudige.” If not stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

neglected in this paper), has proved a highly practical approach for character investigation⁵ and which is the only study of temperament which exists in an authorized translation into English. I will further add Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical approach, in the form of Frans Carlgren's account, when appropriate. Although both approaches are dated, they still contain the fundamental characteristics of the four humours which I am going to apply to Grahame's characters.

In his *Englische Kulturgeschichte* (1995), Dietrich Schwanitz combines the four humours with the four elements and their major qualities:

Thus, dry and cold earth corresponds to the black gall, cold and wet water corresponds to phlegm, hot and dry fire corresponds to the yellow gall, and wet and warm air corresponds to blood. So, the sanguine is an airy spirit, the phlegmatic a slimy water-sprite, the choleric a fiery devil, and the melancholic a cool lump of earth. (Schwanitz 112)⁶

A comparison of these to the four main characters also shows some of the relations which become visible in *The Wind in the Willows*:

	Wet		Dry	
H o t	Air:	TOAD loud unstable high-flying vain chatty	Fire:	BADGER hard practical bold courageous hot-tempered
	Water:	RAT lazy easy-going content supercilious contemplative	Earth:	MOLE sensible sensitive over-critical difficult faithful

Table 1: The four characters, their elements, humours and qualities.

Both the individual characters, their respective humours, and their relationships will be

⁵ Hallesby's work has been intended for popular use. Nevertheless, since its author had a chair at the University of Oslo, one can expect at least some scholarly work at the base of his publication. Hallesby uses the masculine pronoun only, which reveals that his work is dated. However, since I do not discuss any explicitly female character in this paper, and since all four characters are (more or less obviously) male, I do not consider this case of gender bias as problematic. Florence Littauer's version of the four temperaments in *Personality Plus* (1982) is similar to both Hellwig's and Hallesby's, but since it is even less precise than Hallesby's, I have not taken it into consideration.

⁶ "Der schwarzen Galle entspricht dabei die trockene und kalte Erde, dem Phlegma das kalte und feuchte Wasser, der gelben Galle das heiße und trockene Feuer und dem Blut die feuchte und warme Luft. Entsprechend ist dann ein Sanguiniker ein Luftikus, ein Phlegmatiker ein schleimiger Wasserbold, ein Choliker ein heißer Feuer-teufel und ein Melancholiker ein kalter Erdkloß." Unfortunately, I could not find any discussion of the concept in English which is as detailed and rich as Schwanitz's.

analysed below in greater detail.

It is likely that Grahame was aware of the four humours when he wrote *The Wind in the Willows*. Grahame was well read in Renaissance literature: “[His] essays are peppered with short quotations and allusions. Shakespeare, ..., Jonson, Marvell ... and others are jumbled together in a casual eclectic way, appropriate to informal, conversational writing” (Kuznets 1987, 21). Furthermore, his friendship to Frederick James Furnivall, the founder of the Early English Text Society, is well known, and Furnivall may have influenced Grahame accordingly (see also Oppermann 2009, 33 and Lerer 2). And last but not least, at the turn of the century, there was an occultist wave of “new paganism” (Kuznets 1987, 26) which was also connected to Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophy. “There was a good deal of ‘Bohemian’ posturing, and ... Grahame ... found [himself] on the fringes of this society” (Hunt, 6), which developed round *The Yellow Book*. Characters such as Annie Besant were topic in this circle, if not at times present in person.

As part of this wave, and especially in Germany, the concept of the four humours was reintroduced. Among the most important corresponding works are Bernhard Hellwig’s *Die Vier Temperamente bei Erwachsenen [The Four Temperaments in Adult Age]* (1888) and *The Four Temperaments in Childhood* (1889) the second of which was widely read and commented on. His description of the four humours is strikingly similar to Hallesby’s nearly eighty years later – with the only difference that Hallesby rather emphasizes the melancholic’s deep perception and sensitivity (see below), which Hellwig characterizes as the source of gross reaction. In front of this background, therefore, my approach of discussing the four main characters in *The Wind in the Willows* as representations of the four humours seems sufficiently justified. Nevertheless, Grahame did not create his characters as prototypes of the four humours. McCooey and Hayes correctly speak of “the text’s unique characters” (46), and both “short [and] stout” Toad (*WW* 13) and Mole with his supposedly round body do certainly not correspond to the rather slim body types which Carlgren ascribes to the sanguine (129) and the melancholic (130) respectively.

In the following, I will investigate each main character according to his humour. Since Robson’s comment first initiated this investigation, I begin with my study of Badger.

2. Badger: The Choleric

Badger shows several characteristics of the choleric humour. Gaarden (44) calls him the severe and somewhat distant father-figure, Hunt (66-7) adds his friendliness to this description. Badger is the highest in the River Bank hierarchy. He also is a *miso-zoon*(see Oppermann2005, 180)who reveals by his “H’m! Company!” (*WW* 12) that he “simply hates society”, as Rat and Otter emphasize (*WW* 12, 39), and which shows his “domineering haughtiness” (Hallesby 67). At times, Badger is just not interested in others. Nevertheless, he is the protector of Rat, Mole and

the Hedgehogs (see Poss 84) once they are stranded at his home, and he is too much Toad's friend not to try to re-educate him for the better.

The scenes in Badger's home also reveal his "great capacity for action" (62) and his practicality; two qualities which Hallesby emphasizes: "[T]he choleric sees what is to be done right here and now" (63):

The kindly Badger thrust them down on a settle to toast themselves at the fire, and bade them remove their wet coats and boots. Then he fetched them dressing-gowns and slippers, and himself bathed the Mole's shim with warm water and mended the cut with sticking-plaster till the whole thing was just as good as new, if not better. (*WW* 60-1)

Nevertheless, Badger is not so blindly driven by action (as a sanguine would be) that he could not wait for the proper moment.

His practicality, "keen mind" (Hallesby 63) and "quickness and boldness in emergencies" (64) are visible in his commanding the attack on the Weasels at Toad Hall, so is the aggressiveness commonly ascribed to choleric: "They were but four in all, but to the panic-stricken weasels the hall seemed full of monstrous animals, grey black, brown and yellow, whooping and flourishing enormous cudgels, ..." (*WW* 230). Remember: These are the same armies which drove Rat and Mole away!

— 26 — One negative quality that Hallesby (65) attests to the choleric is his hardness. Badger reveals this quality when Toad is to be re-educated: "He took Toad firmly by the arm, led him into the smoking-room, and closed the door behind them. ...Through the closed door [Rat and Mole] could just hear the long continuous drone of the Badger's voice, rising and falling in waves of oratory ..." (*WW* 103). His "common way" of calling Toad's speeches "gas" (*WW* 241), also reveal Badger's boldness. I suppose that this is the quality which causes him to be so respected:

By this time they were all three talking at once, at the top of their voices, and the noise was simply deafening, when a thin, dry voice made itself heard, saying: "Be quiet at once, all of you!" and instantly everyone was silent.

It was the Badger, who, having finished his pie, had turned round in his chair and was looking at them severely. When he saw that he had secured their attention, and that they were evidently waiting for him to address them, he turned back to the table again and reached out for the cheese.

And so great was the respect commanded by the solid qualities of that admirable animal that not another word was uttered until he had quite finished his repast and brushed the crumbs from his knees. (*WW* 216)

² Animal advocates point out that "the loss of a pig's life is no less ethically troubling than the loss of a baboon's life" because both are "sentient, cognitively complex mammals" (Orlans et al. 62).

This may also be the reason why Robson classifies Badger as an aristocrat, and why Hunt sees him as a squire. However, neither his superior age nor his lineage alone can be held responsible for this. Badger further gains his commanding position from many choleric qualities in his character. His practicality, activity and “domin[ance]” (Hallesby 67), as well as his passion, boldness and courage make Badger a natural leader – like many other choleric characters. Thus, Badger not only corresponds to Breitingner’s choleric description, he also fulfils Hallesby’s criteria.

The element connected to the choleric is fire, and indeed, there is no fire as warm as Badger’s when he rescues Mole and Rat from the terrors of the Wild Wood. It fills Badger’s kitchen with “all the glow and warmth” which the two now are in need of:

The floor was of well-worn red brick, and on the wide hearth burnt a fire of logs, between two attractive chimney-corners tucked away in the wall, well out of any suspicion of draught. A couple of high-backed settles, facing each other on either side of the fire, gave further sitting accommodation to the socially disposed. ... The ruddy brick floor smiled up at the smoky ceiling, ... and the merry firelight played over everything without distinction. (*WW* 59-60)

— 27 — Nancy Barnhart’s illustration best shows this (see Gauger 83). Not even Mole’s fire can challenge this one (compare *WW* 89-97), the less so when we remember that Mole End must have been cooled out from neglect when Mole and Rat arrive there in midwinter. In contrast, they can “toast themselves” at Badger’s fire which is obviously the dominant feature of his kitchen. Mole later “basks” (*WW* 62) in this fire, which burns “brightly” (*WW* 65) again when the two come down for breakfast the next morning. Therefore, also the element fire, which can be associated to him, proves Badger a choleric, even though his choleric qualities are not as ‘fiery’ as in the common opinion of this temperament.

Badger fulfils Hallesby’s criteria of the choleric in a positive way because his hardness is not so domineering that it becomes hurtful to his charges (except to the weasels!). His choleric qualities also make him the natural leader of his crew, and his active benevolence is their constant support.

3. Toad: The Sanguine

Grahame describes only Toad with regard to his humour as “much the same *sanguine*, self-satisfied animal that he had been of old.” (*WW* 139, emphasis added); a phrase which goes uncommented by both Lerer (167) and Gauger (191). In scholarship, Toad generally has the part of the rebel: Graham sees him as “a sort likely run into trouble at school” (184), Hunt calls him “the frustrated adult rebel” (74), and Robson “never ... more than a naughty child” (80) whereas

Green is as bold as to name him “The Id personified” (282). Only Breitinger describes Toad’s qualities according to his humour, although without connection to the relevant quotation from *The Wind in the Willows*. Nevertheless, qualities of the sanguine appear in criticism, too. Hunt mentions Toad’s “short attention span” (70) and Gauger (40, FN 26) remarks that “[p]atience is something Toad lacks completely”, which corresponds to one typical sanguine quality: “Impressions from without have easy access to mind and heart. ... he cannot bear to lose any of them” (Hallesby 13-14). This becomes especially obvious with his quickly changing obsessions:

“Once it was nothing but sailing”, said the Rat. “Then he tired of that and took to punting. Nothing would please him but to punt all day and every day, and a nice mess he made of it. Last year it was house-boating, and we all had to go and stay with him in his house-boat, and pretend we liked it. ... All the same, whatever he takes up; he gets tired of it, and starts on something fresh.”

“Such a good fellow too,” remarked the Otter reflectively, “but no stability – especially in a boat!” (*WW* 13).

Similarly quickly, “the real thing” becomes a “horrid, common canary-coloured cart” (*WW* 25 and 34) once Toad has met with the automobile. This is the only obsession Toad will not tire of, but then, an automobile is much faster and much less exhausting than either a boat or a gypsy cart. Therefore, the fact that “whatever he takes up; he gets tired of it, and starts on something fresh” is not just a sign of Toad’s wealth, as Gauger (23) says, but indicates his sanguine nature as well. “Otter’s ‘no stability’ introduces the central feature of Toad’s character and the “threat he poses to the River Bank” (Robson 92).

The sanguine’s emotions also change quickly (Hallesby 15), and so do Toad’s. When, after his escape from jail, he steals another automobile, this becomes obvious:

He picked himself up rapidly, and set off running across country as hard as he could ... till he was breathless and weary, and had to settle down into an easy walk ... “Ho ho” he cried, in his ecstasies of self-admiration. “Toad again! Toad, as usual comes out at the top! ... O, how clever I am! How clever, how clever, how very clever-“

A slight noise at a distance behind him made him turn his head and look. O horror! O misery! O despair. (*WW* 199-200)

Furthermore, Toad’s similarly sanguine quality of acting without thinking (Hallesby 15) becomes apparent here.

Toad also is “chatty, lively, and entertaining” (Hallesby 16), especially when boasting of his adventures, and Rat must stop Mole from further supporting this quality of their fallen friend. In such moments, his vanity appears, too, but if it really is as “naïve and unfeigned” as Hallesby (47) states can be doubted. The barge woman has a reason for throwing him into the canal:

'So you're in the washing business, ma'am? said the barge-woman politely as they glided along. 'and a very good business you've got too, ...

'Finest business in the whole country,' said Toad airily. 'all the gentry come to me ...

'...And are you *very* fond of washing?'

'I love it,' said Toad. I simply dote on it. Never so happy as when I've got both arms in the wash-tub. But then, it comes so easy to me. No trouble at all. A real pleasure, I assure you, ma'am.'

'What a bit of luck, meeting you,' observed the barge-woman thoughtfully. ...

'Why, what do you mean?' (*WW* 182-3, emphasis original)

Taylor (61) correctly calls Toad "a little fat fellow overborn by his fat, little ego". He does not for a moment consider what his boasts may lead to.

According to Carlgren (128) and, thus, to anthroposophy, the sanguine is the humour associated with childhood and youth although, of course, it is not restricted to a certain age. Hallesby also says of the sanguine: "He is a big child" (15). Indeed, as stated above, Toad is the most childlike and childish of the four. His "playing motor-car-accident" time and again (Oppermann 2005, 191-2) is one of the best examples: Philip says that "though adults can daydream while sitting quietly, a child needs stage-properties" (303, see also Lerer 152, FN5). This makes the more sense since Toad is the most important reflector figure for many child readers (Robson 95), including Alastair Grahame himself (Philip 307).

The sanguine element is air, and in this respect Toad shows the least affinity of all four characters. Kuznets, however, gives one revealing hint: "Only Toad's home is totally anthropomorphic and *above ground*, ... in an artificial position for a Toad, a reptile [sic!]⁷ that would not erect a Tudor or Georgian mansion but would burrow in the mud" (1977, 120, emphasis added), and McCooey and Hayes mention "some *airborne* moments (mostly associated with Toad)" (50, emphasis added). Toad also has to abseil from his bedroom window in order to escape. Literally "airborne" he only becomes in Horwood's sequel to Grahame's work, *The Willows in Winter*, in 1993. Last but not least, Toad's plans can be regarded as "lofty", especially in comparison with those of other characters, especially Rat: "The open road, the dusty highway, the heath, the common, the hedgerows, the rolling downs! Camps, villages, towns, cities! Here to-day, and off to somewhere else to-morrow! Travel, change, interest, excitement" (*WW* 25). Toad, the sanguine, is as high-flying as he is "active and restless" (Hallesby 14). Again, Breitinger is correct, and Hallesby's criteria are met.

4. Mole: The Melancholic

Whereas the two characters discussed so far are associated with their humours rather by their

⁷ Toad is not a reptile but an amphibian.

qualities, the two who follow now are rather connected by their elements. Earth, according to Schwanitz “cool and dry” (112), is connected to the melancholic, and in *The Wind in the Willows*, this part is Mole’s. He, “an *underground* animal by birth and breeding” (*WW* 64, emphasis added), is surrounded entirely by ‘his’ element both at Badger’s and at Mole End, and, in contrast to Rat, he enjoys his stays in the earth: “‘Once well underground’, [Mole] said, ‘you know exactly where you are. Nothing can happen to you, and nothing can get at you. ... Things go on all the same overhead, and you let ’em and don’t bother about ‘em. When you want to, up you go, and there the things are, waiting for you’” (*WW* 70). The natural coolness of the melancholic in contrast to choleric heat may be another reason why Mole’s fire is not as expressively warm as Badger’s. Although Mole’s return to Mole End after his Christmas visit is unlikely, his experience of utter protection and welcome in his underground home are forever connected to this place (see Thum 27, Hunt 34, and Nodelman and Reimer 206).⁸ Nevertheless, Mole is aware of the fact that he also is excluded from the “things that go on all the same overhead”. According to Hallesby, the melancholic’s “mental world is not only dark but narrow” (39). Thus, Kuznets’ statement that Grahame chose his characters also for their typical dwellings (1977, 119) is fulfilled by Mole especially. However, one should be careful to ascribe to Mole too much selectivity and distance. He is the reflector figure of nearly half the book, and as such, readers experience everything new along with him. Without an escape from a dark and narrow underground home, Mole could not enjoy his spring experience half as much:

Never in his life had he seen a river before - this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver – glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. (*WW* 3)

Tabbert (422) comments:

[W]hen the narrator opens the focus from the narrow mole’s tunnel to the openness of a meadow, and changes lighting from half shade to blazing sunlight, he also communicates the feeling of freedom. ... Happiness is presented so strongly that it makes reality have meaning.⁹

⁸ In later interpretations or sequels to Grahame’s classic (including those of Horwood and de Board), Mole does return to Mole end but Grahame himself emphasizes that he remains at Rat’s. This is contrastive to Clausen’s strong argumentation in favour of Mole’s return (146-8); we should not overlook that, on p. 146-7, Clausen leaves out the decisive quotation from *The Wind in the Willows*. (See *WW* 98; the missing sentence is: “[Mole] did not at all want to abandon the new life and its splendid spaces, to turn his back to sun and air and all they offered him and creep home and stray there; the upper world was all too strong, it called to him still, even down there, and he knew he must return to the larger stage.”). However, I agree that the connection between Mole End and the experience of homecoming is very strong and, therefore, certainly the driving force behind this later development.

⁹ “[W]enn dann der Erzähler den Fokus von der Enge eines Maufwurftunnels zur Weite einer großen Wiese öffnet und die Beleuchtung von Halbdunkel auf strahlenden Sonnenglanz stellt, so vermittelt er zugleich ein Gefühl der Befreiung ... Glück wird so unverschämt eindringlich dargestellt, daß es zugleich der Wirklichkeit einen Sinn gibt”

This quotation also reveals what Hallesby calls the greatest melancholic strength; a "rich, sensitive nature", which is "not only delicately attuned, but deep" (40). So melancholics also perceive, and it comes as no surprise that Mole's return to Mole End touches him so deeply: "Mole is home again" (Taylor 114), and nothing else matters.

A second important melancholic quality is faithfulness in friendship (Hallesby 41), which Mole shows to both Rat and Toad. After Toad's return, Mole listens to his adventures when nobody else does, no matter if he may "egg on" the boaster or not (*WW* 215, 226-7). He also promises to stay with Rat although he would rather travel with Toad:

[Rat said]: "I'm not coming, and that's flat. ... And what's more, Mole's going to stick to me and do as I do, aren't you, Mole?"

"Of course I am", said the Mole *loyally*. "I'll always stick to you, Rat, and what you say is to be - has to be. All the same, it sounds as if it might have been - well, rather fun, you know!" (*WW* 26-7, emphasis added).

Mole may feel obliged to follow Rat but this does not contradict his being faithful to him, too. Nevertheless, another melancholic quality may also account for Mole's loyalty here; passivity (Hallesby 47). He obeys Badger's every order, which turns him into "Badger's first lieutenant" (Carpenter 60) because this is easier than to defend his own needs (e.g. *WW* 233-6). He also is "a fellow ... for giving in" (*WW* 89) as Rat says, which further shows Mole's typical melancholic pessimism (Hallesby 46): "he really goes out of his way to look for something depressing". Mole cannot see that Mole End has qualities which are equal to the houses of his friends. He measures it according to his "ideal standards" (Hallesby 46) of Rat's "cosy quarters - or Toad's beautiful hall - or Badger's great house" (*WW* 84) and is disappointed. Similarly, Mole, "sensible fellow that he is" (Smyth 59), idealizes Badger himself (*WW* 40), which gets him into the Wild Wood in a cold and dark winter night, and he romanticizes the autumn harvest (*WW* 176), which saves Rat from going the wrong way. So, this melancholic quality is not just negative in Mole. Furthermore, his tendency to idealize does not necessarily lead to the disappointment which Hallesby ascribes to the melancholic, and which causes this to be "the suffering temperament" (Hallesby 38). In this respect Mole is lucky because his ideals prove their value, especially with Badger. Furthermore, in the easy, carefree ways of living at the River Bank, Mole's daydreams do not result in any waste of time or life. Thus Mole does not simply suffer from melancholia; it is his natural humour.

5. Rat: The Phlegmatic

Like Mole, Rat is characterized by his element, water, in the form of the River:

“So - this - is - a - River!”

“*The River*”, corrected the Rat.

“And you really live by the river [sic!]? What a jolly life!”

“By it and with it and on it and in it”, said the Rat. “It is brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company, and food and drink, and (naturally) washing.” (*WW* 8, emphasis original).

Rat’s house is “open to the River’s ebb and flow” (Kuznets 1977, 119). How close Rat really is to the River becomes evident when he has to leave it:

[Toad said:] “... Talk about your old river!”

“I *don't* talk about my river”, replied the patient Rat. “You *know* I don't, Toad. But I *think* about it”, he added pathetically, in a lower tone; “I think about it – all the time!” (*WW* 29, emphasis original)

With this in mind, it is easy to guess what the “something very different” (*WW* 31) is that Rat has on his mind the following day. Even though he can leave his River for a while, homesickness is the price. In “Wayfarers All”, Rat is confronted with a situation of temptation; he is the only “boarder[] who [is] staying on” (*WW* 155), so that everybody else’s *wanderlust* also affects him. However, this experience is entirely new to him, as Grahame emphasizes:

Restlessly the Rat ... lay looking out towards the great ring of Downs that barred his vision hitherto, his Mountains of the Moon, *his limit behind which lay nothing he had cared to see or to know*. To-day, to him gazing south *with a new-born need stirring in his heart*, the clear sky over their long low outline seemed to pulsate with promise; to-day the unseen was everything, the unknown the only real fact of life. (*WW* 161, emphasis added)

Meeting Sea Rat in this moment leaves him “spellbound” (*WW* 171) and not himself.¹⁰ For Ratty, sea life “won't do, he's a fresh-water Rat, not a salt-water Rat” (Kuznets 1977, 129). Mole, who knows about Rat’s tendency towards homesickness from the adventure on the open road, does not keep him from going off as he desires to but from becoming unhappy again. (Fresh-)Water is, and remains, Rat’s element even without turning him into a “slimy water-sprite”.

A look at the qualities which Hallesby ascribes to the phlegmatic shows that Rat shares some of these too. Especially, he is “good natured and easy to get along with” (Hallesby 81), and he easily forgives both Toad and Mole – “What’s a little wet to a water-rat?” (*WW* 17) – their mistakes although he also severely rebukes them. This shows that he has a tendency to be

¹⁰ In the Cosgrove Hall puppet trick version of the chapter (1984, season 1, episode 9) the hypnotic quality of Sea Rat’s tale is strongly emphasized so that Rat’s being mesmerised also becomes strongly visible. The effect is further supported by singing in the background.

supercilious and knowing better (Hallesby 89). Robert de Board, who must have found this tendency in Grahame's work, elaborates it in *Counselling for Toads*: "[Mole] was always standing in Rat's shadow. If they were boating, Rat would usually tell him, that he was not doing it right, like not feathering the oars properly ... If they got lost, Rat always knew the way ..." (2). Rat would never defy his friends, but their faults, he does.

Hallesby (81) further attests to the phlegmatics that they neglect their own ideals for comfort. He even calls them "opportunist" (ibid). Rat would never leave his friends for his own comfort but the fact that he rejects the far horizon (Robson 86) shows this tendency: "Beyond the Wild Wood comes the Wide World, ... and that's something that doesn't matter, either to you or me. ... Don't refer to it again, please." (*WW* 10) Furthermore, once he was taught to, it is always Mole who rows, and Rat asks him to open the door (*WW*99) during breakfast, which Gauger (34, FN 10-12) regards as a hint that Rat makes Mole his servant because Mole is of a lower class, but which I rather see as a proof of Rat's phlegmatic nature. Nevertheless, he is not openly "lazy" (Hallesby 88) neither is he "plump and round", as Hallesby (82) describes the phlegmatic.

Generally, Rat is a cool character. Apart from the extreme situation in "Wayfarers All", he appears most content with his life on the River Bank: "It's my world, *and I don't want any other*" (*WW* 8, emphasis added). In addition, "he has a practical mind" (Hallesby 84) by which he finds Mole's duster and his meagre supplies although he has been in Mole End only some minutes. "The phlegmatic takes his time and considers everything carefully before he acts. Whatever he does is therefore well done. One can always depend on his work" (Hallesby 84); be it the preparation for the attack on Toad Hall (*WW* 228) or Rat's search for Mole in the Wild Wood. In this situation, he also reveals his ability to reflect on what he perceives.

Therefore, Rat is the character who fits most closely with his element. His character also shows the greatest deviations from Hallesby's description, and Breitingner does not comment on him at all, supposedly for this reason. All of his typically phlegmatic qualities will, again, be easy to recognize in one or two comrades in every not too small group.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of Badger, Toad, Mole and Rat's temperaments has shown that, indeed, each represents one of the four humours. Badger is active, bold, naturally dominant with a tendency to be aggressive and somewhat misozoistic, he is also hard and a little hot-tempered, which gives him the "aristocratic" (Robson, 80) position in the River Bank hierarchy. Mole's sensitivity makes him responsive both to the joy of a sunny spring morning, a lustily gurgling river, and a homecoming of utter acceptance and without reproof. Toad is the high-flyer whose emotions and interests change very quickly, and who has the richest experiences and the best talent for telling

his adventures. And Rat's content and practicality make him the saviour of both Toad and Mole more than once.

Toad and Rat have been friends for a while before they meet Mole, and both live on the River Bank. Mole and Badger also are very close. Mole and Rat both share the coolness which enables them to live together so well. Furthermore, Toad and Mole appear as two opposing characters, and so they are generally regarded, e.g. by Graham (182-3). This is supported by the fact that both their humours are governed by opposing qualities; cold and dry (Mole), and wet and hot (Toad). Therefore, Breitingner's hint at of the four humours as one concept on which the four main characters in *The Wind in the Willows* were based has proved correct.

However, the four humours are not just an additional way of analysing the four main characters' qualities. With the Edwardian social system subject to partial oblivion, the four humours' names are still present enough to be recognized and understood. Therefore, in my opinion, readers of all ages can identify the characters' special qualities even without sufficient knowledge about the social system which may originally have inspired Grahame. Children can recognize the different qualities in people around them and in books. Once sufficient knowledge of the four humours has been gained, the recognition of them will soon follow. Furthermore, and in addition to the book's appeal due to its embodying "some of mankind's deepest and most ineradicable yearnings: the pastoral dream, the Golden Age, the search for lost innocence" (Green, 263), *The Wind in the Willows* offers chances to recognize one's own character qualities in at least one of the characters, and thus enables its readers to enter the world in which these yearnings are fulfilled.¹¹

In this respect I regard the concept of the four humours as one parallel step to approach *The Wind in the Willows*, especially for readers who are not (yet) aware of the British Edwardian class system. The sociological approach, so much favoured until now, is not outdated by it (once one sees more in the Weasels than simply the villains in the book it gains its original importance) but added to. With the knowledge of the Edwardian Class system a second approach will be possible.

According to Green (191), Grahame "saw very clearly that any writer who wishes to give his characters permanency must work from inner, rather than external, characteristics", and indeed, these show in Mole, Toad, Rat and Badger's temperaments. Apart from "satirizing contemporary society (Green, 240), Grahame also mastered the task of "constructing an ideal model of the Good Life" (Green, 240) by combining the four characters in a well equilibrated relationship according to their temperamental qualities. This, I am sure, will only increase his work's status as a timeless classic to be read and enjoyed at all ages.

¹¹ It has often been remarked how much Grahame himself can be identified with Mole (e.g. Green, 278).

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BIO

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Embodying an Other Relation to Language: A Geocritical Topopoetic Reading of Brian Friel's *Translations*

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ABSTRACT

My paper studies the entangled relationship between language and an embodied sense of place in the Irish dramatist Brian Friel's play *Translations* (1980), which is set against the backdrop of British colonial linguistic hegemony. Within a postcolonial framework, my paper studies how Friel uses language as a decolonizing trope. I deploy literary scholar Sten Pultz Moslund's topopoetic approach which brings forth human-place relations by reconnecting language with a sensory relation to the world in order to study how language not only performs another (nonrepresentational) dimension of itself but also challenges the 'supra-sensory ego-logic of modernity' (Moslund). By approaching spatiality as an embodied human-place relation, a topopoetic reading locates how the materiality of place presents itself in language to resist territorial ideologues and posits instead, an agency of space and embodied relation with the phenomenal world in language. Language's "sense-effect" (Deleuze) embodies a relationality between the word and material world, thereby contesting the imperialistic use of language as a representational semantic tool for meaning-based signification. *Translations* in its colonial resistance offers a topopoetic reading since Friel inheres in the play a *felt* sense of platial locatedness and geographical affect which impacts (in affirmative and/or negating capacities) not only the locals and the transformed natives of Baile Beag but the colonizers as well. Hence, through the tropes of language, place, and embodiment, I study how the text's aesthetic dimension (poetic-aesthetic) offers an alternative decolonial strategy in relating to the word and the physical material world.

KEYWORDS

language, embodiment, geocritical, topopoetic, decolonial.

The Irish dramatist Brian Friel (1929-2015) was one of the founders of Field Day Theatre Company¹ which premiered as its first production, his widely celebrated three-act play *Translations* on 23rd September 1980 in Northern Ireland's Guildhall in Derry. The play locates the power of language as a cultural byproduct that shapes realities, experiences, personalities, and histories of not just individuals alone but of communities as well. Set in 1833 in North Ireland's rural Irish-speaking community in Baile Beag in County Donegal, the play concerns itself with the arrival of a platoon of British Royal Engineers to perform the administrative task of making the first Ordnance Survey by renaming Ireland's Gaelic place-names into standardized English equivalents for better land valuation and taxation. The Irish language is to be replaced in the education system with the colonizer's language (English) and the local hedge-school system is to be abolished and replaced by a new state-run national school system. In mapping the linguistic utterances of a place, Baile Beag is thus made to jostle between two meaning-making paradigms — of the colonized (Irish) and of the colonizer's (English). Within the framework of a postcolonial literary intervention, by positioning the act of translating Irish into British English as a decisive point of inflection, the play's thematic interrogates linguistic and cultural tensions arising not only due to the British colonizer's Anglicization of Gaelic place-names but also due to nationalist endeavours of revisionist history. It is interesting to note that, historically speaking, Ireland not only contributed towards dismantling the British Empire but also in its building, as its own people played an influential role as colonizers². In Ireland's conflicted status as a colonized country, its revisionist histories which subdue the role of colonial legacy³ and narrow sentimentalist nationalist histories that search for "authentic" Irishness; Friel's text assumes significance as it delineates anxieties pertaining to cultural resistance by a community in flux and explores its cultural moorings through a postcolonial framework. In order to address how *Translations* critically maps the "cultural density" (Ashcroft 77) of a habitus as well as the hermeneutical changes that it encounters when its cultural constitution undergoes re-writing, my paper addresses two inter-connected aspects pertaining to language as a decolonizing tool within a postcolonial literary imagination. The first aspect studies how Friel contests language's representational⁴ facet by exploring language's poetic sense-aesthetic quality which brings to surface the bodily and affective responses that translate language from a language of meaning to

¹ Co-founded with actor Stephen Rea in 1980.

² On Irish contribution to the empire, see Jeffery, Keith (ed.) *An Irish Empire: Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (1996) and David Fitzpatrick 'Ireland and the Empire' (1999).

³ On revisionist positions, see Boyce, George D. and O'Day, Alan (eds) *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (New York, Routledge, 1996) and Roy Foster (1988) *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (London, Allen Lane, 1988).

⁴ Representation occurs "whenever the aesthetic object invites us to leave the immediacy of the sensuous and proposes a meaning in terms of which the sensuous is only a means and essentially unimportant" (Dufrenne, 1953, 312).

a language pertaining to the senses. I deploy literary scholar Sten Pultz Moslund's⁵ 'topopoetic' (*topos*- place, *poesis*- bringing-forth) way of reading which illustrates how language can also perform an epistemological function wherein instead of representing, it presents a preconceptual and prelinguistic *sensory* relation to the wor(l)d. Producing landscape as a presence legible to English colonizers by textualizing it in the colonizer's language is destabilized by a topopoetic reading which engages with a place that is not represented to speak in terms of/through an identity-based representational language but presents an embodied way of thinking and seeks to gauge an environmental and immersive experience of platial settings. Approaching language in terms of its sense-aesthetic quality engages with the "silent place relations in language outside any metaphysical ego-logic of the cogito... a silent embodied level in linguistic renditions of place where the power of discursive meaning ceases to work in language as words come to trigger spontaneous sensations of the heterogeneous appearance of things and the place world" (Moslund 24). By approaching geographical spatiality of a colonized place in terms of an embodied human-place relation, a topopoetic reading locates how the materiality of place presents itself in language to resist territorial ideologues and posits instead, an agency of space and embodied relation with the phenomenal world in language. If "[a]ffect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon" (Gregg, et al. 3), the primary relevance of reading *Translations* by focusing on its spatial discourse helps to analyse how the dramatic text that is fundamentally a language-based medium offers the possibility of another insight into the different modes of perceiving space and the evocation of different responses to the same geographical place. Furthermore, within the context of a postcolonial text, apprehending language's "sense-effect" (Deleuze 138 qtd. in Moslund 68) functions as a conduit to the second underlying aspect of my paper which studies how the playwright also subversively emphasizes upon language's "meaning-effect" (Deleuze 138 qtd. in Moslund 68) and deploys language in terms of its instrumental use to critique the colonizer's representational tactic. The interface between this dual engagement with language (as sense-effect and meaning-effect) makes for an interesting study as Friel inheres in the play a rejection of binaries and presents instead, an in-between hybridity. My paper argues that while Friel also explores language as a meaning-making paradigm, he illustrates the notion of an in-betweenness as a viable option to contest the homogenization of language propounded by both, the anti-colonial nationalist discourse as well as the imperialist project. Thus, through the trope of language, my paper studies how the utterances of verbal expressions pertaining to the physical material world evoke nonverbal sensations in the play's characters in order to critically analyse

⁵ Moslund references to the works of Heidegger, Mignolo, Deleuze and Guattari in order to position his topopoetic approach within critical discursive engagements that study the intersection of nature, body, linguistics, and dwelling.

the relationship between language, place, and the body.

Embodying a Topopoetic Approach

The twentieth century poststructuralist linguistic and cultural turn in the field of humanities enabled the methodological lens of postcolonial studies to approach place primarily through the coordinates of a historico-discursive analysis. This temporal perspective addressed the metaphysics of modernity and the territorialization of colonial lands by positioning Western suprasensory values inherent to the processes of imperialism and universalism over and above (spatially) situated sensory experiences and relation to reality. This inevitably resulted in a shift from spatial matters of geography to temporal matters of history (Moslund 18). While a temporal and discursive reading of colonized spaces is crucial in the political endeavour of subverting colonial histories; approaching histories of colonized places from a spatial perspective, particularly through the “body’s relation to other dimensions than those of the socially organized space” (Moslund 27) is equally necessary and crucial to the anti-colonial project insofar as it foregrounds “non-identitarian interrelations between the body and the phenomenal dimensions of reality” (Moslund 28). The subsequent cartographic anxieties that are made to inhere in the sensibilities of natives and the Heideggerian “ego-logic of modernity” can be effectively upturned by listening to the sounds of how “geo-graphia” (Moslund 11) or “earth-writing” occurs in the play. In other words, focusing in works of literature on an intense sensory contact with the landscape can facilitate a contestation of the representational facet of language that disembodies and dismembers the “sense-effect” of signs (Deleuze 138 qtd. in Moslund 68). It is pertinent to note that this dwelling on bodily sensations in language does not perform the function of mere descriptive narration. Instead,

the very exercise of describing sensations provoked by the text involves the mobilization of an extra-discursive, embodied form of thinking, as the very act of describing sensations requires of us that we become conscious of and reflect on the heterogeneity of nonverbal sensations that may be triggered by the verbal expression (Moslund 40).

Thus, by dovetailing place with a subjective embodied sense of place peculiar to each character, Friel’s text problematizes conceptual homogenized constructions of places as fixed and reiterates the relationship with landscape as a subjectively *felt* interaction. Such a perspective contests the negation of the body as a site of knowledge and the colonialist mentality that pedestalized ‘rational’ over embodied, since the former marked the hallmark of progress and enlightenment while the latter was espoused by ‘subhuman’ brute creatures devoid of the faculty of ‘rational’ thought. In order to address the phenomenality of space within literary studies,

literary texts should not be understood only as a discursive medium to understand how the production of space and identity takes place through language. As the literary scholar Moslund argues, literature is also an aesthetic medium and he proposes to approach aesthetics not in the Kantian sense of universal and disinterested but as *aisthesis* (in Greek) which refers to that which is produced by sensory experiences/bodily feelings. Such an approach facilitates in reading places in literature as “sensuous geographies” (Rodaway 1994) which can in turn steer our attention towards how literary language can cull out places in literature through the quality of sense-aesthesis which resist simplistic translations into metaphysical and ideational relations to the world. In proposing a topo-poetic approach, Moslund understands poetic as *poiēsis* (Greek for bringing forth)⁶, thus, a topo-poetic mode of reading entails understanding the poetic qualities of language that calls forth the place world in an *aesthetically*-attuned manner. In other words, reading in a topo-poetic manner “engages with place worlds in literature that occur or happen as sensuous experience (*poiesis-as-aisthesis* and *aisthesis-as-poiesis*)” (Moslund 11). Thus, his proposition to explore the triad between language, place, and the sensing body through literature’s sense-aesthetic can provide us with a different route of relating to places which are other to the discursive relations which inform our primary perceptions of relating to the world. In a way, a topo-poetic mode of reading can make the lingering traces of the colonial project face the music through other ways of relating to the word and the world, i.e., by engaging with place as a sensuous experience which calls forth a nonlinguistic (sensory) relation. In attempting to recover a bodily felt relation with place as opposed to the limited and limiting ego-logic of reasons, a topo-poetic reading counters processes of disembodiment that have been the colonizer’s tool in dehumanising and alienating the colonized people. Moreover, such an approach does not render the platial setting as a passive literary landscape upon which the story develops; rather it brings into action the environment as a participating whole and recognizes the materiality of the landscape in itself.

Part I: Geocritical Exploration and Phenomenality of Space

The word “environment” in its ability to signify “whatever surrounds or, to be more precise, whatever exists in the surrounding of some being that is *relevant* to the state of that being at a particular moment” (Harvey 2) does not merely locate the landscape environing the play as a surface upon which the colonizer (re)maps. Instead, it facilitates in locating it as a site which enables the interface between subjective aesthetic experience of spatiality and the conflicting socio-cultural contexts which produce that space through language. While the primary site at which the play is performed is the hedge-school room, platial memory and

⁶ For more, see Heidegger, 1935, 42, 44.

relationality with the landscape of Baile Beag is a significant trope in navigating the interface between language and landscape. The specificity of Baile Beag's landscape is not relegated to the margins; it is an active participant in the performance of the dramatic text as it intervenes in characters' nonchalant conversations, place memories, situated knowledges, and cartographic anxieties. All of these work towards inhering a sense of place for not only the colonized peoples but also for the colonizers as well. By dovetailing place with a subjective sense of place peculiar to each character, the literary text problematizes conceptual homogenized constructions of places as fixed and re-iterates the relationship with landscape as a subjective interaction. Linguistically mapping "every patch of ground" of the rural Irish speaking community evades the experiential dimension of relating to places and spaces that constituent one's environment. By surveying the minutest, the colonizing act attempts to write over not only the linguistic signifier but also effectively efface the embodied relationality felt between language, landscape, and subjective experiences (of an individual's, of a community's) sense of a place.

At the very outset, the play sets the tone and tenor of premonitory decadency of colonial territorialization and shifting terrains of engagement with the environment of Baile Beag. The hedge-school (where natives receive their education of/in English) architecturally flows into the living quarters and is also described as a space of fading and neglected agrarian lifestyle. Described as "comfortless and dusty and functional" (Friel 1), "disused barn" (Friel 1), "where cows once milked and bedded" (Friel 1), and where "broken and forgotten implements" (Friel 1) are strewn around the room, the hedge-school's room becomes a storehouse archiving the fading agricultural life of Baile Beag. The note of disintegration continues as the characters that are housed seem to be withered as well. "She [Sarah] is sitting on a low stool, her head down, very tense"; Manus "works as an unpaid assistant"; "Sarah's speech defect is so bad that all her life she has been considered locally to be dumb and she has accepted this" (Friel 1); Jimmy's clothes "are filthy and he lives in them summer and winter, day and night" (Friel 2). The relational aspect with their land constantly surfaces in memory as the stories recollected by the characters are infused with a sense of connectedness with the landscape of Baile Beag. If the colonizer's disembodied sight dispossesses; the olfactory senses of the characters sense the presence of Baile Beag's flourish through the everlasting memory of the "sweet smell" of the crops. Maire exults, "Sweet smell! Sweet smell! Every year at this time somebody comes back with stories of the sweet smell. Sweet God, did the potatoes ever fail in Baile Beag? Well, did they ever- ever? Never!" (Friel 18). Jimmy, fluent in Greek and Latin brings through a different language register the richness of the land that they dwell with, by stating, "[N]igra fere et presso pinguis sub vomere terra"⁷ (italics in original). The characters' mindscapes are not disconnected

⁷"Land that is black and rich beneath the pressure of the plough" (Friel 14)

from their platial settlements and acts of dwelling. Interactions between them inhere natural elements that constituent their environment and recognition of movement of colonial devastation distinctly embeds human subjectivities in their environing worlds. Physical infiltration of the British troops by way of their invasive and devastating movements is illustrated through impingement upon Baile Beag's natural lifeworld wherein characters attending the hedge-school verbalize such acts of violence. Doalty exclaims, "Prodding every inch of the ground in front of them with their bayonets and scattering animals and hens in all directions!"; Bridget continues, "And tumbling everything before them-fences, ditches, haystacks, turf-stacks!" she declares, "Not a blade of it left standing!" (Friel 73).

Translations' social milieu is circumscribed by the colonizer's endeavour at writing over the Gaelic language. Hugh, the hedge-school masterstates, "it is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language" (Friel 88). By attributing a personalized liveness to the conceptual understanding of language per se, the character of Hugh voices the power of language. Colonial project understood language's importance as a tool to wield power. "The bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of spiritual subjugation" (Thiong'o 9). Hugh's understanding of language is not devoid of an experiential reality since for him (and his community), embodied proliferation of the past resides in the unfolding of language. Hugh posits language in experiential terms by embedding in it a collective past to establish an individual's relational continuity with his/her past and by using language to enable actualization, representation, and articulation of their reality embedded in the Irish countryside. By disregarding facticity that is often attributed to history, he validates language's centrality as a discourse that effectively shapes sensibilities. Irish writer Thomas Davis stated, "language which grows up with a people, is conformed to their organs, descriptive of their climate, constitution, and manners, mingled inseparably with their history and their soil, fitted beyond any other language to express their prevalent thoughts in the most natural and efficient way" (cited in Crowley 161). Hugh's statement visibilizes colonial appropriation of language and colonial preoccupation with defining the colonized land and its language. Stating that it is not 'facts' that hold the ability to shape, Hugh negates the presence of and efforts undertaken by the colonizer and renders them as an ineffective trope to dismantle Irish identity and reshape it in the image of the English entity. The colonial enterprise, well-versed with the knowledge that "[m]astery of language affords remarkable power" (Fanon 9), constantly strives to usurp Gaelic. Hugh's statement also contests the apparent sense of universalism inherent in the colonizer's attempt at standardizing the colonized peoples' language by finding its English equivalent. Anglicizing Irish by reworking Baile Beag's system of signification to equalize it to 'Ballybeg' is ruptured by the hedge-school master's words which present the community's past

as embodied occurrences that cannot be described and contained within the forcible anglicized equivalences. The act of translation thus evinces the failure of the English language to capture the materiality of ‘non-English’ places. British Lieutenant Yolland who is assigned the task of standardizing Gaelic place-names observes, “[s]omething is being eroded” (Friel 53). This moment of in-betweenness where a member of the British troop acknowledges the linguistic, geographical, and cultural effacement that underlies the act of translation obliquely brings to light the deep-rooted entanglement between land, language, and sense of affiliation. Yolland’s acute awareness of his position as an outsider makes him poignantly observe, “[e]ven if I did speak Irish I’d always be an outsider here, wouldn’t I? I may learn the password but the language of the tribe will always elude me, won’t it? The private core will always be... hermetic” (Friel 48). Friel dovetails the colonizer’s personal dilemma with the overarching political inflection of colonization, which also encounters a sense of displacement even after adopting the colonized peoples’ language for ‘technical’ governance. Colonizing subjugated native’s personality not only sought to condition a Western ‘modernizing’ sensibility but also strove to put in place, an internalization and acceptance of European superiority. Yolland in the act of gazing back at the colonizer/himself, acknowledges the negative impact of colonization’s forced enculturation. Interestingly, Gaelic language that lends the Irish a sense of belonging is also exhibited by him.

— 45 — Wearing an English soldier’s demeanour, Yolland is persistently seen admiring Irish language and culture that finds an expression in referents in the countryside. He says, “I think your countryside is- is - is very beautiful. I’ve fallen in love with it already” (Friel 35). Yolland extrapolates this sense of *philia* in order to counter the colonial process of othering that deftly put in place, the imperialist rise of the empire. He does so through his oblique act of resistance by confronting his authoritarian overlords by stating, “[y]ou cannot rename a whole country overnight” (Friel 41). Interestingly, this moment of the colonizer’s self expression as a subjective self is attributed by him to an environmental affect - “[y]our Irish air has made me bold” (Friel 41). The strong bond of affinity developed between Yolland and Baile Beag punctures the notion of divisibility between human and his environment, in particular when the individual hails from a different topographic location (here, the metropolis of London). However, aware of his status as an outsider not only in terms of his association with a different geographical locale but also in terms of his identity as a colonizer, Yolland hesitates, “I hope we’re not too- too crude an intrusion on your lives” (Friel 35). Friel deftly juxtaposes a British Lieutenant’s celebration of Ireland with an unsettling feeling of discomfort and unwontedness due to his colonial presence in a colonized native land. The burden of an acute awareness of the intrusive role of an imperial entity’s presence in Baile Beag surges alongside in Yolland as he also experiences a sense of connect with the spatial, spiritual, and cultural aspects of the Irish county. If Yolland’s presence

strives to find a presence through the environment of Baile Beag, natives like Maire who embody marks of laborious engagement with the nonhuman life and landscape of Baile Beag (“black calf has to be fed... My hands are that rough; they’re still blistered from the hay. I’m ashamed of them. I hope to God there’s no hay to be saved in Brooklyn” (Friel 78) yearns to leave for America.

A moment of in-betweenness in terms of linguistic incomprehensibility, incomplete semiotic communication, and structurally different parole patterns emerges in an important conversation between Maire, native Irish speaking girl and English-speaking Lieutenant Yolland in Act II. Structurally, between Act I and Act III, stage instructions to create an atmosphere of in-betweenness — “This scene *may be* played in the schoolroom, but it would be *preferable to lose* - by lighting- as much of the schoolroom as possible, and to play the scene down front in a *vaguely ‘outside’* area” (italics mine) (Friel 61-2). Eager to communicate with Yolland, Maire speaks Irish and Latin and struggles to enunciate the few English words she knows. Their stutter, indecipherability, and inhibitions (“I-I-I”, “What-what?”, “sorry-sorry?”) (Friel 63) are interlaced with precise, articulate yet separate phrases in Irish and Latin (Maire) and English (Yolland) to confess mutual love. They experience the desire to communicate by uttering elements of nature (“water”, “fire”, “earth”) that become the ideal planetary connect. They weave a communication with entangled threads of linguistic and cultural difference, confessing love by circumventing language’s ‘decipherability’. Postcolonial theorist Leela Gandhi locates “the trope of friendship as the most comprehensive philosophical signifier for all those invisible affective gestures that refuse alignment along the secure axes of filiation to seek expression outside, if not against, possessive communities of belonging” (10). Even when Gaelic and English language registers according to each’s linguistic culture possibly sound like jabberwocky, they still manage to understand and extend towards each other, beyond notions of belongingness offered by their respective languages. This episode undercuts the heightened awareness of politics of (un)translatability of language that grips the thematic through standardization of words that is both unsettling and welcoming to differing ideological positionalities. The words uttered by both acquire a tonal affect that melts into their hearts, even when semiotically they hear chaos.

Part II: Energizing the in-between

As a literary text coming out of a former colony of the British Empire, *Translations* punctures the colonialist project of appropriation by positing translation as an enabling mechanism for the Irish to articulate their postcolonial identities of 1833 as they deem fit. By problematizing a narrow understanding of tradition, Friel visibilizes fossilization and lifeless living that the natives suffer at the behest of mythic reification and narrow (puritanical)

nationalism. ‘Fifth Provence’⁸ for Friel and Field Day was understood as “a province of mind through which we hope to devise another way of looking at Ireland, or another possible Ireland” (“Field Day Five Years On” 7). As a dramatist and co-founder of Field Day Theatre Company, Friel’s ideological stance vis-a-vis the arts was that “[f]lux is their only constant; the crossroads their only home; impermanence their only yardstick” (Friel 1967, cited in Russell 12). His theatre company believed “genuine and beneficent societal change could be introduced and wrought by artists, who could “translate” politics and literature—culture generally—into accessible language for the masses through traveling plays and writings” (Friel 1967 cited in Russell 149). A playwright who understood the affective quality of theatre as performance where “[t]hrough their physical presence, perception, and response, the spectators become co-actors that generate the performance by participating in the “play” (Lichte 32), Friel’s medium of representation (theatre) compliments the idea he wishes to put forth. Interestingly, Friel admits that, “a fundamental irony of this play is that it should have been written in Irish” (“Talking to Ourselves” 59). However, by actively involving the reader/viewer through a suspension of disbelief, he makes them hear Irish *in* spoken English. Friel punctures the colonial project and the play’s thematic that is working towards appropriating Irish by overtly infusing English with Irish undertones. By bringing the personal of the individual reader/viewer into the text through its form and content, an active negotiation with Friel’s play blurs boundaries between personal and political. Postcolonial theorist Edward Said defined culture not only as “all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure” (xii) but one that also exists as a “concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought... [c]ulture in this sense is a source of identity... In this second sense culture is a sort of theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another” (Said xiii). Interlacing culture as performance proper (theatre) and qualifying culture as ideological and political, Friel’s play rests in an ideologically-driven translation that acquires its political dimension through a postcolonial context imbricating notions of identity and subjectification. Friel also extrapolates translation beyond its literal meaning by translating the threat of cultural imperialism’s ideological coercion into facilitating a postcolonial self-definition that articulates an Irish surcharge through English colonization. He does so by energizing a state of flux that holds the possibility of creating an Irish English identity that adopts and becomes adept at commingling the past in terms of the present. Friel’s text “embraces [cultural] difference and absence as material signs of power rather

⁸ Explored by Richard Kearney and Mark Hederman in *Crane Bag*, (1977). Mind’s “the secret centre...where all oppositions resolved...such a place would require that each person discover it for himself within himself”.

than negation, of freedom not subjugation, of creativity not limitation” (Ashcroft 165-66) to accord to a postcolonial Ireland a sense of self-assertion through language and culture. Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe who chose to write in English while recognizing its colonial baggage opined, “*But* it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings” (emphasis mine) (“English and the African Writer” 30). In rendering porous the boundaries between the Irish and the English language, an utterance develops which routes itself by destabilizing linguistic essentializations.

The character of Owen (Irish master’s son who has returned to his native town) performs the function of the transformed native. Employed on a part-time basis by the British to carry out the English Ordnance Survey, he along with Yolland has to perform his “official function as translator [which] is to pronounce each name in Irish and then provide the English translation” (Friel 38). Performing the “official function as translator” and his command “Put English on that, Lieutenant” (Friel 41) implicates him in creating a dichotomy- firstly, for the Irish community, he becomes an accomplice of the British in endorsing, participating, and commanding for the native’s ideological coercion and secondly, he sketches himself as a modern man willing to adopt English language and establish a contrast to his community’s way of living — 48 — that continues to thrive on potatoes and buttermilk (Friel 45). Owen functions as the archetypal figure of the transformed native upon whom cultural imperialism operates by “disrupting and changing the context within which people give meanings to their actions and experiences and make sense of their lives” (cited in Bush 123). Owen’s disregard for his native community completes the colonial process of acculturation. Thus, the combined task for Lieutenant Yolland (attached to the British toponymic department) and Owen at the beginning of Act II, Scene i is to “*take each of the Gaelic names—every hill, stream, rock, even every patch of ground which possessed its own distinctive Irish name—and Anglicise it, either by changing it into its approximate English sound or by translating it into English words*” (Friel 38, italics in original). Appropriating by way of translation, either an aural approximation or an approximate meaning raises pertinent issues relating to language as they emerge in the context of colonization- as a cultural tool of hegemonic control, in terms of politics of translation, and as a concept negotiating notions of tradition and modernity from the vantage point of Western imperialist project of modernity. The colonial act of translation seems to not only write over Irish names but strip off cultural resonances interwoven into the Irish language register by reducing the signifier to an empty sound. The emphasis on land infused with cultural undertones of “its own distinctive Irish name” is offset by Lieutenant Yolland’s response on hearing the Gaelic word ‘Bun na hAbhann’⁹

⁹ the beach point at which the stream enters the sea.

- “Let’s leave it alone. There’s no English equivalent for a sound like that” (Friel 39). His response that identifies the absence of an equivalent sound and not an equivalent (approximate) meaning points out the meaninglessness in disassociating the place-name from its site specificity. The littoral point of the beach where the stream enters the sea mirrors the littoral contact zone between the colonizer and colonized that fails to meet in terms of equivalences. Friel states that even when the British leave Ireland “ the residue of their presence will still be with us.... and that brings us back to the question of language for this is one of the big inheritances which we have received from the British” (“ Talking to Ourselves” (60-61) cited in McGrath 3). He insists, “[w]e must make English identifiably our own language” and English words must become “distinctive and unique to us” (“Talking to Ourselves” (60-61) cited in McGrath 3). Gaelic and English are shown to perform diametrically opposing functions wherein,

‘Gaelic’ view of language sees it as the means to express an essential privacy, the hermetic core of being, to divine origins and etymologies, thus enabling a community to recollect itself in terms of its past. It is opposed by the technological, ‘English’ view of language, which sees it as a system of signs for representing, mapping and categorising — for ‘colonising’ the chaos of reality... danger with the ‘Gaelic’ model is that it can imprison a community in the past and lead to political stagnation... [the] ‘English’ model, taken to the extreme, reduces language to a mechanistic, totalised and ontologically depthless system of arbitrary signs (Andrews 170-71).

This view weighs Gaelic against English to posit language between two conflicting positionalities. “Possession of two languages is not merely having two tools, but actually means participation in two psychical and cultural realms. Here the two worlds symbolized and conveyed by the two tongues are in conflict: they are those of the colonizer and colonized” (Memmi 151). The former (Gaelic) presents communal language as a synthesizing device via the personal and the Gaelic land while the latter (English) presents a consolidating language as a usurping agent via the political. Towards the play’s end, the hedge-school master Hugh takes Marie (local Irish girl) under his wing to teach her English. He postpones the beginning of English lessons by stating that they would start “[n]ot today. Tomorrow, perhaps. After the funeral. We’ll begin tomorrow (*Ascending*)” (Friel 89). Friel uses the form (theatrical representation) and stage directions to juxtapose this postponed acquisition of English (a language understood as static) with Hugh’s physical movement wherein he climbs steps to ‘ascend’. If learning of the colonizer’s language is delayed, the body of the native is seen in motion. Contrast between deferment and Maire’s enthusiasm to learn English and move to America problematizes any simplistic acceptance of the fate of the colonized peoples’ negotiations with language and culture. He further says to Maire, “don’t expect too much. I will provide you with the available

words and the available grammar. But will that help you to interpret between privacies? I have no idea. (*He is now at the top*)” (Friel 89-90). Even when natives have access to English grammar devoid of its quality as an embodied language, it does not reassure competent entry and participation in the language’s intimate privacies decipherable only to the natives. Precariousness of adopting the other’s language either as an imposition or assimilation is exemplified through this interaction. However, to penetrate the privacies of language, Friel suggests that individuals need to energize English language by injecting into it their private sense of a language that embodies Irish linguistic history. Chinua Achebe had opined, “let no one be fooled by the fact that we write in English for we intend to do unheard of things with it” (9). Advocating for an intercultural transfer by attempting that “[w]e must learn to make them [English words] our own. We must make them our new home” (Friel 88), the play seems to bring to life identities of individuals which are shaped by a language that can emerge as fluid, complex, intertwined, and hybridized and can demystify attempts at homogenization and essentialization of subjectivities in the name of language, culture, history, and/or the nation-state. As Hugh says, “we must never cease renewing those images; because once we do, we fossilise” (Friel 88). The play locates language’s power as a cultural byproduct that shapes realities, experiences, personalities, and histories of not individuals alone but of communities as well. Friel uses language to reflect upon cultural atmospherics of a colonized Irish settlement and problematize fixed positionalities vis-à-vis English and Irish. He uses colonial language to establish a postcolonial critique and thus complicates relegating language within either nationalist or colonialist puritanical tendencies.

Hugh’s statement to Lieutenant Yolland: “remember that words are signals, counters. They are not immortal. And it can happen — to use an image you’ll understand — it can happen that a civilisation can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of...fact” (Friel 52) critiques the colonial act of writing over the landscape of North Ireland’s Gaelic language. Interestingly, his statement offers both, a critique and an appreciation of refurbishing their Gaelic linguistic expressions. Hugh points out language’s functional signification (“words are signals, counters”) (Friel 52). He dismisses language’s timelessness by attributing to it a liveness of its own. Hugh re-iterates language’s experiential and personal associative quality that enables comprehension. He locates an understanding of the colonial project from the colonized perspective to explain the colonizer’s machination to Yolland himself by stating “to use an image *you’ll* [Yolland] understand” (emphasis mine) (Friel 52); thereby re-reading the colonizer’s anglicization of Irish by upturning the colonizer’s motifs to establish a dialogue with the British soldier himself. He articulates the inextricable link between a civilization and its linguistic framework by positing that linguistic incarceration either through dispossession of a culture’s traditional linguistic utterances or through imposition of a colonizer’s

verbal imagination can effectively rupture a civilization's collective consciousness. Lastly, as an oxymoron, by conflating embodied language with "landscape of fact" (Friel 52), he verbalizes a relational characteristic of the facticity of a language's embeddedness in a particular cultural domain as language "inhabits us and we inhabit it... Language introduces us to an identifiable world, initiates us into a family, providing those most basic concepts — 'me', 'us', 'them' (Ashcroft 95). Thus, Hugh expresses affective charge between language and land, traditional customs and beliefs, historical and mythic memory wherein each shape one another.

Friel's play is not a mere telling of a colonized people's story. It directs the viewer/reader's attention to moments of in-betweenness that enable one to destabilize and problematize well-differentiated identities of the colonizer as dictator and the colonized as submissive and devoid of agency. If postcolonial writings reclaim histories by resisting narratives presented by the colonizers that rendered them without a subject position and instead chose to represent themselves to regain an identity; Friel's text problematizes the nationalist act of retrieval and reclamation. He does so by reflecting upon the liminal space between the hegemonic erasure of Irish identities through 'standardized' semiotics via the English language and the divergent positionalities taken not just by the colonizer but by the colonized as well that throw into disarray clear distinctions between preconceived dichotomies. Furthermore, Lieutenant Yolland's dejection that he feels "so cut off from the people here. And I was trying to explain a few minutes ago how remarkable a community this is" (Friel 50) finds his appreciation and astonishment in the place name "Termon, from Terminus, the god of boundaries" (Friel 50). Boundary-blurring acts of finding 'equivalences' that tip the scale towards English paradoxically entrenches the boundary deeper into cultural differentiations that will always stand apart. However, Friel insists upon creating an 'Irish English' that takes cognizance of not only Ireland's expression in a Gaelic tongue but also of infusion of English language due to colonization and thus, the natives "must learn those new names...[and] make them [English words] our own. We must make them our new home" (Friel 88). Friel suggests that this paradox or the quality of the in-between or fluidity qualifies language as an "[e]xpression [that] must occur in the transition between old and new, between text and interpreter, between past and present, between the already spoken and the speaking of the yet to be expressed" (Diprose et al., 156). Friel's commitment to creating mental, cultural, and linguistic spaces that constantly refurbish themselves with changing times to avoid fossilization and transforming perspectives of characters' advocates for accepting linguistic fluidity that does not build borders to sieve out 'outsider' influences to retain their 'untainted' pre-modern linguistic past. By situating the text in a colonial setting, Friel postulates not one historical truth of Irish identity, culture, and language

disposition but argues for reading many translations of the historical narrative of Ireland's linguistic reality and possibilities. As critic J. H. Andrews points, the play is "an extremely subtle blend of historical truth - and some other kind of truth" (167).

Friel's commitment resides in creating mental, cultural, and linguistic spaces that constantly refurbish themselves with changing times to avoid fossilization. By presenting a case for retaining elements that enable the community to keep its embodied imagination, platial and planetary connectedness, and linguistic articulation well lubricated without suffering cultural erasure; Friel advocates for accepting a linguistic fluidity that does not build borders to sieve out 'outsider' influences to retain their 'untainted' linguistic past. Instead, he extrapolates translation beyond its literal meaning by translating the threat of cultural imperialism's ideological coercion into facilitating a postcolonial self-definition that articulates an Irish surcharge through English colonization. Thus, in attempting to make language their own, the act of defamiliarizing the colonial language by infusing it with Gaelic surcharge and in looking beyond their own nativism locates a decidedly political intervention.

Conclusion

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 Seamus Deane (one of the directors of *Field Day*) stated, "[e]verything, including our politics and our literature, has to be rewritten — i.e. re-read. This will enable new writing, new politics, unblemished by Irishness, but securely Irish."¹⁰ Negating Ireland's co-option by mindless translation of Irish names as an anglicized reflection of the colonial master's language, Friel advocates for a processual becoming that acknowledges interconnectedness between Irish and English by claiming a personalized sense and prevalence of a modernity that the Irish could acquire on their own terms. Though initiated as an endowment upon the Irish through Western imperialism, Friel argues for resisting the Eurocentric discourse embedded within by presenting a case for retaining elements that enable the community to keep its embodied imagination, platial and planetary connectedness, and linguistic articulation well lubricated without suffering cultural erasure. Renewing colonial translation by re-presenting it as Irish English, Friel's engagement with such a linguistic interaction puts forth a positive outcome insofar as it is through the character of Hugh that the playwright makes the students of language and culture unlearn the colonial(ist) reading of translation. Instead of othering English, Friel suggests othering their homogenized and puritan selves that perpetuate exclusionary, decontextualized, and stagnant perspectives. By infusing embodied language of Irish culture into English, Friel makes the colonizer's language stutter. He subverts the stutter embodied by characters struggling to enunciate English and vouches for accepting an Irish English on the tongues of the natives. By

¹⁰ Seamus Deane in "Field Day: An Introduction," quoted in Russell, 2013, p. 149.

not mitigating the natives' sense of self and sense of place, Friel locates meaning, expression, articulation, and identity in a fluid in-betweenness. Contesting the idea of home (oikos) as fixed, he proposes it as fluid to counter colonial machinations of cultural dispossession and construction of a monolithic national identity. Moreover, a spatial reading transgresses territorialization espoused by national boundaries and places instead, place as a site of study that renders open, a sense of relationality through a subjective experience of the place inhabited.

In attempting to make language their own, defamiliarizing the colonial language by the Irish and looking beyond their own nativism locates a decidedly political intervention. Bodies of different characters enable minute intimacies interconnected with the embodied enviroing landscape that posit multifarious translations of the transitional notion of in-betweenness. Friel's insistence on situating his play away from the political cannot be read as self-explanatory. As a dramatist writing in the late twentieth century, post the advent of literary theory, and encasing the problematic relation between language and culture in a colonial discourse in the form of a dramatic play that commands interaction with its audience, Friel's literary creation subtly makes a political statement vis-a-vis the colonial discourse. In the act of energizing the void created due to cultural difference and alterity (by way of listening to the sounds of the planet, sighting fast evading bounties of the earth, smelling fragrances of plantlives, tangibly experiencing nonhuman lifeworlds and tasting the utterances of an Irish English), Friel indeed posits many translations.

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BIO

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