

English Break

**18th Edition
May 2021**

You Will Read:

- **Brooklyn Book Festival**
- **The Hall of the Fallen**
- **Schizoglossia**
- **Tenet: A Reverse-Machine of Fatalism/Determinism**
- **Structuring the Self Against the Fictional Other**

English Break

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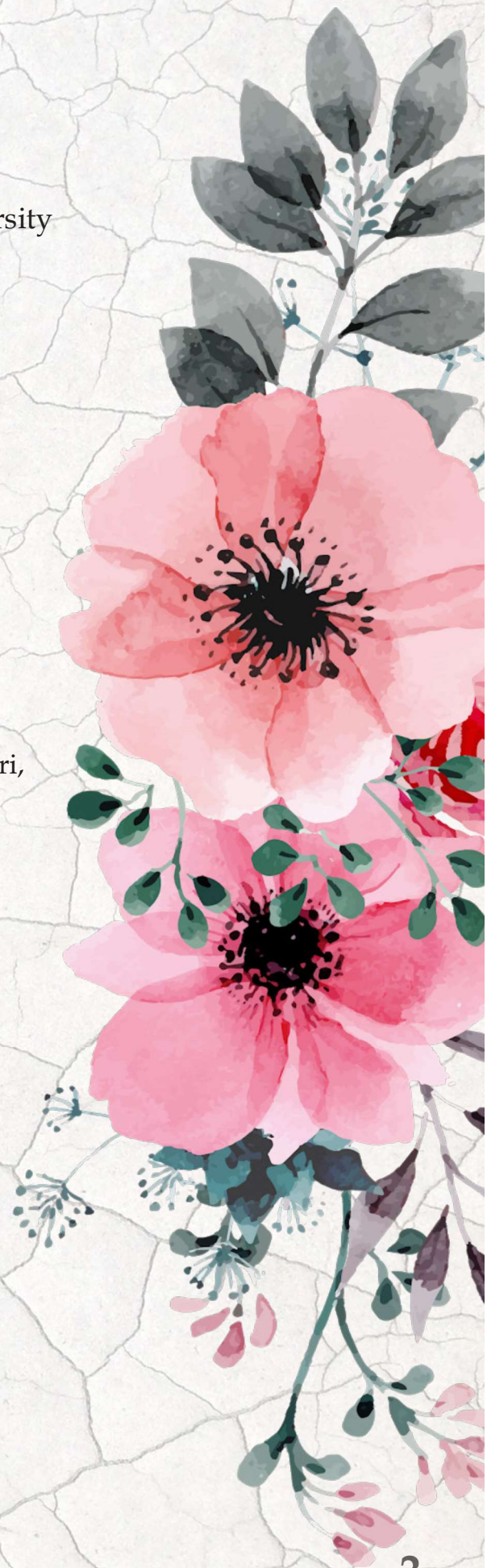




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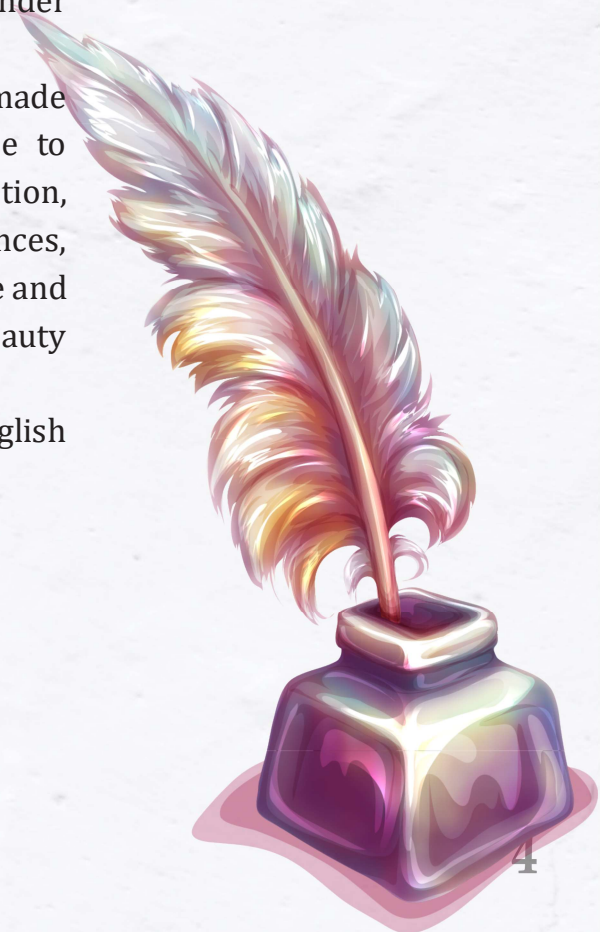
A Word From the Editor

Despite being composed in quite diverse cultures, literatures serves as a universal language, similar to music and dance.

Reading and studying literature has given us a chance to experience magnificent feelings; feelings we wouldn't have been able to experience otherwise, as we go through series of revelations and epiphanies along with the characters actually experiencing them. We get to meet people whom we'll probably never get the chance to in real life. This universal language is what makes it possible to walk the magical stairs of Hogwarts at one moment, and revel in the parties of Jay Gatsby in another. When all the walls seem to be crumbling down around us, it's our way of escaping, of running away into a safe place deep in the abyss of unexperienced thoughts and adventures. The seemingly insignificant signifiers spread out on paper are what make our hearts beat, and flutter like nothing else. The beauty of it all lies in the core human experience we collectively get to share while appreciating literature; as in reading literature, we become one community, where we get the chance to ponder over the unanswered questions of life.

Thanks to our hard-working writers and editors who made this edition of English Break possible, we were able to appreciate literature to the best of our abilities. In this edition, you can catch a glimpse of global literary events, experiences, and methodologies, as well as enchanting poetry, movie and poetry analysis, alongside new content from our Langeauty Lounge.

We sincerely hope you'll get to enjoy this edition of English Break as much as we did creating it.





Anahita Zarabian

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Brooklyn Book Festival

As book aficionados, there is little else we desire more than a full week of literary events, including the gathering of our favorite authors, book signing sessions, meeting other book lovers and buying as many books as we can carry or as many as our balance would allow!

With all that being said, in this issue of English Break, we have taken it upon ourselves to introduce to you one of the most famous book fairs around the world.

The Brooklyn Book Festival is the largest free literary festival held annually in New York City. This one-week fair was inaugurated in 2006 by the Brooklyn Borough President in order to celebrate the plethora of authors residing in the borough.

The festival has expanded over its fifteen years of activity, and every year, hosts an abundance of attendees, passionate readers and authors alike, from the United States of America as well as international visitors.

Perhaps, one of the most important events taking place during the festival is the awarding of a biannual Literary Prize, supported by St. Francis College. The prize, founded in 2009, is worth US\$ 50,000 and is awarded, as a gesture of invigoration as well as financial support, to a writer half way through his career. The winner is chosen by a jury of authors during the festival and announced in September.

If you are a book lover as well as an adventurer, and the whole thing has bored you to the point of ad nauseam, you should know that the festival can be a lot more fun! In the subsequent years after its establishment, a great deal of amusing activities have been added, such as a whole day dedicated to children, parties, book reading ceremonies and stand-up shows.

One of the ends for which the festival has been striving is welcoming a diverse range of cross-cultural readers, authors and publishers. This has consequently resulted in a great deal of international interaction among those who are fond of literature.

Much like all the other events, literary or otherwise, affected by the raging Covid-19 pandemic, the Brooklyn Book Festival was no exception. The 2020 fair was held virtually and proved, in many ways to be, if not better than, at least as good as before.

The virtual world allowed for more attendees to be present during the festival and “everyone had a front-row seat” to all the events they may have missed the previous years, according to one of the co-producers, Liz Koch.

The 2021 festival will be held from September 26th – October 4th. There has been no news regarding whether it will be an online fair or not. However, for those of you who are interested, you can visit the website brooklynbookfestival.org for further information and details.

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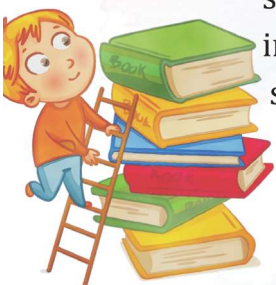


Literature's Gifts to Young Minds

Literature is the most important means of shaping one's thoughts which also provides many cognitive benefits. Therefore, it can be used as a way to educate the members of a society. As a great deal of personality is shaped at a young age, it is better to introduce literature to children so that they would be able to benefit from it. But what makes it so advantageous?

The most obvious characteristic of literature is that it puts us in somebody else's shoes, and makes us see the world through different perspectives. Imagine how many feelings a child can experience through stories. The written lines filled with another person's feelings, thoughts, life conditions, and maybe even epiphanies can explain so much about humans to a child who is trying to understand the world. In short, literature can teach children empathy in a way no other media can, which will be a great help for their future since empathy leads to having better communication, thoughtful behavior, helping skills, emotional regulation, etc.

Moreover, literature demands an active mind. While reading the story, a child needs to keep imagining what he/she is reading. On its own, developing imagination may not be an appealing goal for some societies, but considering the fact that creativity is actually using one's imagination to bring an original thought into existence, the significance of imagination will become noticeable. Another vital role of literature is to hand down our culture to the newer generations. Through centuries, several things have changed, but the books left from long ago remain our valuable sources of information about the past events, stories, traditions, etc. Learning about the formation of the beliefs existing in a society, and the reasons behind them can clarify the behavior of people surrounding us; thus, opening the minds to better communicational methods.



It is noteworthy to mention that literature can even go beyond cultural borders. There are places where people of different cultures come together and need to co-exist; literature can teach the cultural or racial differences and widen the children's understanding of humanity in diverse settings. In summary, literature can provide children with an accepting and open mind, which at the same time appreciates its own heritage.

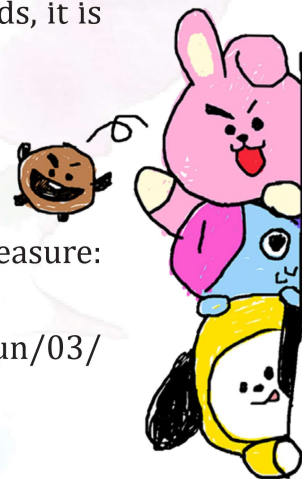
These are just a few of the practical benefits that literature can bring to children as valuable members of a society. However, as we live in a time when video games, movies, social media, etc. have the attention of the young, convincing them that reading is also interesting may be challenging, but not impossible. We must take an active role in creating the love for reading in children. For instance, it is good to keep in mind that a child's home environment affects them immensely, so if reading is a habit in their home, they are more likely to show interest in this activity; thus, just reading in front of a child can be helpful. For the children not raised in such condition, the environment can be created in a classroom. For instance, the teacher can read out loud to the class, bearing in mind what the students are interested in- even if it's a magazine or a comic book. You can even set reading challenges- or similar projects- for the students to motivate them and make use of the peer pressure; just be careful not to drain them. Try looking at the world through the eyes of a child and remember what made you fall in love with reading. We must trust our own love for literature and spread it, using desirable methods.

Literature has brought pleasure to people for centuries and the fact that it hasn't been completely replaced to this day shows that it is needed. Nevertheless, with other media coming to the scene, stealing the attention of the new generations, it is pushed to the shadows. Considering its power to shape bright minds, it is worth the effort to bring some attention back to it.

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Raha Fazlollahi

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The Hall of the Fallen

O moon, are you pleased to behold our shrieks in the blood rain?
When we dance on the generous edge of a blade, our sway on the crimson edge of
agony, as if the whole world is on fire, and the blade is the abode we never had.
When we breathe the last dance, more angelic than the flight of butterflies on a forest
fire.

O moon, are you glad to behold our meaningless existence?
When the universe is so ambiguously magnificent, and we humans horribly
insignificant,
Life so intensely brief, death dreadfully lasting,
And love so crudely loathsome, and hatred affectionately adorable.

O moon, are you proud to behold the voiceless funeral in our eyes?
When the dull sunshine burns as a candle with grief in the memory of you, the proud
moon,
When the birds flutter their wings across the sorrowful sky and wail the lament for
the murdered night,
When the dew tears of roses fall on the sinful ground,
And our mourning begins.

O moon, are you fortunate to behold our shiver in the oblivion?
When the humans crave for unknown destiny, coward love, and distant stars,
When humans desire untouchables.

O moon, are you ambitious to behold our pale face and still heart?
When a frigid breath of a dead man fondles our neck,
Sometimes as a winter breeze, sometimes as a spring storm,
Deep at nights, shallow at dawns.
When it smothers our fire and never lets us burn.

O moon, are you grateful to behold the down of our love?
When a lover stares at his beloved's portrait, day after day, and forget her more and
more, day by day.

When a lover thinks of claret skies and her aged scent at sunsets with remorse,
When he imagines the dance of trees over her silky golden hair with dolor, and forgets
her, who asked not to be forgotten, once a day.

O moon, are you willing to behold the faithlessness to ourselves?
When a pointless silence trudges in our brain. No word talks, no life endures.
A hoarse ember recalls the memories, such sweet tears, and amiable foes.
When a blind silence wanders in our brain. No faith remains, no belief prevails.

O moon, are you relieved to behold our bewilderment in guilt?
When we are laid on the shore of shame, the swallowing ocean claws to our feet,
howling thunders crash the faint-hearted soul of ours.
Lost in pure dim mist, we are laid, lured into the dreams of red roses.

O moon, are you delighted to behold our shadowing remorse?
When a pain blossoms in the heart and takes us back to the past,
When the rainbow of irises sprinkled upon that heart, and we were in a faint slumber,
nightmaring the pain.

O moon, are you gratified to behold our endless end?
When we seek death in an ocean of roses, yet we die in a desert of thorns.
With each heartbeat in vein, and each wave on the shore, we're one breath older and
one tear farther.

O moon, what greater honor than gaining your blinding glint from our misery.

R.F. AZA



Tenet: A Reverse-Machine of Fatalism/Determinism

(The Travel From Postmodernism to Metamodernism)

Tenet, Christopher Nolan's latest movie, has raised many questions and criticisms since its release on August 26, 2020. On the surface, the movie follows a protagonist struggling to prevent World War III from happening; a war against the entire planet that will take place against a machine, which can invert the whole world. While many argue that Tenet lacks science and logic, we begin to see the deep philosophical questions it addresses, such as that of free will vs. determinism, as we delve deeper.

As we become aware of the existence of the reverse machine, and the ability to travel in time, we tend to think that perhaps, this is one of those classic sci-fi movies in which the characters can travel in time and change the future or the past. However, in the first fight scene, we notice that Neil manages to take off the opponent's gas mask only to realize that the opponent was the reversed version of the protagonist. Later on, when the protagonist asks Neil the reason for not telling him this earlier, he responds: "What's happened's happened". Neil's repeatedly uttered sentence, which the protagonist does not comprehend up until the last scene, leads one to wonder if one cannot really undo the past, or change what will occur in the future, or at least decide to do things freely, what is the point of all the struggle? This is probably our first encounter with the philosophical question mentioned above for which we see two stages in the movie.

Now this might lead us, in the first stage, to a postmodern conclusion of the message that Nolan is trying to convey in this movie. It is true that in Tenet, at least, time is not linear and separate. It does not operate as a train moving from the first station to the last station. As Albert Einstein states, "People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion". Also, if we take the time to take a glance at the theories regarding the concept of free will and determinism, especially that of "Event Causation" (that no physical event can occur without having been caused by a previous physical event), we realize that the physical world is deterministic (also conceded by libertarians). Therefore, the world Nolan is portraying for us here is a deterministic world in which the past, present, and future coexist at the same time.



With all that being said, and thanks to the inversion machine, individuals find the ability to travel in time, but cannot do anything other than what they have “already” done. The same picture we get by reading Kurt Vonnegut’s *Cat’s Cradle*; that we are all puppets playing in a big game the rules and the outcome of which have been previously determined. Quite postmodern! But the movie does not end like that.

In the second stage of the movie, we gradually come to another perception of this message as the protagonist begins to see the world differently. As if we move from a postmodern view of determinism to a Metamodern one. Metamodernism highlights the oscillation between the aspects of both modernism and postmodernism. As Vermeulen and van den Akker put it, Metamodernism’s oscillation should not be thought of as a balance; “rather, it is a pendulum swinging between 2, 3, 5, 10, innumerable poles. Each time the Metamodern enthusiasm swings toward fanaticism, gravity pulls it back toward irony; the moment its irony sways toward apathy, gravity pulls it back toward enthusiasm.” (Turner, 2015). Like us, the protagonist comes to a full understanding of the situation in the last scene between Neil and himself. In that scene, when the protagonist asks Neil: “but can we change things if we do it differently?”, he responds: “What’s happened’s happened, which is an expression of faith in the mechanics of the world. It’s not an excuse to do nothing.”, and he calls this the reality. If Nolan intended his movie to be Postmodern, he wouldn’t have had such dialogues here. He wouldn’t have had the characters get a hold of their lives and decide to do things differently and choose between options despite the fact that they knew they could have struggled in vain. Instead, he would have presented the audience with a feeling of despair, and a sense of nothingness and inaction.

All in all, similar to other movies by Nolan, *Tenet* is open for various interpretations. But one thing’s for sure. That although the characters are living in a deterministic world, their actions matter. Although the result may be determined beforehand as a fact, the road to that result could be different. When they decide to take another road, like not giving Priya the information, they form a new causality. The same thing can be said for the real world. Our actions matter. “What’s happened’s happened”, but this is “not an excuse to do nothing”.

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Schizoglossia

A Creeping Death of Indigenous Languages and Dialects?

Iran abounds with many languages and dialects. No matter where you explore, each and every part of our country has astounding various words, pronunciation rules and grammatical forms to offer. However, is every single person in Iran capable of comprehending all indigenous languages/dialects? The answer is no. That is why most of us are bilinguals, if not multilinguals, from our early years. We know our regional language in addition to the standard language which, in Iran, is the one spoken in Tehran; as a short form for further use, I'd rather call it T-Persian. Despite the fact that T-Persian has made it way easier for us to communicate with each other in our daily lives, its domination is threatening and risks the disappearance of many of our pure and ancient indigenous languages/dialects. "Schizoglossia" or "Linguistic Insecurity" is one of those threats.

What is Schizoglossia?

Schizoglossia ("Schizo" meaning fragmented + "glossia" meaning word or speech) ,or Linguistic Insecurity is a person's fear of or anxiety in using their mother tongue or dominant language due to social, educational or political problems it can beget. This linguistic problem is mostly witnessed in communities with two or more languages co-existing. Although these two terms (Schizoglossia and Linguistic Insecurity) were first used by two different linguists (the former by Einar Haugen in 1962, and the latter by American linguist William Labov in the 1960s), they nearly express the same concept.

What are the Causes of Schizoglossia?

Schizoglossia can be caused by several reasons, among which linguistic prejudice and linguistic discrimination (linguicism) are the most salient.

Linguistic Prejudice vs. Linguistic Discrimination:

While linguistic prejudice refers to the negative attitudes towards the use of a particular language/dialect, it does not include any discriminatory actions against the users by which their social, educational or political rights are prohibited. On the other hand, when those negative attitudes are associated with some actions against the users, it is not called linguistic prejudice anymore, but gets a new name which is linguistic discrimination or linguicism.

What happens in the course of these two is that the users of a particular language or even a dialect would be deprived of their natural rights, be it in a social or even an educational context. In some situations, this matter can even put an individual's life at risk! For instance, some students are precluded by the official law of a country from using their indigenous language/dialect (which is the minority language/dialect of that country) and instead, they are required to use the official or dominant language/dialect that the government recommends. Furthermore, in some countries, not following these laws can even get you in prison! In social cases, a person can easily be put aside in a job interview despite his/her capabilities due to his/her language/dialect which is not preferred or respected by the employers. Linguistic Prejudice and Linguicism can eventually result in some precautionary measures which are adopted unconsciously by the discriminated users in order to regain their social, educational or political position. Hypercorrection and code switching are two of them.

Hypercorrection:

Hypercorrection occurs when someone struggles to appear more efficient in using a language. It involves the excessive or exaggerated use of some words, pronunciation patterns, or particular grammatical forms to appear more intelligent or polite which, in most cases, backfires. This linguistic phenomenon usually takes place among the lower-middle class who attempt to speak like the upper-middle class or even the upper class. Those suffering from Schizoglossia usually, and most of the time

inadvertently, use hypercorrection to fill the gap of prestige in their daily communications.

Here are some examples:

The Use of **I** for **Me** and **Whom** for **Who**:
(My uncle bought ice creams for Rafael and I)
(**Whom** are we inviting to the party?)

False Plurals:

“octopi” instead of “octopuses”

Code-Switching:

As we discussed in the previous edition, Code-Switching is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs when a bilingual or multilingual individual switches between two or more languages in the course of a single sentence or conversation. Regarding Schizoglossia, the person who sees his/her social or educational condition or, in some severe cases, their lives at stake, abandons their first/dominant language/dialect temporarily or forever and shifts to the language that the social or educational context requires them to use. This unwanted code-switching can eventually lead to the disappearance of that language or dialect, also known as “language death”. Languages and dialects die or even commit suicides due to many reasons.

Schizoglossia and Social Class:

As said in Hypercorrection, some minority languages/dialects are wrongly associated with or thought to be the representation of naivety, lack of education or social skills and in general, the lower social classes of a society. These assumptions are, in essence, discriminatory and thus, lead to discrimination. Since there are no serious or conscious acts to stop these negative attitudes or actions, the discriminated users of a particular language/dialect adopt some preventive measures such

as hypercorrection, abandonment of their own language/dialect or code-switching in order to diminish the effect of those negative attitudes or to prevent mockery and eventually save their social face or educational comfort.

New Generation and Language Heritage:

I live in a town in one of the western provinces of Iran. We have our own particular dialect of one of the major regional languages of Iran. I've seen numerous times that my grandparents who have lived in Tehran for more than 30 years and who are consequently very good at T-Persian, switch to this particular dialect whenever they visit us or are talking to a person from a similar background. My aunts and uncle are not as good at this dialect as their previous generation, but they can still speak well enough if they want to. I am from the third generation starting from my grandparents, and although I have grown up in the immediate context where this dialect is used, unfortunately, I cannot speak it that well. My cousins who are younger cannot even comprehend it. That is another problem caused by Schizoglossia. Nowadays, among the youngsters, it is considered un-classy to

use indigenous languages/dialects in the daily conversations, and parents, too, use T-Persian to communicate with them, and exacerbate this insecurity. Therefore, the path is set for the everyday decline of many of the most stunning and unique dialects of our country.

Conclusion:

Once again, I want to mention that Iran is full of beautiful, exotic languages and dialects whose protection is our national duty. The biased dominance of one language like T-Persian, and the consequential prejudice of its native users which leads to linguicism, in addition to the abandonment of one's indigenous language or dialect, for saving one's face or gaining appropriate social or educational comfort, would only result in the daily diminishing of these national and cultural treasures and eventually, their extinction. As much as we pay attention to provide for our children to learn a foreign language (which is great of course), we need to help them learn their own regional languages/dialects as well, and also teach them how alluring it is to use them. Besides, we should make sure they never ever feel ashamed of knowing one more language/dialect, because language of any kind is power!

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Lady Lazarus: The Story of An Unwilling Resurrection

“Lady Lazarus” by Sylvia Plath is a poem generally understood to be about suicide. An intricate, dark, and brutal poem with mentions of the Jews and their awful treatment by the Nazis alongside the idea of annihilation or extinction; themes that are never far away from us with a Plath’s poem. Plath is known for her tortured soul. This is what makes her captivating to readers. Most people have experienced agony at least once. This agony is often so deep that there are no words to express the true anguish present. Plath, however, has a way of putting delicate, beautiful words to describe dark, lonely feelings. A single glance, and it becomes clear that the poem contains references to suicide attempts. Other details can certainly be understood through this context. When the speaker says “I have done it again...” she means she has attempted suicide for the third time after one unintentional attempt, “the first time it happened, I was ten...”, and one deliberate attempt in the past. However, the first stanza of Lady Lazarus cannot be properly understood until the entire poem has been read, so I highly recommend that you read the full poem first.

For Plath, her suicide attempts represent a sort of death, and her survival is more of an unwilling coming back from death than a simple continuation of living or perhaps, suffering. Plath’s own longing for extinction is portrayed visibly in the poem.

She mentions ‘Doktor’ (German dictation) and this doubles up as a reference to Plath’s doctors and psychiatrists who treated her, both when she attempted suicide, and when she underwent electroconvulsive therapy for her depression; threatens them because they denied her what she wanted; denied her of the escapement of death she so intensely sought, and brought her back to the never-ending cycle of misery and suffering.

When she claims that death is her “call”, it reveals that she feels no purpose in life other than dying. She exposes that her only relief from suffering, emptiness, and numbness was what she experienced in her encounters with her own death, but every time she gets a taste of it, she ends up surviving, only to resume her former suffering.

Thus, the poem reveals that she is disappointed with being alive. It becomes apparent that she identifies with death far more than with life. She thinks of herself as



a rotting corpse. She reveals an obvious disappointment with the fact that she has not been able to die when she compares herself to a cat, concluding that it will probably take many more attempts to reach death and not just three.

And the mystery of the title of the poem is solved. She is the Lazarus, a modern one, just like the well-known bible character who was brought back to life by Jesus Christ after three days in the tomb. And in this context, one could consider the doctors to be the modern Messiah.

Plath then takes the focus off herself and her misery and begins to criticize the people around her. She calls them the “peanut crunching crowd” implying that they are only in her life to mock her and make a spectacle of her.

She calls her exit from the tomb “a big strip tease”, revealing that when she came close to death but was brought back to life, the people around her were there not to celebrate with her or to comfort her, but to be entertained by her. The sarcastic tone reveals her frustration with the observers and her

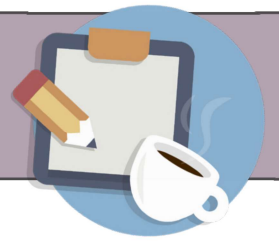
disappointment with the fact that she was unable to stay dead.

Plath turns to a tone of revenge. She continues to blame men, God, and the Devil, specifically pointing out that both God and Lucifer (the Devil) are men. This also reveals that she feels powerless under the influence of men. She refers to the Doktor, God, and the Devil all as men who hold some kind of power over her.

It is difficult to tell whether Plath is referring to herself when she “rises from the ashes” as a physically alive woman who has failed yet again in trying to end her life, or to one who has died and will return as an immortal. She may plan to stop attempting suicide, and to take her revenge on men instead of herself; or maybe she plans to come back as an immortal after she has died to take her revenge on men. The red hair suggests something that could symbolize the mythical creature, phoenix, which can burst into flames and then be reborn from its ashes. Either way, Plath warns men everywhere that she is no longer a powerless victim under their influence, but that she is ready to take her revenge.

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Iconography and Iconology in Literature and Art

Different eras can be identified through their special characteristics which can be historical, social, economic, etc. These characteristics influence different fields related to the society, such as literature and art. With the passage of time, those specific features may seem to fade away, but will still survive in the deeper layers of the culture; that is why some customs and traditions are practiced by people of a society, who may not exactly be aware of their roots, over a long period of time.

Having paid attention to this important fact, Warburg and Panofsky began to go beyond the visual features of the works of art by studying them iconographically, which has continued to be structured as Iconology, a new methodology at the time. Actually, Iconography is concerned with the description of the images, while Iconology goes further and tries to find the hidden meanings behind the surface. Warburg is the one who has introduced Iconography, but Panofsky is known as the theorist of the field under the title name of Iconology.

Panofsky, the theorist of Iconology methodology, defines it as a three-stage analysis: **The Primary Stage, The Secondary Stage, and The Tertiary Stage;**

1. The Primary Stage: in which the factual description of the representations is focused on. In this stage, the researcher tries to describe all the visual aspects of the image in detail.



2. The Secondary Stage: in which finding the symbolic meaning of each image and its parts is considered the main task. Here, the researcher tries to go through the lines of the written and unwritten texts, the literary works or the oral ones, to find the representations of the symbols in them, too; so finding the same symbols and the related characteristics and meanings of them in both visual and written/unwritten texts can result in flourishing a structure which is behind all the visual aspects of the images and words. Thus, finding the structure can lead us one step closer to the final stage which goes way deeper.



3. The Tertiary Stage: in which all the fields of Humanities, such as Anthropology, Sociology, Mythology, etc., should be considered scholarly to find the now-apparent structure in them as well; therefore, the deep meaning of the visual aspects may show itself through different layers of the society and if done properly, it may result in finding the roots which the researcher has been looking for. (SAGE: p.3)



Actually, the first two stages seem more practical for a researcher to do while the third one is somehow too time-consuming since, in an ideal situation, all the fields of Humanities would have to be covered in order to reach the best result, which may seem impossible.

Although this methodology seems too idealistic, even doing the first two stages can lead the researcher to fabulous results since finding the structure behind the surface plays a very important role in finding the roots.

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Dead Poets Show Us the Life

The title may seem like a horror movie with the ghosts of the poets here to kill the students of the Welton School, but wait, this movie is exactly what you need for a dark, sad evening. *Dead Poets Society* is a movie which makes you laugh, think, enjoy, dance, and cry for about 120 minutes. The film was produced in 1989 and directed by Peter Wein. Watching the famous smile of Robin Williams on the screen is what makes it more enjoyable. The whole plot is about a teacher, played by Robbin Williams, with a kind of new and strange method of teaching, and a group of friends who have a secret club with each other called the Dead Poets Society.

Have you ever thought about the real meaning of literature, and the reason for which we read or write it? *Dead Poets Society* shows the deep meaning of literature and poetry in the most beautiful way. Watching the spirits of young teenage boys in the dark and strict atmosphere of their

school is the most highlighted point in this movie. The teacher sees a poet inside of every student, and asks them to turn it out. The fact is that poetry is not something out of our ordinary life and thoughts; we do not need to have supernatural minds to write poems, the only thing we need is the ability to show the real and pure emotions which are hidden in our minds by us. This is what the teacher wants to teach his students, the ability to turn these emotions out, the fact that an actor, a great trumpet player, or even a shy boy can become a poet and enjoy literature in their own way.

I am sure you have experienced the feeling of achieving your goals when everyone was telling you that you would not succeed, and even now you can taste the sweetness of that success in your mind. There may be a wish in your mind which is forbidden in your family and parents' minds, now imagine achieving it after so much hard work. We can see the sad fact of

how parents kill their child's spirits by forcing them to go down the road they want them to, and how this will hurt them. It shows us what will happen to a dead spirit, and what the result of this cruelty is.

Since love is not something separated from life, love is not neglected in this story. You can enjoy the young pure love which is not so easy to reach; a love which needs the bravery of the lover's heart to fight and try hard for it.

While watching the movie, try not to miss the beauty of the music in it which is composed and chosen by Maurice Jarre. Let your ears be blessed by the melodies from Beethoven, Jimmie Driftwood, and other great musicians and composers. For sure, the beauty of the amazing poems written by Shakespeare, Robert Frost, and other poets are admirable. If you like literature and poetry, surely



you will enjoy listening to young brave spirits of teenage boys in the friendly atmosphere of the cave which is the club's meeting place, and even if you are not a fan of poems, I am sure you will fall in love with this movie.

The main message of this movie is to be brave for achieving your wishes and to enjoy every single moment of your life. If you like reading the story of the movie you can also read the book with the same title, and enjoy the paper version as well. So, if you feel tired and depressed, and if you think you need a break to free your mind of the negative thoughts, the only thing you need is a screen and 128 minutes to enjoy and feel free with *Dead Poets Society*.



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Structuring the Self Against the Fictional Other:

How Our Favorite Fictional Characters and Stories Become a Part of Who We Are

Whenever someone asks me where I come from, my first instinct is to tell them the name of my favorite fictional character. Odd, isn't it? Usually people expect a location; the city where you were born, the city where you live. I have quite a few of those to choose from; I live here, but my parents live there. I was born here, but I grew up there. All different cities. So, I choose one and give them a location, but honestly, that is not where I come from. I come from my favorite fictional characters, I come from my favorite stories. Sometimes, I think about introducing myself to people like, "Hi. My name is Zahra. I come from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, Kerouac's *On the Road*, and Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*," which is to say I believe in magic, spend too much time in my own head, dream of hitting the road, and ponder the absurdity of existence way more than the average person. Because that's where I really come from, that's the kind of person I am, and to read the stories that I have, to love the characters that I have, is to know and understand me as a person, it's to know where I come from.

As someone who loves stories, and has spent most of her life reading them, analyzing them, and thinking about them, I believe stories can do way more than we give them credit for. I think stories and characters can shape us, can inspire us to reinvent ourselves, and give us people to love, people to look up to, and dreams to follow. I know that the dreams in my head and the longing in my heart for "the great" perhaps come from stories I have read and the characters I have loved and integrated into my being,



like dissolving a spoonful of sugar into a hot cup of coffee, till there is no way of saying where I end and where the stories begin. I have always found stories and characters inspirational. Whenever I wanted to answer one of those Big Existential Questions, I would pick up a book and read on. I knew that somewhere in between the pages of printed word, lies the promise of inspiration, of endless possibilities and becomings. Sometimes, my friends joke with me, telling me that I have stolen my personality from fictional characters, that whatever book I am reading at the moment, whatever characters I am obsessed with at the moment, that is who I am and that there is no permanent Zahra. I laugh and tell them that of course there is not a permanent “Me”! There is not a permanent “You”, either. I say that it’s bold of you to assume there ever is such a thing as a permanent state of the self. Because there is not. There never was and there never will be. The self is but a reaction to the other and as the other changes, so does the self. And so, we are in constant motion, changing from one state to the next, to the next, to the next, reinventing ourselves based on our surroundings and our reactions to the other. I just like to let stories and characters be part of this constant motion, change me, and inspire me. I am not stealing my personality from them. I am looking up to them, taking inspiration from them, forever turning them into a part of who I am now and who I will be later.

I often wonder what it means when I structure myself against the fictional other, when there are parts of who I am that come from worlds of fantasy and imagination. Does it mean that I’m fictional? Unreal? At least to some extent? Does it mean that those stories and characters have come to life through me and are on some level real? I think it is neither. I also think it is both. The question of real and fictional is irrelevant here. It is no longer a binary opposition, a this-or-that kind of a situation. It is the mixture of reality and fiction that exceeds and goes beyond both, creating its own plane of existence, its own kind of human identity, and way of being that can no longer be defined in terms of the binary oppositions we see and interpret the world through, rather in terms of the deconstruction of that binary opposition and the reconstruction, the reinvention that follows. Am I fictional because parts of me come from stories? Are the characters I love real because I have brought them to life? Yes. No. This question is irrelevant. The real question is: what am I going to read next?

“That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you’re not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.”

F. Scott Fitzgerald