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Author(s)	森, 瑞樹
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博士論文

題目 Art of Life Now:

Theatrical Creativity of Contemporary
American Playwrights

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氏名 森 瑞樹

要旨

建国から 250 年あまり、様々な文化的、社会的主義や思想が乱立し、それらがアメリカの文化に影響を与え続けている。そのような状況下で、アメリカ演劇自体もそれらの影響を受け続けていることは改めて言うまでもない。そして、このような文化的時代性の影響を考慮し、時代を映す鏡という観点からアメリカ演劇を捉えた文化研究が多くを占めていることは、現在の批評の動向を見ても明らかである。それゆえ、これまでにアメリカ演劇全体の特徴を捉えようとした先攻研究はほとんど存在しない。そこで、本博士論文では、黎明期から現代に至るまでのアメリカ演劇を時系列にそって分析することで、アメリカ演劇全体のひとつの特徴となるべきものを抽出しようと試みた。

まず第一章では、ポカホンタスとグラディエーターという、今やアメリカのエンターテインメント産業の中では非常に馴染み深いキャラクターが初めて登場した ジェイムス・ネルソン・バーカーの *The Indian Princess* (1808) とロバート・モンゴメリー・バードの *The Gladiator* (1831) を論じる。これらキャラクターの表象方法の分析を通して、独立期のアメリカが、その国家的また個人的アイデンティティ形成を、演劇を通して追求していった過程を論証してゆく。アメリカ演劇黎明期では、アメリカ的アイデンティティを作り上げるために、創世記を借用し、アメリカをロマン化することで、創世記的な形而上的世界としてのアメリカの表象を可能とした。しかし、啓蒙思想に基づいた近代的知の諸分野の著しい発展がこのような形而上学的世界観の不在を明るみに出す結果となった。それにもかかわらず、原始性と文明の出会い、原始性への共感、それと同時に原始性からの崇拝という今ではクリシェとなっているプロットを展開させる物語が未だに多く生み出されている。その理由は、アメリカ的アイデンティティの根幹を守るために未だに人々がその文学的想像力に依った虚構性に頼らざるを得ないからである。

第二章では、アメリカ演劇の父とも呼ばれるユージン・オニールと肩を並べるソーントン・ワイルダーの *The Happy Journey to Torenton and Camden* (1931) と *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942) を検証する。帝国主義をひた走るアメリカとその正当化の技法について、メタ批評的観点も交えながら論じてゆく。歴

史的文脈の延長線上にアメリカを位置づけながらも、アメリカを中心とした歴史的文脈の普遍化をおこなうメカニズムが、演劇的性質と非常に似通っていることが明らかになるだろう。そして、アメリカを、普遍的、形而上学的存在に仕立て上げることは、帝国主義の拡張と密に関連していることは言うまでもない。アメリカ以外を紀元に持つ様々な文化的、歴史的モチーフを崇高な国家アメリカ内部で普遍化することによって、アメリカ帝国主義が更なる発展へとつながるメカニズムがここでは明らかにされる。さらに、アメリカ帝国主義への讃賞の裏側で、同時にそれを疑問視する作家の葛藤も浮かび上がってくるだろう。それは未だ覇権を求め、平和への矛盾を抱えたアメリカの姿をも浮き彫りにするものである。

第三章では、アメリカ演劇のアイコンとも称されるテネシー・ウィリアムズの *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959) について論じる。社会から個人へと劇作のテーマが移り変わっていった時代において、ウィリアムズはどのような自己表象の戦略を取ったのだろうか。この問いを追究することで、排他的、利己的、さらにはナルシシスティクなまでの崇高で唯一無二の芸術家像の想像といった自己表象の手法に新古典主義的審美観が色濃く影響を与えていることが明らかになっていく。そしてその排他的な側面が、現在のエンターテインメント産業を力強く後押ししているという逆説的な側面も明らかになる。ウィリアムズの自己表象は、新古典主義のような、他の文化的、社会的遺産のネットワークの中で可能となるものである。そこで、アメリカ的理想的自己の追求と想像の背後には、確固たる歴史的、文化的遺産がそびえ立っているにもかかわらず、人々はそのテネシー・ウィリアムズ像をまさにアメリカとして受け入れてしまっている矛盾も、分析の結果明らかとなる。

第四章では、ウィリアムズと同様に個人のあり方を常に考え表現してきた劇作家サム・シェパードの作品である *Sympatico* (1995) に焦点を当てる。大きな物語が崩壊したポストモダンと呼ばれる現代において、またアメリカニズムが趨勢を極めた時代において、アメリカのアイデンティティはどのような末路をたどるのか、という視点でこの章は論じられてゆく。シェパードの劇作の原動力はまさにポストモダン・アメリカにおけるアイデンティティのあり方を巡るものである。現代特有のテクノロジーを巧みに取り込み舞台化するシェパード

の文学的想像力は、まさに現代的アイデンティティ、そしてその追求の技法をつぶさに描き出してゆく。そして、シェパードの自己表象という命題が示しているものは、実際の自分ではなく、理想的自己を探し続け、作り上げ続けるしかない、というあまりにもポストモダンな現実である。さらにサム・シェパードは、その劇作家人生において、過去と決して袂を分かつことができないことに気付きながらも、ポストモダンにおいて浮遊する自己という逆説的な想像力を持つことになったことが明らかにされる。それはひとえに、現在の自己に影響を与えている文化的、社会的伝統が、明確に意識化できない程にアメリカ化されているということを表している。

第五章では、ポストモダン・アメリカに於いて、再び芸術を中心とした文化・社会形成を目指した作家を論じてゆく。20世紀を全10作で書き記そうとしたアフリカン・アメリカンのオーガスト・ウィルソンの劇作理念とその作品がここで論じられる。ピッツバーグ・サイクルと呼ばれるサイクル劇の分析により、ウィルソンが様々な社会的・文化的葛藤や問題を超越した時限での劇作を行おうとしていたことを浮き彫りにする。さらにそれは、芸術とは何かという大きな問題に挑戦した作家の姿をも描き出してゆくだろう。その結果、古典古代から脈々と流れ続けている芸術文化の系譜に、アメリカ演劇を確かに位置づけるきっかけとなる点も伺える。さらに、オーガスト・ウィルソンの劇作理念も無意識にはあるが、文化帝国主義と密接に結びついている点も明らかになる。ウィルソンの芸術性を培ったものは、過去から連綿と受け継がれる芸術文化の遺産である。そしてウィルソンはそれらを肯定的に受け止め、黒人芸術運動また文化帝国主義とは決別するための重要な要素として扱った。ただ、彼の劇作理念は、アメリカにおける芸術がかつて持っていたアウラを取り戻すこと、つまり、芸術、言い換えればサイクル劇を中心とした文化形成である。それは、従来の芸術的価値をアメリカ的に書き換えたものであることは言うまでもない。過去の遺産の重要性に気付き、それに対して多大なる敬意を払ってきたウィルソンでさえも、自身の芸術の中で伝統の取り込みとそのアメリカ化をおこなっている点が、分析の結果明らかになる。

初期アメリカ演劇から現在の演劇までを時系列的に、また包括的に検証していった結果、次のことをアメリカ演劇の特徴のひとつとすることができる。そ

それは、伝統の取り込みと、それらのロマン化、普遍化、さらにはアメリカ化という、無意識的に文化帝国主義を促進してしまう側面である。アメリカ演劇はまさにこのような特徴によってその根幹を支えられている。たとえそれが、権力に抵抗するマイノリティの演劇であろうと、このアメリカ演劇の文化帝国主義的側面からは逃れられていないことが明らかとなるだろう。つまり、アメリカ演劇の文学的想像力、また演劇的創造性の中に、文化帝国主義的無意識が取り憑いているのである。アメリカ演劇は、様々な芸術とのネットワークの中に位置づけられながらも、それに影響を与えた過去の偉大なる芸術文化を反復し、アメリカ化し、理想的現実を作り上げ続けてゆく。アメリカの劇作家たちは、その文学的、演劇的想像力を通して、その芸術において一貫して無意識的にではあるが文化帝国主義を促進してきたのである。

Summary

About 250 years have passed since the Declaration of Independence. During the period, so many social and cultural ideologies and philosophies have been sophisticated and continued to influence upon American culture. Likewise, American drama has been also affected by such cultural and social conditions. Furthermore, the trend of literary critique evidently shows us that taking cultural and social conditions into consideration, many critics tend to regard American drama as the mirror of each temporality. However, there seem to be few studies that attempt to discover one of the characteristics of American drama as a whole. Therefore, this doctoral thesis attempts to find out one of the characteristics of American drama, through the chronological analysis of American drama from the early years of the republic all the way up to the present day.

The first chapter explores James Nelson Barker's *The Indian Princess* (1808) and Robert Montgomery Bird's *The Gladiator* (1831), in which two well-known characters in the American entertainment industry: Pocahontas and Spartacus were dramatized for the first time. Through the analysis of the manner of representation of these two characters, the issue of how the young republic established their personal and national identity through drama will be discussed. Adopting the Genesis and romanticizing America enabled some playwrights to represent America as a metaphysical divine nation. However, remarkable rationalization of science, historiography, and geology, which was based on the Enlightenment, ironically revealed its absence. Nonetheless, many stories that depict the encounter between primitiveness and civilization, adoration for primitiveness, and also the worship from primitiveness have been still produced. The reason of this phenomenon is that America is compelled to rely on fictionality derived from the literary imagination in order to preserve the basis of American identity.

The second chapter describes Thornton Wilder, who is thought to be the

same level as the father of American drama Eugene O'Neil, and his *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). From meta-critical point of view, the manner of justification of American imperialism will be discussed. Although Wilder placed America within the great historical context, he attempted to universalize some motives as American originals. Consequently, we will discover that such a mechanism of universalization has something in common with theatrics. Furthermore, we will find out that representing America as a metaphysical divine nation is deeply connected to the expansion of American Imperialism. Additionally, our analysis reveals the inevitable conflict about peace that has resulted from contemporary American hegemony.

In the third chapter, we shift our focus on a work written in the time when some playwrights could explore the notion of the self more freely than ever before. Through the analysis of *The Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), one of the most distinguished American icons Tennessee Williams, his artistry mainly based on Neoclassicism, and his manner of self-representation will be discussed here. Although his manner of self-representation is so exclusive, egoistic, and narcissistic that some would feel utterly disgusted, such exclusiveness ironically encourages the current entertainment industry to highly flourish in contemporary America. His self-representation can be enabled with the vast amount of social, cultural, and artistic legacies. However, those who live in America tend to forget the existence of the great legacies and consume a forged Williams as American icon.

The fourth chapter discusses another prominent American playwright Sam Shepard, who has always explored himself in his art and one of his plays *Simpatico* (1995). At the current time in which grand narratives have already collapsed, what course will American identity take? It is this profound issue that Shepard has ever grappled with in his drama. His literary imagination largely associated with modern technologies reveal how to establish and pursue postmodern identity. His exploration indicates a

highly postmodern reality: he cannot depict their true selves but create their ideal selves. Even though Shepard notices that he can never be free from a huge influence of the past, his exploration paradoxically results in the drifting self in postmodern America. The influential past, so to speak, has become just another motive to explore one of the characteristics of contemporary America, namely, postmodernism.

The last chapter describes a struggling playwright in postmodern America who eagerly longed for restructuring social and cultural formation through the creation of art. Through the analysis of August Wilson, one of the most prominent African American playwrights, his Pittsburgh Cycle, and his theatrical creativity, we discover that his manner of playwriting unveils his lifelong concern: what is art? Subsequently, his artistry helps us place American drama within the network of art, inherited from classical antiquity. The purpose of his art is to restore the aura that has vanished away from the traditional art. In other words, he attempted to reconstruct American culture with his Pittsburgh cycle as the central factor. However, this indicates that even Wilson, who had the most sincere attitude toward American culture, utilized the potential power of traditional art to establish Americanness. It can be reasonably said that he unconsciously Americanized the traditional art in creating his own art.

As a consequence of the chronological analysis of American drama from the early years of the republic all the way up until the present day, we can surely define one of the characteristics of American drama. It is cultural imperialistic dynamics that support the basis of American drama, whether playwrights are conscious or unconscious of this phenomenon. Needless to say, it is characterized by adoption, romanticization, and Americanization of the cultural and historical legacies.

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Introduction

What is the essential function of drama? Some great predecessors have ever tried to figure it out, as an ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C.) enthusiastically contemplated the definition of tragedy. Once ancient Greek and Roman drama used to be performed as religious rituals in order to enlighten their citizens. Through performances, they could acknowledge the structure of the society and gain the skills to live their lives within a community. To put it differently, with the worship of the gods, ancient Greek and Roman drama was deeply connected to religions in order to unite citizens. Likewise, William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616) thought that the purpose of drama is to “hold the mirror up to nature,” which is often quoted in various occasions. (We are also supposed to come across a similar phrase in the last chapter.) Since then, drama is said to reflect the reality peculiar to each temporality.

Then, what is American drama as a whole? There seems to be no one who has grappled with this difficult issue. Although America, which is now the only superpower in the world, has a tremendous influence on the rest of the world, it is still merely a young republic. Nonetheless, in about 250 years since the Declaration of Independence, various philosophies and ideologies have shaped and sophisticated, with great deals of problems like gender and sexuality coming to the surface. Some have still great influences on its culture, but others have disappeared all too soon. Literature, of course including drama, tends to be influenced by such cultural conditions. For example, from the 1980s to '90s, when America desperately suffered from AIDS, various queer activists rushed to problematize AIDS in their literary works, which were generally called queer theater or AIDS theater. Nonetheless, we rarely hear of a frenzy of Minority Theater these days. On top of that, literary critique also tends to depend on cultural and social circumstances. When Sigmund Freud's view of the unconscious or

postmodernism took the world by storm, many critics fanatically adopted such notions in their literary critiques. Still, as a rule of thumb, we all surely know that such trends change with the times.

At first glance, there seems to be no consistent characteristic of American drama. However, we are supposed to be able to figure it out by the chronological analysis of American drama from the early years of the republic all the way up to the present day. Hence, in the following chapters, we will discuss some of the most distinguished American playwrights, their theatrical creativity, artistry, and literary imagination.

In the first chapter, through the analysis of the representations of well-known characters, Pocahontas and ancient Roman gladiators, the process of establishing their personal and national identity will be discussed, which contributes to the answer to the problematic question: why has America ever continued to dramatize the contrast between primitiveness and civilization in the American entertainment industry, as we witness in some films like James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009)?

The second chapter describes Thornton Wilder's drama and his peculiar manner of representation. What will be brought into light from meta-critical point of view are some phases of imperialistic America, the manner of its justification, its disconnection from historical realities, and universalization mainly oriented by imperialistic America. Furthermore, our analysis will reveal the inevitable conflict about peace that has resulted from contemporary American hegemony.

In the third chapter, we shift our focus on a work written in the time when some playwrights could explore the notion of the self more freely than ever before. One of the most distinguished American icons Tennessee Williams, his artistry, and his manner of self-representation will be discussed here. We will discover an artistic influence upon his manner of self-representation, which is so exclusive, egoistic, and narcissistic that some would feel utterly disgusted. Ironically, however, such exclusiveness

encourages the current American entertainment industry to highly flourish.

Again in the fourth chapter, we will discuss another prominent playwright Sam Shepard, who has always explored himself in his art. At the current time in which grand narratives have already collapsed, what course will American identity take? It is this profound issue that Shepard has ever grappled with in his drama. His literary imagination largely associated with modern technologies will reveal how to establish and pursue postmodern identity.

The last chapter describes a struggling playwright in postmodern America who eagerly longed for restructuring social and cultural formation through the creation of art. August Wilson, one of the most prominent African American playwrights, his Pittsburgh Cycle, and his theatrical creativity are to be discussed. His manner of playwriting unveils his lifelong concern: what is art? Subsequently, his artistry will help us place American drama within the network of art, inherited from classical antiquity.

By the chronological analysis on American drama from the early years of the republic all the way up to the present day, we will surely discover one of the characteristics of American drama.

Longing for the Sight Unseen:

The Symbolic Landscape of America Theatrically Reclaimed with the Literary Imagination

Introduction

We now frequently come across lots of stories featuring the ancient Roman gladiators and the well-known Native American girl Pocahontas, which sets forth the fact that they are repeatedly and rather amply utilized in the American entertainment industry. Dramatizing memoirs entitled *The General Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624), were written by John Smith (1580–1631). A seventeenth century British adventurer, James Nelson Barker (1784–1858), the first to feature Pocahontas in a story, composed *The Indian Princess* (1808). Additionally, fully fascinated by the Third Servile War (73–71BC), also called the War of Spartacus, Robert Montgomery Bird (1806–1854) wrote *The Gladiator* (1831). Due to these two plays, Pocahontas and the ancient Roman gladiators' popularity spread out into the American culture.

With her popularity rising in the American entertainment industry and even in its greater culture, Pocahontas has been incessantly embroiled in the various vortexes, because the peculiarity in the way of characterizing Pocahontas has gradually and also paradoxically come to be conspicuous by being presented before people. From the late sixteenth century—the beginning of the colonial history of the United States—all the way up until the middle of the twentieth century, Native Americans were often described as primitive, savage tribes. In contrast, Pocahontas in *The Indian Princess* and also other versions of her whom we are well familiar with in various media have usually been produced and characterized as either innocent or philanthropic. The two contradictory images of Native American were derived from certain Western-centered perspectives. The later, however, seems to have been exaggerated to indulge ordinary Americans' preference

for the glorification of their western sublimity. In the Red Power Movement of the late 1960s, Pocahontas was employed for representing those who blindly pandered to white people, which consequently spread her negative impression amid all the political controversies. However, interestingly enough, although entangled in political matters all the time, she continues to be characterized with purity and innocence.

Interpretation of *The Gladiator* has ever influenced by social and also political trends in the United States. Given that its theme: “authoritarians versus just a lone gladiator” reminds Americans of the term emancipation, since its premiere *The Gladiator* has been interpreted as allegories reflecting various social and political controversies. This reliably alludes to Americans’ dissatisfaction with life and the desire for a whole new image of American citizens, that is, a new American identity.

In this chapter, focusing on *The Indian Princess* to begin with, the issue of Pocahontas’ representation, mentioned above, is examined, which will lead us to a comprehension of the indispensable prerequisite for the American identity, namely, the relationship between the creation of a symbolic landscape of America and literary imagination. Subsequently, confirming that *The Gladiator* treats a symbolic landscape in a different manner, though concerning the same issue of “pursuit of identity” as *The Indian Princess*, a contradiction inevitably tagging along with the American identity will be unveiled.

Playwrights’ Functions

Playwrights in the early nineteenth century were rather more like workmen who used to attach much greater importance to business and take public opinion, social conditions and actors’ preferences into account to build up their works, than artists enthusiastically pursuing their literary ideals. Plays in those days were more culturally and socially woven than those of today. To put it differently, their manner of playwriting was

invariably carried away by the intentions of theatre owners, audience's response, and also the star system, which distinguishes American show business. Therefore, they were no less than highly sophisticated mouthpieces for citizens who expressed patrons' political correctness or even actors' masculine ideals based on the patriarchal society. Bird's *The Gladiator*, for example, won the competition an originally Shakespearean actor Edwin Forrest (1806–1872) had held to seek brand-new drama in which he could express his masculinity much better. Barker, without exception, gave a higher priority to business and made his works agreeable to the public, as Jeffrey H. Richards notes, "he also explicitly acknowledges women in the audience as the only hope his play has of continuing on stage" (172). Whether or not it was just an ideal, playwrights then, as it were, created an imaginary world that would not otherwise exist in real life to satisfy the public's intellectual curiosity.

In figuring out the public opinion that Barker perceived and embodied in his drama, it is quite useful to grasp the fact that *The Indian Princess* was written in a time when memories of the American Revolutionary War were still quite fresh. The results of the American victory not only brought about political independence from the Old World, namely, the Kingdom of Great Britain. It also urged new American citizens in the nineteenth century to be apart from Britishness, not actually but rather ideally. Robert M. S. McDonald analyzes the desire they had in their mindset as follows:

Citizens came to view themselves as consumers, not only of political ideas and manufactured goods but also of identity itself. Unlike their forebears, for whom faith, social standing, and vocation existed largely as functions of birth, nineteenth-century Americans enjoyed an unprecedented opportunity to define their own selves. Increasingly, they viewed the power to choose less as a luxury and more as a right. For the dynamics of power within the United States,

the consequences were profound. (McDonald 12)

Adopting his analysis, it can be reasonably said that citizens in those days were eager to pursue the whole-new American identity certainly emerging in America with the will to shake off the social and political values of the Old World (old-fashioned Christian ethics or an identity suppressed in a hierarchical society, etc).

Independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain, however, raised another matter: citizens of the New World could never get back to Britishness and claim the cultural and social background from it in pursuing and building up Americanness. In brief, as compensation for their victory and independence, they were forced ever to lose the root of their identity, that is, a formative experience or a symbolic landscape that are firmly related to archetypes derived from the collective unconscious. The loss aroused the public's intellectual curiosity for the origin of their identity, and Barker was susceptible to their curiosity. When dramatizing *The Indian Princess*, he was formidable to adopt ideas from Smith's *The General Historie*, because this motive must have touched the audience's heartstrings. They pleasurably accepted it as the American origin; it tells the story of how, after arriving in Virginia, the very first colony of North America, Smith helps Native Americans, promises prosperousness, and is worshipped as a living god by them. In this play, Smith and his subordinates never suffer from nostalgia for Green Erin (an eulogistic name of Ireland), but are just intoxicated with the promised development of North America. It confronts the audience with the fact that they can never come around again to the Old World, but for all that, it alters their loss into a hope for their new identity. Barker's dramaturgy of describing their departure from Green Erin is to urge his audience to be apart from Europe and to generate the desire for a symbolic landscape of America.

Creation of the Symbolic Landscape of America

The representation of the Native American in the Western point of view is constantly being disputed, and so is the portrayal in *The Indian Princess*. Deliberating over the phenomenon that Europeans used to undoubtedly assume themselves to be chosen people, Jeffrey D. Mason explicates their view of Native American:

Sixteenth-and seventeenth-century European thinkers had grappled with the phenomenon of the Indian, some suggesting that Indians were not descended from Adam at all, and others arguing that they were drastic degenerations of human race; the fundamental question was whether or not they had souls, an issue that would affect the way in which the explorers dealt with them—or, rather, with how the explorers justified their dealing. [...] Although most of the colonists were Puritans, Separatist, and Quakers, who were accustomed to managing significant differences between themselves and others, they found the natives to be completely alien in virtually every way. If the settlers were God's elect, the Indians were surely a fallen race to whom the Lord had sent His favorite emissaries. (Mason 28-29)

He also points out that citizens in the early colonial history of the United States inherited this sort of Native American's impressions from Europe (29), which, as one of malicious outcomes of the Enlightenment, aggravated Western superiority and led to the Indian Removal Act that Andrew Jackson had signed into law in 1830.

Only written in Smith's *The General Historie*, Pocahontas's history was already distorted by Western-centered perspectives. Barker undoubtedly adopted her altered image for his drama. In *The Indian Princess*, members of a tribe who intensely oppose the settlers are described as savages. This plainly proves the reflection of the Western-centered

perspectives. Pocahontas and her tribe, however, are not only characterized to reveal Western superiority. In contemplating the encounter and in comparison of Western civilization with a primitive society, it is momentous to be conscious of its plot: a Native American girl fascinating a British man with her innocence, from which Barker's inclination toward romanticism¹ spontaneously become clear. A notion of liberating the human nature oppressed by dogmatism was present in romanticism, which had a great influence on western culture between the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century and put special emphasis on untamed nature and primitiveness. Before the late eighteenth century, people largely led rigid customary lives, restrained by social taboos based on Christian doctrines and the long-inherited hierarchical society. To be fascinated by and experience primitiveness was once thought to degenerate civilized people. Under such a situation, much of the public could not pursue their own identity. Meanwhile, as with Adam and Eve in Genesis, the fact that Christianity involves some sort of primitiveness in itself elucidates the paradox: although there exists primitiveness in the Bible, no one can ever be allowed to experience it. Christianity had vehemently kept it away from the public for centuries; nevertheless romanticism undermined its long-established authority.

The admiration for the primitive innocence Native Americans represent indicates that Americans in those days started to enjoy brand-new, different culture from the conventional one. Geographic conditions of the North American Continent, like the grandeur of nature and also Native Americans, stimulated it much more. Likewise, Barker describes Virginia, the place of *The Indian Princess*, as "wild, and picturesque" (*The Indian Princess* 118). However, as flamingoes that do not inhabit North America appear on the stage for some reason, he seems to exaggerate it deliberately as a colorful painting. Furthermore, Native Americans often compare themselves to plants and animals in their

conversation, which emphasizes coexistence with nature or the humanity based on romanticism.

Pocahontas' characterization, which is largely based on Western perspectives, also made Americans start to enjoy the new culture. As Eugene H. Jones states that those living in the colonial history of the United States discovered a Native American woman no less to be a "perfect dusky eve" (41), settlers were not a little fascinated by Native American women in the Christian context, which verifies that the geographic conditions of the North American Continent brought about adoration for primitiveness once seen as a taboo even though it exists in the Bible. Indeed, depiction of Native American women in *The Indian Princess* is strongly influenced by the Bible, which once fundamentally presided over Western culture and art. Walter, one of the characters in *The Indian Princess*, actually compares a Native American woman to Eve. Pocahontas, who cries her heart out even when her tribe takes a bird's life out, also does not mind sacrificing her own life to save others, even though they are total strangers. Being far removed from conventional savage representation, she is granted an affectionate personality. What is especially important is that Pocahontas has been a suitable medium to project the adoration of the civilized world for primitiveness.

Through scrutiny of his depicting nature and Pocahontas, it can be deduced that Barker presented a symbolic landscape of America, that is, the origin of an identity that the audience was eager to obtain, successfully embellishing the North American Continent with primitive and rather divine beauty which the Garden of Eden written of in Genesis has. His playwriting is no less than practice of the literary imagination: by writing *The Indian Princess*, he replicated primitiveness in the Bible, methodically transformed it into the symbolic landscape of America, and made the audience think over the construction of their identity from the ground up. In short, romanticism and geographic characteristics, woven up by the literary

imagination, made it possible to be emancipated from dogmatic Christianity and establish their new identity.

Such a fusion of the cultural trend, physical factors, and the literary imagination must have accelerated the mythology of the Promised Land, or North America. Native Americans worship Smith as follows:

Nantaquas: Warriors, listen to my words; listen, may father, while
your son tells the deeds of the brave white man. I saw him when
300 of our fiercest chiefs formed the war-ring around him. But he
defied their arms; he held lightning in his hand. Whenever his arm
fell, there sunk a warrior: as the tall tree falls, blasted and riven,
to the earth, when the angry Spirit darts his fires through the
forest. I thought him a God: my feet grew to the ground; I could not
move! (*The Indian Princess* 132)

While transforming North America into the God-given land through the literary imagination, Barker described Smith as a “God” of first shaping the American national identity, satisfying the intellectual curiosity of the public for the symbolic landscape of America and the origin of their identity, and successfully pacing his country in the metaphysical lineage. Smith ceremonially celebrates the development of empire:

Smith: Joy to ye, gentle lovers; joy to all; / A goodly circle, and a fair.
Methinks / Wild Nature smooths space her savage frown, /
Moulding her features to a social smile. / Now flies my hope-wing'd
fancy o'er the gulf / That lies between us and the aftertime, / When
this fine portion of the globe shall teem / With civiliz'd society;
when arts, / And industry, and elegance shall reign, / As the shrill
war-cry of the savage man / Yields to jocund shepherd's roundelay.
/ Oh, enviable country! Thus disjoin'd / Free old licentious Europe!

may'st thou rise, / Free from those bonds which fraud and
superstition / In barbarous ages have enchain'd *her* with; / Bidding
the antique world with wonder view / A great, yet virtuous empire
in the west! (*The Indian Princess* 164-165)

As he regards independence from Europe as their departure for a sublime world, *The Indian Princess* makes Americans feel that they surely have the origin of their own identity without a European background.

As discussed so far, primitiveness in Christianity, which once dominated people's way of thinking, was embodied in Pocahontas and the grandeur of nature in *The Indian Princess*, and could compensate settlers or the audience for their rootlessness. As a matter of fact, however, they had to suffer from the absence of such a sublime America in the face of progressivism. Remarkable rationalization of science, historiography, and geology, which was based on the Enlightenment, ironically revealed its absence. Under Manifest Destiny and the Indian Removal Act that the Jackson regime promoted, East America, surrounded with nature, was physically destroyed. America must have obsessed with a dilemma of its identity, since there never existed any Native American who would blindly accept their superiority and worship them like Pocahontas in the story does. Furthermore, they could never see the symbolic landscape in their nation.

Provided that the symbolic landscape is merely an ideal illusion, America has to keep on rewriting it infinitely. This is the exact reason why representation of Pocahontas and nature has never been changed at all, with the crucial issues intensely argued. Through the literary imagination of rewriting the subliminal world in the Bible into the symbolic landscape of America, the fact that their genuine origin of identity and the symbolic landscape never exist can be obliterated eternally.

Focal Point of the Story

Once the absence of the symbolic landscape is revealed, American

national identity might fleetingly disintegrate. Therefore, it ought to be the perdurable object of pursuit. However, admitting its absence beforehand, Robert Montgomery Bird tackled this issue. *The Gladiator* tells on the pursuit of American identity in a quite different manner from *The Indian Princess*, which attempts to create the symbolic landscape onstage.

The interpretations of *The Gladiator* so far have focused mainly on three points: England versus America; the elite class versus the working class; and slavery versus Jackson's administration. The audience in those days regarded the ancient Roma as England and Spartacus as America, and deepened their awareness of cultural independence and patriotism (Reed 154). Likewise, they, most of whom were labors from Philadelphia, saw a national hero Andrew Jackson in Spartacus (Reed 153-155). Regarding the former elitist administration as questionable, and reforming political systems known as Jacksonian democracy, he was acknowledged, so to speak, as a hero for the working class. The former two interpretations share a core issue. Similar to American drama right after the Revolutionary War, *The Gladiator* was thought to tell on the pursuit and creation of their own identity. In consequence, Edwin Forest, who played Spartacus, was widely known as an actor who embodied an American hero with physical and mental toughness and a unifying force, while Bird was praised for his patriotic writing of the ideal hero.

The Gladiator is also thought to metaphorically represent antagonism between slavery and Jackson's administration that implemented thoroughgoing ethnic cleansing (Quinn 230). It talks about a desperate gladiator (he is no more than a slave in the Colosseum) against absolute power. Like Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, slave rebellions were intensified especially in the eighteenth century. Although, indeed, Bird himself was against slavery in America, he did not directly refer to it—just because he was afraid of being poisoned by writing it. (Miller 71, 72) Therefore, as Tice C. Miller notes, "From our perspective today, it seems

that the play's rhetoric closely resembles that of the abolitionists'. At the time, however, the public failed to find a relationship" (Miller 72), the audience were not perceptive to allegorically grasp slavery from its narrative. It seems quite reasonable, for this interpretation is rather retroactive in that critics designedly apply certain issues of the times to *The Gladiator*. In the same way, issues, such as the Soviet Union versus the U.S. in the Cold War era and heterosexuality versus homosexuality, have been temporally formulated, all of which is largely based on social and cultural traits. Issues shared by the audience and what they reflect on Spartacus can be altered along with the needs of the times. It is quite apprehensible for them to react schematically and semi-unconsciously to its heroic narrative and terms, such as freedom, slavery, a tyrant, and rebellion. In either case, each interpretation, to greater or lesser degrees, concerns individual and national identity. Thereby, it can be inductively reasoned that focusing on emancipation, which is no more than an element of unfolding the story, is a distinctive characteristic of America. In short, the act of pursuing emancipation itself can ironically be the American identity.

Nostalgia for the Homeland Lost in Reverie

The Gladiator begins with one of the gladiators, Phasarius, plotting a rebellion against the Roman Empire. Then Spartacus, enslaved by a Capan Lanista (a master of gladiators), appears onstage to tragically meet his wife and child also captured in Rome, and talks with her:

Senona: O, dear my husband, / Thought I ne'er thought to have the joy
to meet you / Again, in the dark world], I scarce feel joy— / I think,
my heart is bust.

Spartacus: Come, be better cheer:— / Art thou not now amid the
gorgeous piles / Of the potential and the far-famed Rome?

Senona: But Oh, the hills of our own native land! / The brooks and

forests—

Spartacus: Ah! No more, no more: / Think of them not.—

Senoan: Where we fed sheep, and laughed / To think there could be
sorrow in the world; / The Bright, clear rivers, even that washed
the walls / Of our burned cottage—

Spartacus: No more, no more, no more. / Are there not hills and brooks
in Italy, / Fairer than ours? Content you, girl. (*The Gladiator* 183)

As he loses all hope for returning to Thracia, their birthplace full of nature, *The Gladiator* is filled with pain and sorrow of losing his homeland from the very beginning. While, in *The Indian Princess*, Barker created a formative experience and the symbolic landscape to establish American's own identity and made the audience share it, Bird propelled his drama by exposing the fact that there is no symbolic landscape.

Spartacus strengthens his determination to plunge into battle as a gladiator, so that he liberates his family from Rome. However, in a Colosseum he is forced to confront a foe: his long-lost brother Phasarius, which makes the tragic side stand out further. Still, his line: "Well, I am here, / Among these beasts of Rome, a spectacle" (*The Gladiator* 192) is quite insightful, in that he regards gladiator games as spectacles. Fighting as a gladiator in those days, unlike slaves whom we well know as those only suppressed and exploited, was a certain occupation². Not only captives and criminals but also civilians and even aristocrats became gladiators, and they had gladiator schools in Rome, because they were highly honored by nations. One of his brethren Crixus makes it clear:

Crixus: Ay. Each of us / Have won some reputation.

Spartacus: Reputation! / Call you this reputation? / This is the
bulldog's reputation: / He and the gladiator only need / The voice o'
the master, to set on to mischief.— / Love you your master?

Crixus: no.

Spartacus: Or of your own wishes / Go ye to perish?

Crixus: No; but being slave, / We care not much for life; and think it
better / To die upon the arena, than the cross. (*The Gladiator* 190)

Their conversation is not the result of Bird's imagination. Although some gladiators indeed died in their combat, the purpose of gladiator games was originally to flaunt not only their martial aptitude but also the financial power of promoters. Helped by editors, fights were staged mostly for entertainment. Hence Crixus thinks that he could make use of them to attain his fame. But it is just a title arbitrarily bestowed upon him by authoritarians reigning over civilians, and can be attained by, as it were, accomplishing an already defined role on an already arranged stage. In such a dogmatic world with everything previously fixed, identity politics will never work.

Walter J. Meserve discovers Bird's works to have been written with a touch of romanticism, which has a strong belief and interest in the importance of nature and primitiveness (Meserve 298). Given romanticism originated from revolt against aristocratic society and dogmatism, the rebellion in *The Gladiator* also reflects the cultural tension between them. Liberation attempted by Spartacus can be called true identity politics. Its narrative about his rebellion against dogmatic Rome and nostalgia for his homeland (the imaginary landscape) is allegorically read as the story that talks about an American who pursues his own identity. Exclaiming, "we did not fight for conquest, / But for passport to our several homes" (*The Gladiator* 204), Spartacus, who has known Phasarius's schemes, is again filled with the hope of retuning to Thracia. For Americans to empathize with Spartacus is their performative identity, no less.

Unstable Hero

Spartacus calls the Roman Empire Tartaros, the deep abyss far beneath Hades once used to confine sinners and dangers for gods. Such a prison-like Roman Empire brings out Americanness in those days through the term neoclassicism, which attains greater importance retrospectively to ancient Greek and Rome in establishing virtue, esthetics, and mentality. Remember that neoclassicism relates to dogmatism, in that it tries to confine all human activities within certain ideal forms. David Irwin analyzes the relationship between America and classical antiquity:

Neoclassicism was a very pervasive style. [...] The civilization of ancient Greece and Rome was viewed as a state of perfection, a Golden Age. Different generations took it as a model, to be emulated in contemporary thought, literature and art. (Irwin 4-5)

Neoclassicism was also the preferred style of one of the youngest republics. After gaining independence from Britain in 1783, the United States of America set about building new headquarters for its legislatures. These buildings were symbols of the new era, and republican ideals, going back to ancient Rome [...]. (Irwin 121)

He also points out that Americas in those days used to model their political philosophy upon classical antiquity (Irwin 356). It clarifies the young nation's dogmatic characteristic that the elites, especially politicians, would rather adopt pre-existing ideology than create a whole new system. Furthermore, as Peter P. Reed indicates a greater influence of neoclassicism upon American culture, it filtered into the public³:

Although many neoclassical forms primarily circulated by elite modes of education, they also became common currency, inevitably

diluting and transforming in multiple transmissions. Appealing in architecture, literature, visual arts, and more, neoclassical and especially neo-Roman forms loom large in the American collective imagination. At the same time, such forms seem to inhabit the public consciousness covertly. (Reed 161)

As seen above, with its dogmatic phase gradually dwindling away to a certain extent, citizens began to be inclined to the pre-existing ideals based on neoclassicism.

Such a cultural background presents a contradiction. Neoclassicism would not essentially associate with Romanticism, for the two notions are thought to stand in opposition. However, romanticism that legitimates individual self-awareness and neoclassicism that confines every possibility in an ideal form coexisted ideologically and also physically in America in those days. Likewise, those living there pursued authentic American identity based on romanticism on the one hand and attempted to idealize their nation through neoclassicism on the other hand. With neoclassical ideals of politics, culture, and even urban structure existing, people enjoyed the opportunity to pursue their identity based on romanticism. More interestingly, *The Gladiator* surely reflects such a cultural confusion. It is not merely an epic of a perfect hero but of a man with several emotions, for Spartacus is so ambiguous to act so humanely as an epic hero and also brutally as a tyrant of ancient Rome. The audience, nonetheless, identified themselves with Spartacus himself. His saying is profound in finding out its reason:

Spartacus: This day, this hour, this minutes, fight and die. / Why should we struggle longer, in this dream / Of life, which is a mocking lunacy, with ever sunshine playing far ahead, / But thunderbolts about us? Fight I say. / There is no Orcus blacker

than the hell / That life breeds in the heart. (*The Gladiator*
238-239)

Only dreaming of the homeland lost in reverie, he keeps on fighting in the nightmarish world, which is no different from the fact that America, drifting apart from Europe, has always struggled to construct its own identity. In a sense, this mentality itself is supposed to be American identity. But, fabricating a belief in the symbolic landscape ahead of the rebellion, Bird covered up its ironical truth—there never existed such a landscape. Simultaneously, his literary imagination in *The Gladiator* successfully engraved its belief deep in the audience's mind.

Conclusion

The Gladiator reflects America's cultural and social situations in which they paradoxically pursued both romantic and neoclassical ideals. Unlike *The Indian Princess*, it exposes the absence of America's imaginary landscape; still, concocting a belief that they will obtain their identity in a bright future, it conceals the paradox and the irony of pursuing American identity and lets the audience dream of the sight unseen.

Furthermore, Spartacus's tragic death purifies the desire for American identity much better. Although, after bereaved of all his family and brethren, the rebellion ends up with his death, his defeat should never let the audience resign the pursuit. Spartacus's last words on his death still head for his homeland and the future:

Spartacus: Well—never heed the tempest— / There are green valleys
in our mountains yet.— / Set forth the sails.—We'll be in Thrace
anon.—[Dies] (*The Gladiator* 241)

His nostalgia for his homeland never fades away. If he succeeded in the

rebellion and went back to Thracia, the audience's pursuit would be finished at that moment and they would be overwhelmed with the crucial difference between the reality and the story. However, his death still with hope keeps the imaginary landscape of America ever fresh and prevents it from being disintegrated. In other words, Bird, utilizing the hero's death, which would seldom occur in American entertainment, tempted his audience into his literary imagination and bestowed everlasting hope on them to keep the harsh reality secret. The hero Spartacus, as it were, is still alive in American culture to take citizens along to a bright future, namely, a whole-new America.

As we have seen so far, Barker created the imaginary landscape of America that would be directly connected with American identity in *The Indian Princess*, while Bird, though exposing the truth that there would never exist such a thing, let the audience dream of it in *The Gladiator*. They both embodied cultural trends and geographical, physical and social conditions in their works by the use of literary imagination. As can be seen even in much of American literature today, the desire for identity and literary creation of it are in eternal repetition. There is no other way for Americans who are tormented with many obstacles to pursue their identity in the real world to ideally search for it within the realm of literature. Drifting about between reality and reverie, America is eternally deep in thought of itself.

The Letter to the American Unconscious: Thornton Wilder's Theatrical Creativity

Introduction

With his three Pulitzer Prize works such as a novel called *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1928) and two plays titled *Our Town* (1938) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), respectively, Thornton Wilder (1897–1975) became one of the most prominent writers in the early twentieth century. Even though his works were written during the heyday of Realism, whose cultural foundation was predominantly shaped by Eugene O’Neil (1888–1953), another prominent dramatist at the same period, Wilder’s drama, his literary imagination and dramaturgy, which are profoundly based on his extensive knowledge of history, archeology, religion studies, and also the classics, are quite different from other literature works of those days in that actuality never helps to interpret his drama.

Most conventional interpretations of Wilder’s drama to date have been related to the realm of metaphysics; some see the perpetual present in them, and others discover the power to sublimate the specific into the general. In brief, the interpretations tried to discover a hypothetical state of universality transcending all individual humanities in his drama. Meanwhile, few critiques have been attempted to see his plays as the medium of representing American cultural and political aspects. One of the reasons is that we can easily identify several contexts pursuing the realm of metaphysics in his third work titled *The Bridge*. Furthermore, Wilder says: “It is through the theater’s power to raise the exhibited individual action into the realm of idea and type and universal that it is able to evoke our belief,” (“Preface to Three Plays” 685) illustrates that he firmly believed in the power of the theater to sublimate the specific into the general. Consequently, such backgrounds had the audience and critics standardize the image of Wilder’s drama and the manner of its consumption, which has

unfortunately narrowed the potential for alternative interpretations.

However, we can surely discover not only representation of universality in Wilder's drama but also representations of American cultural and political life. This assertion is supported by Wilder's own words:

Wilder: [...] Our imagination is oppressed by memory, by the knowledge of a hundred thousand details of history, by the tangle of private stories which rose to surface with the help of psychoanalysis. [...] Sometimes I am close to despair when I think about my characters as being surrounded by the shadows of other similar figures from political and literary history so that I as well as my public more often make comparisons instead of having a new experience. (Jungk 63)

As can be seen above, Wilder already regarded his literature as something that was shaped by history, culture, and social phenomena. Accordingly, conventional interpretations through a metaphysical point of view represent one of the American characteristics, i.e., interpretations of Wilder's drama are precisely cultural representations.

Wilder seemingly explores American politics through *The Skin of Our Teeth*, in which three serious global crisis, including a world war, are conveyed. To survey how the audience adopts its narrative would lead us to a profound comprehension of imperialistic America, which is still spreading its cultural and economic control over the rest of the world culturally.

As a playwright who lived during the peak of the twentieth century, a century in which America's political, cultural, and economic dominance was evidence, what did Wilder put into his works? By focusing on one of Wilder's experimental plays, *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (1931) and *The Skin of Our Teeth*, this chapter analyses the cultural aspects of the relationship between his drama and the audience and the relationship

between his cultural representations and imperialistic America. Furthermore, in terms of Wilder's theatrical creativity, the process of establishing imperialistic America and its possibility to change, both of which are represented in drama rather than in theatre⁴, will be also discussed.

Representations of the American Unconscious

In order to acknowledge the relationship between his drama and the audience and his strategic use of both, we have to examine *The Happy Journey*, a play where Wilder depicted a so-called typical American family for the first time. The manner of representation and theatricalities used in this play had a great influence on his following masterpieces, such as *Out Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

The Happy Journey can be seen as a farce to describe just another trip of the Kirbys. Without any dramatic event at all, the family decide to visit their married daughter, which rather emphasizes the family's simple but pastoral personalities. However, the reason why Wilder represents such a typical American family and its consumption are significant in terms of shifting from a conventional metaphysical interpretation of the play to an American cultural and political interpretation. David Castronovo's argument reveals the consumption of Wilder's drama as a cultural phenomenon. He discusses *The Happy Journey* as follows:

But *The Journey* is stripped bare of fantastic elements and literary allusions. Confined to the mundane from start to finish, Wilder's people dignify the ordinary because they discover permanent truths about their world. [...] Ma Kirby matter-of-fact delivers Wilder's themes in lines that are as plain as paint, but somehow never flat. Truisms and clichés are freshly polished and come out as forgotten realization. Ma lives by an easily articulated code of decency, friendliness, love, and

pride. [...] She corrects children, only to be warm and loving with them; she respects conventions, but knows her own mind; she likes order and discipline, but knows that life is too complex to live by strict codes. [...] Wilder has transferred this theme, first encountered in *The Bridge*, [...]. (74-75)

Castronovo argues that Wilder has pursued the depiction of universal virtues through the Kirbys, who sometimes struggle with the complexity of life. In other words, the pursuit of universal virtues consequently leads to solve the complexity of life. What is quite interesting here is that he unconsciously replaces the magnificent context far beyond America with Americanness and identifies the Kirbys as the universal and ideal American family with all the virtues.

However, such an American perception, regardless of logical inconsistency, represents the dynamics of American imperialism. The fact that Ma Kirby plays a central role in *The Happy Journey* is significant in this regard. Amy Kaplan juxtaposes the home as a woman's sphere with the empire as man's sphere and adds:

The representation of the home as an empire exists in tension with the notion of woman's sphere as a constructed space, because it is in the nature of empires to extend their rule over new domains while fortifying their borders against external invasion and internal insurrection. If, on the one hand, domesticity drew strict boundaries between the private home and the public world of men, on the other, it became the engine of national expansion, the site from which the nation reaches beyond itself through the emanation of woman's moral influence. (29)

She insists that America has expanded into the rest of the world, as women have obediently fulfilled their inward obligation. We can easily witness Mrs.

Kirby in *The Happy Journey*, as being part of the same rhetoric. As a devout Christian, a good wife and wise mother, she ethically maintains good order in her family and romanticizes George Washington as a national hero as if he had nothing to do with the chaotic situation at the time regarding the development of national foundation. Likewise, many critics, including Castronovo, romanticized America as a divine nation from which universality could be generated. An imperial unconscious of America lies beneath such romanticization.

In the early twentieth century, America was suffering from some devastating issues, such as the Russian Revolution, the aftermath of the Great Depression, and the rise of the Nazis. As discussed in the previous chapter, the nation longed for the social stability, even though such an ideal can only be seen in literature. Therefore, Wilder seemingly eased society's anxiety by romanticizing an American family, despite understanding the realities of the society's challenges at the time: he universalized, idealized and sublimated an American family to stabilize their swaying country, which otherwise would have collapsed from within.

Wilder's Dramaturgy

Thus, this means audience's imagination can be easily manipulated through the theater. In order to argue this point, we have to focus on Wilder's dramaturgy mobilized in *The Happy Journey*, which significantly influenced his subsequent works. Surveying his drama in terms of the following methodology: how to utilize the theater to convey narratives, surely leads us to a profound comprehension of the issue.

The Happy Journey is performed on an empty stage with scenes tacitly switched one after another. Christopher J. Wheatley argues the use of a bare stage represents something that is quite common for all of us:

Wilder's bare stage is not something he knows better than we do,

because it is everyone's world; moreover, what he knows can only be understood communally. Fundamentally, Wilder thinks that each person's world shares important repetitions that an audience recognizes. (85)

Wilder calls for us to imagine and supplement narratives through the performance and lines; the audience can easily accomplish this. It is because most of us are fully accustomed to the convention of theater: actuality and reality are not always required in the theater. Wilder recognizes it as a matter of course, providing four fundamental conditions of theater as follows:

- I. The theater is an art which reposes upon the work of many collaborators;
- II. It is addressed to the group-mind;
- III. It is based upon a pretense and its very nature calls out a multiplication of pretenses;
- IV. Its action takes place in a perpetual present time. ("Some Thoughts on Playwriting" 694)

Focusing on the third point, Marvin Carlson explains, "The third condition, that theatre lives by conventions, exposes the search for realistic illusion as an error, since conventions encourage the necessary "collaborative activity of the spectators' imagination" and raise the action from the specific to the general." (406) His argument reveals an interesting aspect of Wilder's literary heritage. He has further reinforced the relationship between drama and the audience in the same way as his predecessors, including those whom we have discussed in the previous chapter. Likewise, Wilder constructed stories to fulfill audience's cultural appetite. It seems that he has had a conventional literary ideal under which intersubjectivity between

writers and readers should doubtlessly work. However, one crucial difference is that public taste and their imagination, or rather the audience themselves, have become merely an element for Wilder to complete his drama. For Wilder, the conventional order between playwrights and their audience has already been reversed.

His egoistic dramaturgy is based on a quite fundamental condition of theater, even though no one could have realized it. Such an awakening actually allowed a new era of drama to flourish, in which, apart from promoting nationalism, and social stability, some playwrights could adequately explore themselves in their own works. (Two of these playwrights are discussed in the following chapters.)

When analyzing Wilder's dramaturgy of manipulating audience's imagination, Stage Manager, a unique character in *The Happy Journey*, is worth studying. As his name literally indicates, he directs *The Happy Journey* from outside the drama, explaining the situation of the Kirbys in order for the play to be comprehensible. With his assistance, the audience is urged to fully employ their imagination. In this sense, it can be reasonably said that the audience's imagination can be efficiently structured in the context of a theater. Remember the imperial unconscious of America, as discussed in the previous section. Wilder, acclimated the audience to such a political notion, by tactically deploying Stage Manager in *The Happy Journey*. His strategy is so casual that his real intentions go unnoticed.

However, Wilder does not always smoothly lead his audience to the end of the story. *The Happy Journey* conceals the real purpose of the Kirbys' journey until the very end: while they seemingly decided to undertake just another trip, they, in fact, decided to take the journey to visit their married daughter who was grieving over the stillbirth of her baby. The seemingly closed narrative suddenly transforms into an open narrative. Subsequently, the audience's faith in the story is utterly disintegrated. In brief, Wilder exposes how an audience's imagination is constructed and deconstructed by

the arbitrariness of his play.

Creation of the American Hero

Wilder experimentally cultivated his dramaturgy in *The Happy Journey*, with which he could thoroughly manipulate the audience any way he wanted. He further sophisticated his dramaturgy in *The Skin of our Teeth*. The year before its premiere, the Pacific War began; this war was considered to be a menace to imperialistic America. It can be easily presumed that such a crucial crisis had two potential outcomes: to either reinforce American imperialism that had established its hegemony over other nations or to destroy it. In *The Skin*, fully utilizing his dramaturgy, Wilder metaphorically deploys this historical phenomenon.

In all three acts, the end of the world is portrayed. However, every time the Antrobus family confronts the end of the world, they miraculously survive. *The Skin* is often compared with those of Bertolt Brecht's *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (1939) because of the similarities in the theatrics and plot. Although we can identify a certain amount of similarities, *The Skin* is developed in the context of a different theoretical framework. Under the distancing effect coined by Brecht, the audience can no longer be absorbed in a story with their critical attitudes aroused. In brief, the audience and the story are intentionally separated from each other. Meanwhile, there is no tension between them in *The Skin*. With Wilder's sophisticated dramaturgy, the audience can simply possess a literary illusion of consuming the plot as it supposes: they are unconsciously captured in its closed narrative.

Concerning a closed narrative, the intertextuality in *The Skin* is quite insightful. Wilder borrows quite a few motives from Greek and Roman mythology, Genesis and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). *The Skin* also includes some exact same lines from *The Happy Journey*. On this point, Donald Harberman argues :

Myth is well fitted to Wilder's idea of the theater, for it is peculiarly equipped to convey a generalized statement about human beings who seem themselves to be individualized. The writer need not bother to provide the characters of myth with details irrelevant to his idea in order to make the characters real. They are already in possession of a reality resulting from their experience throughout time. [...] If, as Wilder believes, the anecdote matters only insofar as it illustrates that idea, then myth is the real anecdote because its general outlines are already known in some way to the audience. A myth is available to everyone. (Haberman 147)

His analysis of intertextuality clearly refers to Julia Kristeva's coinage that the meaning of a text is produced as it mediates through and is filtered by codes from other texts. We can notice one crucial paradox here. Although readers are privileged under this notion, in the case where other texts are literary canons that everyone knows their stories, writers can easily manipulate readers. In brief, narratives of some texts are closed with the use of intertextuality.

Wilder also depicts a typical American family in *The Skin*. As we have previously discussed, he sublimated and universalized an American family in *The Happy Journey*, such a family plays a central role in *Our Town* for which he won his second Pulitzer Prize. His manner of representing a family is so formulated that the audience can doubtlessly decode its connotation, namely, as the imperial unconscious of America. As with Mrs. Kirby in *The Happy Journey*, Wilder bestows the role of stabilizing the home, one of the foundations of empire, on Mrs. Antrobus. She, as the president of the Excelsior Mother's Club, establishes and preserves order not only of her family but also of all living things from dinosaurs all the way to mice.

Furthermore, by representing Mr. Antrobus as Adam in Genesis, the delegate of the human race and God, Wilder creates an absolute perfect hero and depicts hegemonic America. Haberman analyzes the characteristics of an American hero:

That the American has no sense of tragedy is perhaps a national flaw, but as Wilder has noted, it is just as surely a major source of national energy. The American has created a new kind of hero, distinct from the tragic hero, and this new hero offers a challenge to American writers for the theatre. (Haberman 122)

As Mr. Antrobus miraculously survives the ends of the world, we can observe a sense of optimism in Wilder. What is quite thought provoking here is that Wilder juxtaposes a war with epic catastrophes like the glacial epoch and the Deluge and that he excessively makes imperialistic propaganda in *The Skin*. In act three, making a triumphant return from the battle against Nazi-like enemies, Mr. Antrobus loudly proclaims American mightiness to survive no matter what may come. Likewise, Wilder seems not to care about logical contradictions in establishing American sublimity. Although the Antrobuses have already had own books, everyone admires Mr. Antrobus for inventing the alphabet.

Concerning the Antrobuses in *The Skin*, many critics insist on the wisdom of humanity having ever survived all sorts of devastating crises. As a matter of course, America's narratives should not accommodate mythology and archeology. However, they romanticize Mr. Antrobus as an optimistic American hero within the American context. In other words, doubtlessly consuming propaganda casually scattered throughout *The Skin* romanticizes imperialistic America. After all, repetition of such absorption and romanticization forms the foundation of American imperialism, including cultural imperialism, and helps America to remain considerably

stable.

Significance of a Play Within a Play

What we have discussed so far is one of *The Skin*'s role in establishing the notion of imperialism. Conversely, we have to pay attention to the metatheatricality of *The Skin*. When we consider that *The Skin* is a play within a play and that characters are merely performing a play called *The Skin of Our Teeth*, we can discover a possibility that *The Skin* is subversively problematizing American imperialism. Nonetheless, few critics have interpreted the play in this manner, which suggests that they have unconsciously consumed imperialistic propaganda and have been manipulated by Wilder.

As with *The Happy Journey*, *The Skin* includes the unique Stage Manager character. In accordance with his directions, characters attempt to establish Mr. Antrobus as an American hero. Such a process reminds us of Wilder's manner of manipulating the audience so they romanticize American imperialism. However, a crucial difference is that the play within *The Skin* is crippled by unforeseen disturbances: Miss Sommerset, who plays Sabina in the play within *The Skin*, often interrupts the play, resisting the Stage Manager's directions and skipping some scenes without permission. Her lines as stated below illustrate her uninhibited manner in completing the drama:

Sabina: Just a moment. I have something I wish to say to the audience.—Ladies and gentlemen. I'm not going to play this particular scene tonight. It's just a short scene and we're going to skip it. But I'll tell you what takes place and then we can continue the play from there on. Now in this scene— (*The Skin* 254)

In this respect, it can be hardly said that she could be an ideal actress for a

playwright to complete his drama. Nonetheless, apart from creating a comical atmosphere, her ignoring directions changes the play's closed narrative into an open narrative, which could potentially destroy American imperialism. As we have discussed above, the audience are manipulated to unconsciously establish and universalize American imperialism in their mindset. Furthermore, its process is quite similar to the one of creating Wilder's theater. Her manner of not obeying the directions, however, indicates that American imperialism could be deconstructed from within. Other characters under her influence start to give up their roles and to talk about their real lives. This chaotic situation prevents the play from being completed. Nonetheless, as we have seen earlier, many critics have disregarded such a metatheatricity of *The Skin*. However, does this fact mean that Wilder was unsuccessful in making his audience face the reality of American imperialism?

Conclusion

We have discussed Wilder's works from both theatrical and political points of view. In doing so, we have hopefully grasped that optimistic romanticization established an imperial unconscious of America. In *The Skin*, Wilder problematizes this by allegorically dramatizing how unconsciously people standardize and universalize it, even though his manner is so casual that his real intentions go unnoticed. He might have realized that his dramaturgy of manipulating the audience's imagination really resembled the manner of establishment of American imperialism.

Nevertheless, it is quite understandable that he was not able to openly voice an objection to the government and camouflaged his intentions at a time where many people had comparatively supporting views regarding World War II. Therefore, Wilder employed a unique theatricality in *The Skin* to achieve his genuine purpose. He sees the auditorium as the ocean and has Mrs. Antrobus throw a message into the ocean during the last scene.

Mrs. Antrobus says:

Mrs. Antrobus: [...] I have a letter... I have a message to throw into the ocean. (*Fumbling in her handbag.*)

Where is the plagued thing? Here it is. (*She flings something—invisible to us—far over the heads of the audience to the back of the auditorium.*) It's a bottle. And in the bottle's a letter. And in the letter is written all the things that a woman knows.

It's never been told to any man and it's never told to any woman, and if it finds its destination, a new time will come. We're not what books and plays say we are. We're not what advertisements say we are. We're not in the movies and we're not on the radio. (*The Skin* 260)

Although we are never told what is written in the letter, Wilder obviously warns about American imperialism. It is certain that he has didactically entrusted his audience with the key to subvert American imperialism.

More than a decade has passed since the New Millennium. America now has the first African American President. Remember that the President romanticized America as the divine nation in his inaugural address, and even after winning the Nobel Peace Prize he emphasized America's wars as political requisites for world peace. However, this strongly highlights the paradoxical Pax Americana and its imperialism. Those living in contemporary America have not yet received Wilder's sincere letter.

The Artist on the Moon:

Tennessee Williams' Self-Revelation in *Sweet Bird of Youth*

Introduction

Stirring up their instinctive fear of aging and death, tales of those who desperately long for their eternal youth against the time have ever fascinated not only readers but also many writers, among which is Tennessee Williams (1911–1983). He candidly wrote this concern in his works. For instance, Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), who never feels like meeting with Mitch in the daylight, glosses over her decrepit beauty under the dim light of a lamp. She is lost in a reverie and acts as if she were still young and beautiful enough. This must be an expression of his complex feeling toward aging. Before his debut as a professional dramatist, he lied about his age in contributing a play to a competition, for he thought they would rather make such a fuss over the young. Furthermore, according to Nancy M. Tischler, in his later years, despairing of his decrepit body in the mirror, he thought, “he didn’t see how anyone could love this old man” (13). These phenomena plainly describe his deep attachment to his youth, his fear of death, and also his narcissism.

Due to *Memoirs*, his autobiography published in 1972, his life, which had never been told thus far, was brought to light. His artistic flair of weaving stories with full of lyricism may take people’s breath away, while, at the same time, his bohemian lifestyle and narcissism may utterly disgust them. Such two different aspects of him were embodied in his characters. For example, Blanche, while dreaming like a girl, hides her ugly nature, and Sebastian in *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958) freely enjoys affairs, besides pursuing God’s truth. Interestingly, however, these two plays end up with Blanche sent to a sanatorium with mental derangement, and with Sebastian devoured by cannibals. This indicates that there is potential self-destructiveness inherent in Williams’ manner of self-representation.

Likewise, in *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), which was originally titled *The Enemy: Time*, exploring his crucial concerns, such as time, youth and aging, he again embodies himself in two characters: Chance, who has a very high opinion of his own beauty and Princess, who gets always drunk. They are, as it were, Williams himself of the past and the present. Versatile relations of artistic motives represented in the play metaphorically describe the ones between Williams himself and his playwriting, politics and art, and also narcissism and his drama. Through analyzing these relations, Williams' dramaturgy and rhetoric of his self-representation will be discussed in the following sections.

Dreaming in a Reverie

During Easter holidays, *Sweet Bird of Youth* begins with a conversation between Chance, who calls himself an actor and attempts to achieve fame in the film industry, and a famous actress Princess, who is always drunk not to remember her age and glorious past. Having evidence to prove that she uses drugs, he blackmails her into selecting him and his ex-girlfriend Heavenly for the leading roles in a new film. While a fight over Heavenly between him and her father Boss Finley gets intensified as the story goes on, Princess reclaims her faith as an actress.

As her watch that has ever stopped symbolically indicates, Williams, at first glance, camouflages *Sweet Bird of Youth* as if it were never affected by time. This theatrics is quite insightful in examining one of its themes, time. As if they were still living in the past, Princess, who cannot accept the decline of her beauty and also of her talent for acting, clings to her past glories, and Chance, returning to his hometown after a long time, is never afraid that his acquaintances have already changed. Chance's characterization is deeply connected with such a timeless stage. Before examining this issue, we need to discuss artistry that had a great influence upon Williams' aesthetic sense. Thomas P. Adler points out that Williams'

literary imagination is characterized by the fusion of diverse symbolisms, which range from classical literature and the Bible up to archetypes (156). As he was inspired by the tale of Orpheus and wrote *Orpheus Descending* (1957), Williams frequently borrowed some motives of his drama from Greek and Roman mythology. His words in “The Timeless World of a Play” surely prove his inclination toward them:

Great Sculpture often follows the lines of the human body: yet the repose of great sculpture suddenly transmutes those human lines to something that has an absoluteness, a purity, a beauty, which would not be possible in a living mobile form.

A play may be violent, full of motion: yet it has that special kind of response which allows contemplation and produces the climate in which tragic importance is a possible thing, provided that certain modern conditions are met. (“The Timeless World of a Play” 648)

This indicates that Williams discovered physical attractiveness in spatial art, which a German dramatist, philosopher and also art critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) defined for the first time in *Laocoon: an Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, discussing interpretations of an ancient Greek sculpture *Laocoon and His Sons*. Static works that capture a decisive moment to be expressed, such as sculptures and paintings, are generally recognized as spatial arts, while temporal art refers to literature and music, which generate their meanings in a certain range of time. In this sense, drama falls into temporal art. However, as seen above, Williams was well familiar with the fact that his drama is a form of temporal art, and it vandalizes spatial, momentary beauty. Nonetheless, he was rather fascinated by its beauty regulated by neoclassicism.

Williams characterizes Chance’s appearance in the neoclassical style like an ancient Greek sculpture, for which Princess admires him. Focusing

on his physical attractiveness and beauty, Robert Brey and some critics presume that Chance reflects Adnis, who is a favorite with Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty in Greek myth (Brey 139 - 140), because Princess is also partial toward him. At first glance, Chance, who makes full use of his body as a measure to satisfy his greed to become a movie star, possibly reminds us of Adnis. However, in the light of the fact that *Sweet Bird of Youth* is written under the theme of exploring time, we realize that Williams has strategically developed Chance from another classical motive, namely, Kairos, an ancient Greek god who signifies individual's qualitative time. (Meanwhile, Chronos, another god of time in Greek myth, embodies chronological, sequential, and quantitative time.) It is important for us to comprehend that Kairos's physical characteristics⁵ resemble to Chance's. Additionally, what we have to remember is a Greek word *καῖρός* (kairos) stands for "chance."

Kairos is deeply connected with Williams' artistry. Through the creation of art, he fought against time that causes absolutely unavoidable fading for all things and takes our lives and dignity away:

It is this continual rush of time, so violent that it appears to be screaming, that deprives our actual lives of so much dignity and meaning, and it is, perhaps more than anything else, the *arrest of time* which has taken place in a completed work of art that gives to certain plays their feeling of depth and signification. ("The Timeless World of a Play" 647)

C. W. E Bigsby explains his words in detail:

Williams pictures a society on the turn. Not for nothing was Chekhov his favorite playwright. The southern setting of most of his plays suggests a culture whose part is no longer recoverable, except as

myth, and whose future represents the threat of dissolution. Language has been evacuated of meaning, ironized by time. History has swept on by. Private illusion and public values are shattered by the quickening pace of a modernity that implies the corruption alike of style and morality. Art alone, it seems, has the power to halt, however momentarily, the rush towards extinction. And for Williams, writing was, indeed, a way of freezing time, of abstracting himself from process. It was a defense equally deployed by his characters who are all compulsive fictionalisers. Having run out of time and space they seek to shore up their lives with fragments of the past, invented or recalled, and elaborate fictions which confer on them a significance they could otherwise never aspire to. (Biggsby 2000 41-42)

Williams sees his playwriting as a way to “escape from a world of reality” in which he feels acutely uncomfortable (Forward of *Sweet Bird of Youth* 151). The utterly same notion can be observed in his early works, as Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) goes to the movies every night so that he can lost himself in a reverie. Likewise, in *Sweet Bird of Youth*, boasting of his beauty, Chance blabs out that many elder ladies including Princess have gone around with him so as to forget their own age and fancy they were still young. This passage is nothing but an allegory of the relation between Williams and his playwriting. In a fictitious world of drama, released from the current of time, he could pleasurably indulge in the lyrical creation to design attractive characters sometimes with the beauty based on neoclassicism. His playwriting, as it were, is Kiros-like creation which is never cast away in time. Nevertheless, Williams destroys Chance, who is partly a clue for him to dream. His usual self-destruction occurs again in this play.

Destructive Kairos

Chance attempts to keep momentary images by using several timeless media: pictures he once took to retain Heavenly's young beauty in his memory and a tape recorder to blackmail Princess, among which he is strongly attached to the films. Sensing his decline, he is eager to star in a movie so that he can prevalently spread his own beauty, for he regards starring a movie as a way to magically rejuvenate him. Films are partly timeless media in that they can be recorded, repeated, and reproduced and that they are site-unspecific: if only the equipment is prepared, they can be shown regardless of time and place. In the realm of films, Chance pursues a way of his self-representation to make his beauty immortal and keep it in memories of people.

As we have seen above, Chance is sardonically or rather maliciously represented as the vain man who has deep attachment to his appearance. For example, although he once joined the army only for the reason that he looked nice in a military uniform, he was discharged because of mental disorder associated not with the fear of war but with the fear of his decline:

Chance: [...] And so I ran my comb through my hair one morning and noticed that eight or ten hairs had come out, a warning signal of a future boldness. My hair was still thick. But it would be five years from now, or even three? When the war would be over, that scared me, that speculation. I started to have bad dreams. Nightmares and cold sweats at night, and I had palpitations, and on my leaves I got drunk and woke up in strange places with faces on the next pillow I had never seen before. My eyes had a wild look in them in the mirror. ... I got the idea I wouldn't live through the war,[...]. Imagine a whole lifetime of dreams and ambitions and hopes dissolving away in one instant, being blacked out like some arithmetic problem washed off a blackboard by a wet sponge, just

by some little accident like a bullet, not even aimed at you but just shot off in space, and so I cracked up, my nerves did. I got a medical discharge out of the service and I came home civvies, [...].
(*Sweet Bird of Youth* 181-182)

Likewise, Chance could not win an acting contest in his high school days, because he bungled his lines. However, he never thought that he did not have a talent for playacting. Although he proudly shows off only his outward beauty, he cannot expose his beauty coming from within.

Furthermore, Chance destroys Heavenly's inward and outward beauty. Although he hesitated to have an affaire with her, for he thought that it would sully her innocent beauty, he eventually gave her a sexual transmitted disease, with which she was compelled to have a hysterectomy. Focusing on Chance's picturesque memory that the sparking spray falls on Heavenly, standing on shore, Nancy M. Tischler insists that she reflects the image of Aphrodite (Tischler 108). However, given that she calls herself a zombie after the operation, because she still keeps her outward beauty in spite of her internal impurity, Tischler's analysis needs to be critically revised.

Neoclassical spatial art that Williams has dared to disintegrate is not superficial at all. The reason why its well-balanced beauty still fascinates us is that it represents the collective unconscious including a imaginary landscape and a formative experience that are never affected by the time. In *Sweet Bird of Youth*, nevertheless, neoclassical bodies, which has partly constructed the basis of Williams' artistry in part, is destroyed from within. Moreover, during the last scene, it is indicated that Chance's outward beauty is to be destroyed: hoodlums hired by Boss Finely attempt to assault and castrate him. His attempt to gain the immortal youth and beauty in the realm of movies ephemerally fades away, which is equivalent to the destruction of neoclassical artistry, his narcissistic

self-representation, and also his playwriting, that is, Williams' conventional way to escape from a world of reality. As we hear a clock tickling at the very end of the play, the seemingly timeless stage suddenly becomes an ordinal space that can never avoid the influence of time.

Such destruction observed in this play describes the change of Williams' artistry and his manner of self-representation. While evaluating him as a postmodern dramatist who sincerely depicts a malfunctioned society with "[t]he collapse of values, ideals, relationships, social models, love, coherence, mental stability, hope, fiction" (Bigsby 1984 104), Bigsby comments on this point:

His [Williams'] characters had always been self-conscious actors (sometimes literary as in *Sweet Bird of Youth*, sometimes figuratively, as in *Streetcar*), playing out their own theatricalising imagination as a valid opposition to a world which otherwise seemed so prosaic and unyielding; but with *Outcry* this process became central. [...]

His plays had always borne directly on his life, but with the years the degree of refraction lessened until he began to write more and more directly about himself as blighted young poet or debilitated artist for whom writing was a way of denying his mortality. (Bigsby 2000 65)

Following Bigsby's profound analysis pointing out the relation between Williams and his drama, it can be said that although Williams adequately acknowledged his defeat against time, he rather favorably turned his defeat into his art to express a new self that would never be affected by grand narratives, such as Christianity and neoclassicism by maneuvering the literary imagination.

Destructionist with a Pen

So that he can revise his conventional self-representation, Williams destroys every single relationship in *Sweet Bird of Youth*, including the one between politics and art. Although, as cited before, Adler points out that one of characteristics of Williams' drama is coexistence of versatile notions of art, it is not the case with *Sweet Bird of Youth*: they are supposed to stand in opposition, the most prominent of which is the ideological tension between art movements that is metaphorically verbalized through the conflict between Chance and Boss Finely.

At the beginning of the act two, the stage direction reads that Boss Finely's mansion⁶ was constructed in Victorian Gothic style. Many of churches, cathedrals, and monasteries in the Middle Ages were designed in this style. Artists whose ideals were deep-rooted in Christianity preferred this style and favorably incorporated it in their creation. What we have to elucidate here is that Gothic art is ideologically opposed to neoclassicism flourishing in the late eighteenth century. As its name self-evidently indicates, neoclassicists found their ideals as far back as in ancient Greece and Rome, while gothic artists regarded Christianity as the only absolute and strongly abhorred neoclassicism. Remember Williams characterizes Chance in the neoclassical style. If so, it is quite reasonable to interpret the conflict between Chance and Boss Finely as the cultural conflict between neoclassicism and Gothic. Naturally, both of them are supposed to collapse in the end. (We have already discussed Chance's collapse.)

Bose Finely, resonating with his Gothic mansion, embodies Catholicism. He arrogantly declares that he is one of chosen people manifested by God and attempts to sublimate his domains into his Utopia, which is based on heterosexual and androcentric white man's perspectives (Wilson 83). He also attempts to carry out a cruel measure against African Americans, such as indiscriminate castration in the name of justice. Felicia Hardison Londré discusses that social alienation that Williams' characters

suffer from results from his own sexuality (489). In this regard, Boss Finely's Utopia is ironically a dystopia to exclude homosexuals, namely, Williams himself from society.

Boss Finely also takes advantage of Heavenly's outward beauty as part of his political campaign. In delivering a speech on the significance of castration to protect white women, he comes up with the idea of getting Heavenly to stand at his side:

Heavenly: Papa, you have got an illusion power.

Boss: I have power, which is not an illusion.

Heavenly: Papa, I'm sorry my operation has brought this embarrassment on you, but can you imagine it, papa? I felt worse than embarrassed when I found out that Dr. George Scudder's knife had cut the youth out of my body, made me an old childless woman. Dry, cold, empty, like an old woman. I feel as if I ought to rattle like a dead dried-up vine when the Gulf Wind blows, but, Papa—I won't embarrass you any more. I've made up my mind about something. If you'll let me, accept me, I'm going into a convent.

Boss (*shouting*): You ain't going into no convent. This state is a Protestant region and a daughter in a convent would politically ruin me. [...] You're going to be wearing the stainless white of a virgin, with a Youth for Tom Finley button on one shoulder and a corsage of lilies on the other. You're going to be on the speaker's platform with me, you on one side of me and Tom Junior on the other, to scotch these rumors about your corruption. And you're gonna wear a proud happy smile on your face, you're gonna stare straight out the crowd in the ballroom with pride and joy in your eyes. Lookin' at you, all in white like a virgin, nobody would dare to speak or believe the ugly stories about you. I'm relying a great deal on this campaign to bring in young voters for the crusade I'm leading. I'm all that

stands between the South and the black days of Reconstruction. And you and Tom Junior are going to stand there beside me in the grand crystal ballroom, as shining examples of white Southern youth—in danger. (*Sweet Bird of Youth* 198-199)

Even though Heavenly points out that his power is merely an illusion and appeals her deep grief, he never changes his intention to politically utilize only her beauty, which has much to do with the fact that he sees the Virgin Mary in her. Exposing her in front of the audience as a Christian icon who is never sullied by anything, he attempts to stir up their faith in religion. This means that art and religion are politically eroded. In his literary works, Williams implicitly resists such an erosion and white androcentrism under which otherwise his identity is to be cleared off.

Politics, for a long time, have swallowed art and religion to use them as propaganda. As increasing number of political critiques not only on Williams' drama but also on every literature obviously shows, it seems as if the creation of art became only the basis to discuss politics. Hence, Williams tries to disintegrate the relation between politics and art in *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Heckler, as his name indicates, suddenly disturbs Boss Finely's speech to disclose the hysterectomy he forced Heavenly to have. What we need to focus on here is that his speech is live broadcast. As can be observed in every visual culture, a recorded image sometimes conceals its true nature and transmits only the surface of it. There are cases in which it constructs a sublime image to prevalently spread it to the public. Heckler uses such a property of medium. During live broadcasting in which no one can arbitrarily manipulate information, he discloses Heavenly's internal impurity and Boss Finely's tyranny. His attempt results in the destruction of the relationship between politics and artistic visions. In short, by mobilizing the notion of life now, he reveals the moment of destruction.

Drama, one form of temporal art, must be the most preferable medium

to depict the destruction of existing values, for such a notion is deeply connected with the characteristics of drama. When sensing the current of time with full of motions, we feel the unavoidable power of time to fade everything away. Fully acknowledging the characteristics of drama, Williams describes several moments of destruction. Notions, ideals, and politics are collapsed at multiple levels. While Boss Finely politically utilizes his daughter so that he can fix his ideals in the minds of the audience, Heckler's live intrusion shatters such an ideal establishment and discloses the truth. To sum up, *Sweet Bird of Youth* is the play describing the moment of destruction of rigid notions.

Artist Returning to His Life

Whether it is neoclassical or Christian one, every aesthetic represented in *Sweet Bird of Youth* never functions well, for Williams describes it as only superficial. Under such a situation, Easter works as a quite insightful theatrical motive: during the last act, Princess, who has been robbed of her beauty by time and ever been so beaten to face the reality, suddenly comes to her senses from a reverie. She has been only exploited by Chance for his selfish desire thus far, nevertheless, the other narratives, including the one representing the tension between politics and art that Chance and Boss Finely weaves, fall backward, and her revival as a gifted artist is unexpectedly foregrounded. It is the most important moment in the play. During the premiere of her latest film, shocked at her wrinkled face on the screen, Princess rushed out of the theater. Once upon a time, she was obsessed by an illusion of youth deeply connected with the outward beauty. Therefore, she has ever roamed with Chance to forget her age and lose herself in a reverie which offers her forged youth. Her grief is so deep:

Princess: [...] For years they all told me that it was ridiculous of me to feel that I couldn't go back to the screen or the stage as a

middle-aged woman. They told me I was an artist, not just a star whose career depended on youth. But I knew in my heart that the legend of Alexandra del Lago couldn't be separated from an appearance of youth...

There's no more valuable knowledge than knowing the right time to go. I knew it. I went at the right time to go. RETIRED! Where to? To what? To that dead plant the moon...

There's nowhere else to retire to when you retire from an art because, believe it or not, I really was once an artist. So I retired to the moon, but the atmosphere of the moon doesn't have any oxygen in it. I began to feel breathless, in that withered, withering country, of time coming after time not meant to come after, and so I discovered... Haven't you fixed it yet? (*Sweet Bird of Youth* 171)

In discussing her revival as an actress, the moon, another important motive of Williams' drama, is quite insightful. In *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams connects the moon with an artist. Represented in the play as an imaginary world for artists, Williams regards the moon as a creative world in which he can escape from a world of reality. In *Sweet Bird of Youth*, however, the moon is described as the Underworld for debilitated artists.

Princess lapses into dyspnea so frequently that she needs to carry oxygen cylinders all the time. It can be considered as one of hysterical symptoms caused by her psychological conflict: she cannot face up with her truth nor live on the moon, namely, an imaginary world in which only gifted artists are allowed to reside. Princess doubtlessly mirrors Williams himself, who could not accept a dreadful decline in his youth and artistry. However, when she calls a film critic to advertise Chance, Princess happens to know her latest film got a favorable reception, which cures her dyspnea and triggers her revival. When hearing that she has not lost her acting talent at all, she accepts her debilitated beauty and reclaims her confidence as a

finest actress:

Princess: Talk about a beach- boy I picked up for pleasure, distinction from panic? Now? When the nightmare is over? Involved my name, which is Alexandra Del Lago with the record of a—You’ve just using me. Using me. [...] I came up alone, as always. I climbed back alone up the beanstalk to the ogre’s country where I live, now, alone. Chance, you’ve gone past something you couldn’t afford to go past; you time, your youth, you’ve passed it. It’s all you had, and you’ve had it.

Chance: Who in hell’s talking! Look. (He turns her forcibly to the mirror.) Look in that mirror. What do you see in that mirror?

Princess: I see—Alexandra Del Lago, artist and star! Now it’s your turn, you look and what do you see? (*Sweet Bird of Youth* 233)

A revived artist Princess, who is free from the obsession with her youth, represents an ideal self for Williams. Furthermore, the moon, namely, the Underground for debilitated artists, transforms itself into the world for deeply fulfilled artists, which is represented as the ogre’s country in *Sweet Bird of Youth*.

Such a release from obsessions has much to do with Williams’ literary imagination especially around the 1960s. David Savran argues his drama after the 1960s is characterized by depictions of his inner self as an artist (132). Additionally, it is widely known that he was quite fascinated by paintings. As Terri Smith Ruckel points out, his inclination toward expressing his inner self can be seen in the pictures that he painted in the styles of Expressionism or Fauvism (85-91). Williams envies pictorial aesthetics of painters, especially the ones of Abstract expressionists and Post impressionists:

I have told you the events of my life, and described as best I could, without legal repercussions, the dramatists personae of it.

But life is made up of moment-to-moment occurrences in the nerves and perceptions, and try as you may, you can't commit them to the actualities of your own history.

The work of a fine painter, committed only to vision, abstract and allusive as he pleases, is better able to create for you his moments of intensely perceptive being. Jackson Pollock could paint ecstasy as it could not be written. Van Gogh could capture for you moments of beauty, indescribable as descent into madness.

And those who painted and sculpted the sensuous and the sensual of naked life in its moments of glory made them palpable to you as we can never feel with our fingertips and the erogenous parts of our flesh.
(*Memoirs* 250)

Free from neoclassical aesthetics, Williams developed his literary imagination to depict his inner self in temporal art, which reveals another rhetoric of his self-representation. Remember that he sometimes wrote a play to satisfy his narcissistic self-representation. In *Sweet Bird of Youth*, Princess's sudden revival sweeps off the rest of narratives: these narratives are nothing but ornaments to flourish her revival.

Given that Williams embodies himself in Princess, who reclaims her confidence as an artist, it can be reasonably said that even political narratives merely function to satisfy his narcissistic self-representation. He attempts to keep his image of a noble artist immortal in the realm of his drama by describing a splendid resurrection in a corrupted world. Thereby, Williams represents the obsession with outward beauty, forged artistry, and art swallowed up by politics as squalid in the play. In spite of aging and absence of artistic talents, if only he further disgraces the world in his drama, positional relationship between him and the world would never

change. This is exactly the rhetoric of his self-representation.

Conclusion

The moon for gifted artists is not created only for Williams himself to satisfy his own narcissism. A story behind the performance of *Sweet Bird of Youth* in London is quite insightful. On the occasion of London performance, an actress Diana Barrymore (1921-1960) was eager to play Princess. However, the performance was eventually cancelled, for Williams never approved her acting the role. Shortly afterwards, she suddenly passed away. (She reportedly died from an overdose of alcohol and sleeping pills.) Although Williams mourned her death, he egoistically said that her death was caused for lack of a special talent for acting (*Memoirs* 177). It seems that he never allowed mediocrities who could not play his drama perfectly to live in his imaginary world. The moon (his drama) is a highly exclusive ogre's country in which only those with a special talent can reside. This story reflects his realistic gaze at Broadway and Hollywood.

Conversely, it can be also said that Williams, who has exclusively and egoistically pursued and stuck to his literary ideals, is embodied into Boss Finely, for whom he has described with a deep hatred. In a sense, this expresses his artistic unconscious. However, crucial difference between them is that talented actors and actresses support Williams' artistic ideals. He also admires them:

Williams, an avid movie fan, must have been fascinated by the aging process in the various appearances of actresses through the years in different of his plays: Vivien Leigh, who had been Scarlett in *Gone with the Wind* became Blanche in the film version of *Streetcar* and then Mrs. Stone in *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*. Each role showed her older and more skilled.

[...] The colorful anecdotes and insights in the essay reveal clearly

why great actresses loved to work with Williams. He understood them, and the roles he wrote for them allowed a full display of their brilliance. Williams had always had enormous admiration for such powerful actress; he loved to watch them perform in his plays and occasionally dedicated his plays to one of them, in hopes of tempting her to take part he designed especially for her. (Tischler 105-106)

Williams was fascinated by mature actresses and had a great respect for them, and those who were allowed to live in Williams' moon went down in history. Williams' art, as it were, makes the names of excellent actors and actresses immortal, and they will hand down his drama eternally. In a world where Williams has never lived, actors and actresses whom he has never met will continue to revive the American icon Tennessee Williams and his artistry. Then, his scheme against time will be successfully accomplished.

The Detective Searching for the Life Now: Those Living in Postmodern America Represented in *Simpatico*

Introduction

Sam Shepard (1943–) is another prominent figure in the American theater, who has continually explored the relationship between the past and the life now. In *Buried Child* (1978), which ends with a lurid scene of digging up the body of an illegitimate child that has been buried, the inevitable overlap between the past and the present is eloquently expressed. In addition, Shepard also has a deep attachment to the American myth, the process of which has long shaped Americanness. In *True West* (1980), with the end of the frontier, namely, the collapse of the American myth, violently revealed, two brothers struggle to create an alternative myth. The past, with its overwhelming influence on the present, bestows a creative imagination upon many artists, and through the American myth, those who live America still dream of American ideals and successes, although the myth has long been shattered. It is these issues that Shepard has always problematized in his drama. The past and the American myth represented in his drama are fundamental motives for exploring not only the American ideology but also those individuals who live in contemporary America.

Shepard exposes a sluggish world in which the American myth malfunctions: envisaging the postmodern period that came after the 1970s, when numerous contradictions, ironies, and complexities became conspicuous in American society, he subverts not only the authorized American sense of values and its social awareness but also the legitimate recognition of self. Through such a literary approach Shepard explores and defines himself in postmodern America.

Every time America finds itself in difficult circumstances, Shepard tends to express his thoughts by writing a play. Immediately after the Gulf War broke out, he wrote *States of Shock* (1991), and *The God of Hell* (2004)

was written in partly as a response to the September 11 attacks and their aftermath. Confronted with a period of social upheaval caused by the flourishing of information and communications technology in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, he wrote *Simpatico* (1995), in which the conflict between two men, each of whom led extremely different lives after they committed an act of fraud together by changing race horses, and their outcome are dramatized. Employing various themes, such as the past, the American myth, information technology (IT), and capitalism, in this play, Shepard contemplates the lives of those who are inhabiting an America that has entered a new cultural phase following the 1990s. We will discuss this topic in the following sections by focusing on both his theatrical expressions and various social, and cultural phenomena.

Web of Stories

Ryle Carter and Vincent T. Webb, or Vinnie, are the main characters in *Simpatico*. The enormous wealth they gained from the fraud they committed in their younger days has aided Carter in becoming a racing commissioner in the West, and he has seized so much power that he could easily erase someone from the world with a single phone call. Meanwhile, Vinnie has—nobody knows why—led a shabby life in a cheap, ground-floor apartment on the outskirts of Cucamonga ever since the crime. On Halloween, Vinnie, a self-styled detective, abruptly calls Carter, ending a long silence between them, and blackmails him with pictures of the crime to take over his position. While their conflict between the two men thrillingly intensifies, as the play goes on, Simms, who was once deceived by them, sees through Vinnie's scheme and looks on their psycho game sardonically.

Before discussing how those living their lives now in America are represented in *Simpatico*, we must first clarify Shepard's dramaturgy and the relationship between his drama and the audience. Comparing Shepard's approach with the conventional form of drama, Stephen Bottoms

characterizes Shepard's dramaturgy as follows:

For while elements of crisis, schism, and conflict have always been the staple elements of dramatic action, they have classically been presented within structured narratives. As audience emphasizes with the protagonists, looking forward to the ultimate resolution of their struggle while following a through-line of cause-and-effect action, in which each moment is seen to be directly relevant to the past and future of the play and of the characters' lives. [...] Shepard, by contrast, is an experimentalist whose plays largely ignore such conventions. While they may make use of narrative plots, these are sketchy and sources as if to ironize the idea of plot itself. Likewise, characters tend to be opaque and erratic: their motivations are shrouded in confusion, and such goals as they have almost invariably remain unfulfilled. The plays end not in resolution but with abrupt anticlimaxes, unexplained images, or the suggestion of tensions continuing indefinitely into the future. They do not restore equilibrium, because in adopting an open-ended, exploratory approach to the writing, Shepard has placed himself in a state of disequilibrium and refuse to depict an arbitrary recovery of balance simply for the sake of convention. (3-4)

According to Bottom's analysis, Shepard can reasonably be described as a typical postmodernist who places a great value on complexity, ambiguity, and paradox. We can also identify such features in *Sympatico*. For instance, although Vinnie's ambition of usurping Carter's position is candidly presented, quite a few causes, processes and results are not specified in the play: we never learn, for example, why Vinnie needs to entrap Carter and why he leads such a shabby life despite all his wealth from their fraudulent act. In other words, the essential pieces related to the main narrative are all missing. Furthermore, although Vinnie successfully ruins Carter, he, for

some reason, returns to his shabby life, thus meeting another aspect of Shepard's dramaturgy, that is, open-endedness.

It is difficult to interpret Shepard's drama as it is. However, such difficulty in interpreting his work is quite suggestive when analyzing the relationship between his drama and the audience. This relationship is discussed by Bottoms as well:

However, far from impending the production of meaning, the plays' roughness tends to open up a proliferation of possible ways in which the individual viewer can read meaning into them. In being unable "to synthesize it all", audience members are required to fill in the gaps for themselves, to draw their own conclusions. As Shepard himself has pithily put it: "ideas emerge from plays—not the other way around." This is not to say, of course, that Shepard never feeds "ideas" into his writing: indeed, his work is packed with concerns and allusions which reward derailed examination. Yet crucially, these ideas are rarely, if ever, worked through schematically implications which gradually coalesce into a kind of poetic density. (Bottoms 2-3)

Bottoms' analysis of Shepard's plays suggests that the audience themselves must supplement abstractness in his work using their own imaginations to construct the narrative, which means that an interpretation will never converge around one focal point. In other words, the audience's imagination, which is constructed by social, and cultural conditions, sneaks into the seams between the narratives, and every time it affects the interpretation, changing into an indeterminate form.

Simpatico too does not end within the play itself. Therefore, we must carefully search for clues to its interpretation also in rather vast contexts that spread out into American society and culture, and then connect them with each other. Thus, the title *Simpatico*, which in Italian means congenial,

like-minded and easy to get along with, arbitrarily requires such an intertextual viewpoint from the very beginning. Therefore, Carter's lines given below are quite insightful in arguing the intertextuality of Shepard's drama:

Carter: When you apply for a State Racing License what is the main prerequisite? Fingerprints! Right? Fingerprints, Vinnie! You've got no concept of how things are hooked up these days. How international files are kept. Information stored. Microchips. Fiber optics. Floppy discs. It's an art from now, Vinnie! An industry! (*Simpatico* 12)

His words candidly reflects a contemporary world where IT is used to store the information in databases and connect people with each other, reflecting one of the most prominent features of the 1990s. Saying, "You've got to pay close attention to this. Try to grasp all the details," (11) and "Make up a story," (31) Vinnie engages in building a network of information to involve others in his psycho game, using an array of maneuvers. What Vinnie, the self-styled detective, does in the play is starkly juxtaposed with what the audience does in interpreting Shepard's drama: as Vinnie's name Vincent T. Webb analogically suggests, the audience must construct a web of social and cultural contexts. In short, Shepard experimentally represents the relationship between his drama and the audience in *Simpatico*, fully utilizing a literary imagination derived from aspects of contemporary culture. However, such a literary imagination alone does not define Shepard as a typical postmodernist. Whenever we encounter a literary work, even if it lacks a concrete narrative, we tend to create a story according our desire, which are thoroughly affected by social and cultural conditions. Shepard's postmodernity is fully foregrounded in that he reveals that postmodern components such as individuality and coincidence are always and already

manipulated and standardized by a vast amount of information.

Two Essential Motives in *Simpatico*

In the network that swirls around *Simpatico*, there are two important motives: Kentucky Derby and Halloween, which characterize confronting political ideologies in postmodern America.

Cecilia, whom Vinnie has deceived into spending time with him, does not have any nostalgia at all for the America of the past. However, when Carter visits her place to ask her a favor of her, she unexpectedly decides to help him, lured in by his delusion: "I could get you box seats at the Derby, Cecilia. Free access to the Clubhouse. The Paddock. Mint juleps. The Inner Circle. You could meet the Governor!" (*Simpatico* 84). The Derby is represented in the play as having a certain influence on Americans. "The Kentucky Derby," Leslie A. Wide notes, "proves a useful synecdochic device, linking the race to a complex of wilder significations of American identity. It evokes notions of native tradition, agrarian wholesomeness, and national pride" (266). Praised as the king of sports, the Kentucky Derby has long been a symbol of American capitalism that should be cherished by those living in the Wild West to survive their harsh lives since the time of the Westward movement. The race, which is shaped in part by the American myth of success has always bestowed upon these people the hope of becoming rich. Moreover, the special attachment to thoroughbred racehorses and financial investment in these animals is a type of cultural representation of Americanness, the American myth, and its ideologies. Americanness, especially the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) mentality, has been deeply connected to thoroughbred racing, in that most of these horses are bred only to surpass the successes of their predecessors for the sake of a victory, and the weak ones are weeded out. In short, the Kentucky Derby and thoroughbred horses represent a sense of belonging to America and strengthen the notion of Americanness and its related myth.

Meanwhile, another motive in *Simpatico*, that of Halloween, reflects not a religious aspect but a political aspect of postmodern America, which, in contrast to the Kentucky Derby, is rather subversive. The origin of the holiday is found in Celtic folklore and the Festival of the Dead. The celebration once had a close connection with the rites and celebrations held during harvest season. Historian Nicholas Rogers, however, points out that the custom of Halloween has uniquely changed in America and he adds that:

In the late 1960s and 1970s, as cities came to be seen as unsafe, inhospitable places of unresolved racial and social tensions, the character of Halloween changed, for children and their parents, and also for young adults. It no longer became possible to think of Halloween as having a stable set of rituals and festive expectations. Halloween after 1970 increasingly registered the pulse and identity politics of different Americas: suburban against inner-city, mainstream against ethnic, evangelical against permissive, heterosexual against gay. (102)

Deprived of its religious aspects as it came under the influence of the process of modernization in America, Halloween became a part of political campaigns related to minority identity politics and started functioning as a crucial factor in undermining male supremacy, white supremacy, and heterosexism, which had up until then been authorized in American culture and society.

Commercialization of Americanness

As discussed above, the Kentucky Derby and Halloween in American culture represent opposite political perspectives: one elevates Americanness and its myth and the other subverts the authority of Americanness. Furthermore, analyzed from the viewpoint of commercialization, these two

prominent motives in *Simpatico* reveal a peculiar phase of Americanization, which inevitably has some impact on those who live in America today.

As can be seen from the fact that Shepard collects some motives from IT and employs them ingeniously in the play, Americanization and the IT industry became linked in the 1990s more than ever before. The overwhelming prosperity brought about by the rise of technology and the IT field restored American capitalism with the end of the Cold War and the beginning of globalization. This was a clear sign of Americanization, which is sometimes termed as “McDonalization”⁷, a process in which everything becomes predictable and standardized, with various discourses also becoming Americanized. The literary critic Terry Eagleton discusses American society and culture in the period of the 1990s:

If culture began to be more crucial to capitalism in the 1960s, it had become well-nigh indistinguishable from it by the 1990s. This, indeed, is part of what we mean by postmodernism. In a world of film-actor Presidents, erotically alluring commodities, political spectacles and a multi-billion-dollar culture industry, culture, economic production, political dominance and ideological propaganda seems to have merged into a single featureless whole. Culture had always been about signs and representations; but now we had a whole society which performed permanently before the looking-glass, weaving everything it did into one vast mega-text, fashioning at every moment a ghostly mirror-image of its world which doubled it at every point. It was known as computerization. (48-49)

Postmodern America, as it were, is a huge database defined by standardization and predictability, which transforms not only merchandises but also ideologies and politics into ghostly American products that are constantly mass-produced in this system. Even

counter-discourses are commercialized through such American dynamics.

Turning back to the commercialization of the Kentucky Derby and Halloween, Shepard, as previously stated, explores the collapse of the American myth in his drama. In an interview with Caron Rosen, he comments, "Myth in its truest has been demolished. It doesn't exist anymore. All we have is fantasies about it. Or ideas that don't speak to our inner self at all, they just speak to some lame notions about the past. But they don't connect with anything. We've lost touch with the essence of myth..." (36) Although in *Simpatico* presents the American myth swirling around the Derby, it is treated as already being nearly collapsed. Simms, who has changed his name after being tricked by Vinnie and Carter, and who now runs a bloodstock office in Kentucky, charges those in power with spoiling the sublime horse-racing industry, saying:

Simms: Bushwhackers and Backstabbers. Snakes. Whole damn industry's full a' snake now. Thoroughbred's gonna be an obsolete animal before you know it. They'll find some way to turn the whole damn thing into a Pac-Man Game. You wait and see. (*Simpatico* 54)

He describes financially influential people including Carter, as a Pac-Man that devours everything in front of itself, namely, as the incarnation of Americanization. As mentioned above, Carter uses the Derby as an enticement to win over Cecilia. Moreover, the fraud of changing horses implies that even thoroughbreds, the image of the American myth, are replaceable. Thus, thoroughbreds and the Derby are also represented as if they have already been swallowed up by the massive dynamics of postmodern America. They can no longer embody the American myth.

As Simms' words clearly depict, "Music, news, politics—pornography personified," (*Simpatico* 58), identity politics, which are related to Halloween, have become only a transient show-like phenomenon that is far

from having subversive characteristics. “Halloween could represent the economic muscle of the United States as much as its cultural imperialism,” (142) argues Rogers. Halloween, excessively commercialized in multiple ways, began representing Americanization soon after the 1990s, when America became the world’s only superpower. A gigantic Pac-Man, namely, Americanization, has thoroughly consumed and commercialized every single ideology and politics, and in turn produced ghostly void discourses.

Exchangeable Identity

In writing *Simpatico*, Shepard has fully utilized a cultural background, in which identity issues related to postmodern America, that is, the issues of those living their lives now in America come up to the surface. Many critics see a sarcastic irony in the title *Simpatico*, in that the plot of the play involves the collapse of identity through Carter and Vinnie’s meaningless psycho game. Among these critics, C.W.E. Bigsby’s perspective is highly suggestive in connecting the commercialization in postmodern American society with identity issues:

In *Simpatico* (1995) two men, co-conspirators in a criminal enterprise, see their identities placed under increasing pressure. For Shepard, the American male is cut off from a past in which the national story gave him a central position and adrift in a present in which he unsure of his role. Violence, once sanctioned by frontier realities no less than frontier myths, is now turned against those who represent a seductive but constraining love or against the self which duty fractures. In a world in a state of flux everything is temporary. And that is no less true of *Simpatico* than of his earlier works. [...] The irony of *Simpatico* is that the title word can be applied to no one in the play, except possibly Simms. The characters inhabit a world without character, see human relationships, Mamet-like, as simple agencies. The past is only the site

of events that have destabilized them. The present is temporary: the future unimaginable. Even identity can no longer be sustained. Causalities are broken. They are performers no longer secure in their roles or certain of their lines. In that sense they reflect one of Sam Shepard's fundamental concerns. (193-195)

Bigsby insists that the identities of those living in postmodern American have begun to be shaken. Moreover, he metaphorically discovers here, as seen in his use of the terms, "performers" and "roles," that, following the collapse of the rigid roles, namely, the conventional self-awareness shaped by American sense of values, ideologies, and myth, those living their lives now have become performers roaming through postmodern America in search of their preferred identities.

Such identities no longer help them confirm a stable place in society, as they are merely exchangeable products that commercialized ideologies and discourses have brought about, and they inevitably drift away from reality. This social situation is clearly foregrounded in a conversation between Simms and Vinnie:

Simms: How many lives do you think a man can live, Mr Webb? How many lives within this *one*?

Vinnie: I'm not sure I understand you, sir.

Simms: Well, say for instance, you could put the past to death and start over. Right now. You look like you might be a candidate for that.

Vinnie: That's not possible. I mean— (*Simpatico* 61)

Although Simms once possessed vast power over the industry as a racing commissioner, he lost all his wealth, fame and family because of the fraud, in which Carter and Vinnie made up a false story, based on pictures that they took secretly. However, after that Simms changed his name into Ryan

Ames and returned to the horseracing. In short, he is a person who has easily achieved what Vinnie schemes to achieve: to live an entirely different life.

During the 1990s, mobile phone subscriptions sharply increased, which serve a prominent purpose in Shepard's play. In *Simpatico*, mobile phones, which the characters use at several instances, are described as a cause of panic. Bottoms interprets the blank space between two stage settings on a split stage as cyberspace (255). Actually, in the London production 1995, optical fibers were crisscrossed on the walls of the theater in London, and every time Carter used his mobile phone, the cables flashed on and off. Furthermore, a mobile phone is metaphorically juxtaposed with the multifaceted postmodern identity in *Simpatico*. Shepard has again named a character after an aspect of contemporary culture. The name Simms resembles the name for a subscriber identity module card, or a SIM card, which explains how Simms has been able to revive himself. A SIM card is the removable integrated circuit card, or smart card that functions on a mobile phone to identify the subscriber's phone number. Because it can be transferred between different mobile devices, a SIM card enables the subscriber to use various mobile devices, which means that devices are interchangeable. Although, it is supposedly the core of mobile technology, what attracts public attention currently is not a SIM card but an interchangeable device with a fancy design—a mobile phone.

Under the enormous influences of postmodernism and postcolonialism, individual small narratives have shaped various identities, reflecting crucial differences from the conventional identities that were shaped by grand narratives. These identities have been mainly explored in minority theater including queer and feminism theater, and are favorably represented with a type of utopian expressions. However, they have not yet achieved their goal and they continued to invent and search for ideal identities, which is natural, given that the realm of literature has been

excessively capitalized and commercialized without exception. As discussed thus far, such identities are nothing more than ghostly American commercial products in postmodern America. Therefore, it can be reasonably said that like the relationship between a SIM card and an interchangeable device, those living in postmodern America only consume interchangeable identities. With all of the narratives suspended in *Simpatico*, it is difficult to determine a single aspect of the relations between cause and effect. The characters' aimless struggle on the stage and Shepard's dramaturgy itself seem to reflect postmodernity in contemporary America.

Cruel Sarcasm in Postmodern America

As it has gathered momentum, postmodernity in America has accelerated the mass-production of various kinds of identities, which those living their lives now uncritically consume instead of conventional identities. It appears as if they are trying on the latest fashions one after another. This peculiar phenomenon is tellingly represented in a conversation between Carter and Vinnie below:

Carter: Look, Vinnie. I gave you all kinds of options. I mean—

Vinnie: Options!

Carter: I did. At one point in time you could have—

Vinnie: The option to disappear, for instance. The option to perpetually change my name and address. The option to live like a ghost.

Carter: Look—You're here, you're alive. You're not in jail. So far anyway.

Vinnie: Three pluses in your hook.

Carter: Better than dead, Vinnie. Better than being locked away.

Vinnie: (*suddenly quiet sincerity*) I am dead. I am locked away.
(*Simpatico* 15-16)

With the possibility of exploring diverse identities along with an upsurge in postmodern theory, those who live in contemporary America pursue these identities as representation of their real selves. However, although at a glance they may appear to be freely enjoying themselves, they are obsessed with the notion of pursuing striving for their own identities.

As discussed before, in *Simpatico*, Shepard unveils those living their lives now in America as blindly taking such vulnerable identities as their identity, without realizing that some of them are only transient fashionable trends commercialized by Americanization. Vinnie's words relentlessly expose the cruel reality of postmodern identities:

Vinnie: I tried, Carter. It wasn't from a lack of trying. I've changed my name a dozen tomes and nothing came of it. I've moved all over the place. I was in Texas for a while, remember? Arizona. Nothing came from an of it. I just got—further and further—removed. (*Simpatico* 33)

The impossibility of becoming a totally different person he asserts proves that the pursuit of a new individual identity is not a radical change in postmodern America.

Vinnie succeeds in bringing Carter to the point of collapse so that he cannot return to his previous prestigious life, which can be interpreted as the possibility of the disintegration of Americanization. However, Vinnie, while struggling to escape from its prodigious influence upon whole things, unfortunately ends up in realizing his unchanging life now. Moreover, although he says, "I'm a detective! That's my job. I'm paid to get to the bottom of things" (*Simpatico* 62), he happens to know the truth: "It's an endless chain. Never get to the bottom of it" (*Simpatico* 104).

Comparing Shepard's drama to the work of Samuel Beckett, Bottoms

observes an irony:

Yet where Beckett's work tends to suggest the stark austerity of a sensibility on the edge of self-erasure and silence, Shepard's plays seem characterized by a very American brashness, a yearning for freedom, for wild self-release. Such desires almost invariably prove unrealizable: indeed, the specific inability of America to deliver on its promises of liberty and self-fulfillment is one which Shepard's work exposes in myriad different ways. (5)

This also indicates a cruel sarcasm concerning subversive or rather utopian ideals produced by counter cultures that pursue radical changes. Saying, "Let me off the hook, Carter!" (*Simpatico* 16)

Conclusion

Simpatico does not only end by exposing such a dystopian truth. Even after recognizing the cruel sarcasm swirling around postmodern identities, Vinnie becomes eager to detect a further truth lying beneath contemporary America:

Vinnie: Surveillance. I'm working on a new case. It's a great feeling to embark on a case. It fills me with purpose. I'm my own man again. I move wherever I want to. I answer to no one. I cut through backyards and they never even know I'm there. I see it all, Carter. I'm a witness to it all. I see it through their windows. I see how helpless they all are. How they're all in the grips of something. And the great thing about this business is there's no end to it. It's bottomless. Just imagine that. Right now, right this very second, someone is cutting someone else's throat. It's amazing. (*Simpatico* 134)

His words are ruthlessly aimed at those who neither contemplate the truth nor take any action to change it—those who are blindly consuming commercialized identities in postmodern America. Vinnie is a detective who spends his life always searching for something. As someone who practices this himself, Shepard,, as a playwright, an actor, and a musician, has played multiple roles in the realm of art. Because art itself has been drawn into the whirlpool of capitalism, he cannot avoid being commercialized, leading to his ghostly images being relentlessly produced in American society, culture, and industry. The ambivalence in his drama reflects Shepard's struggle to define himself in a chaotic postmodern America. His exploration through his literary imaginations has continued even in the twenty-first century.

The Storyteller of the Black Genesis: August Wilson's Art and Creativity

Introduction

In the twentieth century, America became the new art capital, in which lots of art movements were energetically organized at multiple levels. From the 1960s up to '70s, the Black Arts Movement, which sprang up in around N.Y., radically pursued its thesis: "Black is beautiful." However, different from the rest of art movements⁸ that genuinely pursued their artistic ideals and tried to develop their manners of expression, the Black Arts Movement aimed at another destination, since it was originally derived from a racial issue. Focusing on its bellicose characteristics deeply connected to Malcolm X's philosophy and the notion of Black Power, Annette J. Sadick points out its excessive political aspect (Sadick 73). As a matter of course, Black Arts Movement was critically regarded not as the one that sincerely pursued its artistic ideals but as the one that urged black people to separate themselves from other ethnicities, which consequently brought it a crucial decline.

Another art movement that ideally conflicted with separatists the Black Art Movement was as well organized in the twentieth century America: multiculturalism flourished in the 1990s. With such a movement, those living in America tried to regard every culture as equals and, especially in the realm of art, they discovered alternative aesthetics of Asian and African art, which resulted in a critical reconsideration of the predominantly Euro-American art history. Multiculturalism was considered as part of social policy. However, we can easily points out that although regarding every culture as equals is the precondition for multiculturalism, Western-centered perspectives still remains in it. In other words, non-Western arts are yet evaluated through the criteria of European aesthetics, because many of authorities who appraise them are from the Western world.

August Wilson (1945 - 2005), who was greatly influenced by the Black Arts Movements, wrote his Twentieth-Century Cycle, consisting of ten plays: each of them is set in a different decade to chronicle African American experience in the twentieth century. In an interview with Sandra D. Shannon, Wilson talks about the much argued issue of racial assimilation and also separation as follows:

There's only two choices that I see. The question we've been wrestling with since the Emancipation Proclamation is "What are we going to do? Do we assimilate into American society and thereby lose our culture, or do we maintain our cultural separate from the dominant cultural values and participate in the American society as Africans rather than as blacks who have adopted European values?" and I think that this is a question that, for the past hundred years, black American has been trying to figure out and debating which way should we go. On the surface it seems as if we have adopted the idea that we should assimilate, and that's simply because one has received more publicity than the other. (Shannon 130)

His words refer to multiculturalism in America. He argues that the notion of assimilation induces the loss of African American culture. In a speech titled *The Ground on Which I Stand* (1996), regarding America's domination of art with its Western-centered perspectives as cultural imperialism, he strongly denies its authority and advocates the need for a comprehensive cultural criterion including African American ones. (*The Ground* 28) His words inevitably refer back to himself as an artist. He describes an artist who pursues a manner of cultural expression as follows:

To pursue our cultural expression does not separate us. We are not separatists, as Mr. Brustein asserts. We are Americans trying to fulfill

our talents. We are not servants at the party. We are not apprentices in the kitchens. We are not the stable boys to the king's huntsmen. We are Africans. We are Americans. The irreversible sweep of history has decreed that. We are artists who seek to develop our talents and give expression to our personalities. We bring advantage to the common ground that is the American theatre. (*The Ground* 41-42)

In brief, Wilson struggled to establish a genuinely American art form for African Americans that was based neither on separatism like the Black Arts Movement nor on Western-centered perspectives like multiculturalism.

In this chapter, Wilson's artistic consciousness, his dramaturgy, and also what he has pursued in his drama are to be discussed, in order for us to comprehend the meaning of his pursuit of a new African-American art form in postmodern America.

Death of Art

Reflecting on his past, Williams admits that his attitude toward playwriting at the very beginning was tangled up in politics of the Black Arts Movement and that he adopted the form of playwriting that could be the most effective medium to spread the ideology of the Black Arts Movement (Bigsby 204). However, his thought on playwriting had gradually changed, as he continued to write the *Century Cycle*:

With the completion of my latest play, *King Hedley II*, I have only the "bookends," the first and last decades of the twentieth century, remaining. As I approach the cycle's end, I find myself a different person than when I started. The experience of writing plays has altered me in ways I cannot yet fully articulate.

As with any journey, the only real question is: "Is the port worthy of

the cruise?" The answer is a resounding: "Yes." I often remark that I am a struggling playwright. I'm struggling to get the next play on the page. Eight down and counting. The struggle continues. (*King Hedley II* x-xi)

As can be seen above, after finishing *King Hedley II* (1999), the eighth play of the cycle, Wilson confides a tough struggle he had to undergo, and it was a result of this that he came to be obsessed with an artistic ideal: "art is a cultural struggle."

Wilson calls *Gem of the Ocean* (2003), set in the 1900s and *Radio Golf* (2005), set in the 1990s, "bookends of the cycle" or "umbrellas to protect the rest of the cycle." These two plays express Wilson's opinion toward art and the relationship between art and society.

In *Radio Golf*, we see a group of middle-class African Americans who have not otherwise appeared in the cycle so far. Harmond Wilks, an industrialist, runs for mayor to attain their assimilation to the American society. However, as the story goes on, he finds out the importance of African Americans' racial legacy, history and memory and turns his attention to protecting them, so ardently that he arbitrarily decides to abolish the plan of an urban redevelopment project, which consequently causes friction between him and his wife and colleagues regarding the significance of history, legacy and also a capitalist society.

The Century Cycle, Harry Elam Jr. insists, is no longer merely aimed at African Americans but at all Americans, since a large number of its non-African American audience identifies themselves with characters in the cycle, and adds that *Radio Golf* indicates the dawn of the new age, symbolically inaugurated by Barak Obama's becoming the first African American President ever in American history (Elam 2010 189). Indeed, America has taken its course along with the assimilation policy that is deeply affected by Martin Luther King, Jr.'s (1929 - 1968) contributions, which for African Americans means to become Americans and for America

to be a great nation. In short, they have pursued an ideal America under such a policy. In the realm of literature, some African Americans such as Amiri Baraka (1934 -) excessively convey the ideology of the Black Arts Movement through their works, while many films that moralize their assimilation to describe ideal America like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1976) have been produced and favorably accepted.

The blueprint of urban redevelopment project in *Radio Golf* is quite suggestive. It, planned under the slogan of pursuing the assimilation, including a treatment system for the poor, represents ideal America. Indeed, although to talk about African Americans by mobilizing the notion of assimilation in literature is a sufficient condition to dream of ideal America, such a manner of expression is haunted by a notion of combatting racism. As you can see in Mame's words on the election saying the most important thing to win is to cut and act, America, manipulated by a certain extent of ideals, is represented as a sort of Utopia, which could not otherwise exist in the real world. What is more, it also indicates that African Americans who aim for assimilation are exploited and swindled out of their art and literature by multiculturalistic America. In arguing this point, Harmond's line below is quite insightful:

Harmond: [...] If you go to the center you look up and find everything done shifted and the center is now the edge. The rules change every day. You got to change with them. After a while the edge starts to go worn. You don't notice it at first but you're fraying with it. Oh, no, look... We got a black mayor. We got a black CEO. The head of our department is black. We couldn't possibly be prejudiced. Got two hundred and fourteen people work in the department and two blacks but we couldn't possibly be race-conscious. Look, we even got a black football coach. You guys can sing. You can run fast. Boy, I love Nat King Cole. I love Michel Jordan. I just love him. We got a

black guys works in poverty but it's their fault. Look, we got a black astronaut. I just love Oprah. How do you guys dance like that? After a while that center starts to give. They keep making up the rules as you go along. They keep changing the maps. Then you realize you're never going to that center. It's all a house of cards. Everything resting on a slim edge. Looking back you can see it all. Wasn't nothing solid about it. Everything was an *if* and a *when* and a *maybe*. Of course... but not really. Yes... but not really. I don't want to live my life like that, Roosevelt. (*Radio Golf* 78-79)

This indicates the possibility for African Americans' history, art and literature not to be able to cut into the center of American culture, which seems solely intent on pursuing totalitarianism.

Through his drama, Wilson has ever problematized multiculturalism that forcibly swallows up their black culture. Among them, he bestows a highly symbolic characteristic on Aunt Ester. As the most notable character in the cycle, she, born in the time when the first slaves were brought to America, embodies African American legacy, history and also memory: she connects herself with both the metaphysical and physical realm of African Americans' past and from this vantage point she offers her fellow African American salvation and a chance to reconsider their connections to the past (Elam 2007 76). The demolition of Aunt Ester's old house is a crucial part of the ongoing urban redevelopment project because it means nothing other than that African Americans would lose their Blackness due to negligence of their racial history and legacy, and that the cultural-imperialistic America would swallow up their art and culture as a consequence. Such a loss of racial identity and a prevalence of totalitarianism would undermine Wilson's creativity, who has pursued a genuine art form created by African Americans, and what this entails is no less than death of his art. Harmond, who finally turns his attention around to the preservation of the house,

reflects Wilson himself, and his longstanding struggle to establish his art in the hostile American culture

Cultural Foundation of Art

The meaning of legacy, history and memory, and its functions Wilson tries to foreground in creating his art are to be quite significant. In the cycle, it is not just *Radio Golf* that explores the loss of legacy and history. We can also witness two siblings in *The Piano Lesson* (1990) come to realize the importance of the piano they inherited from their distant ancestors. In this regard, the piano is equivalent to Aunt Ester, an embodiment of African Americans' history and legacy. She finally passes away at the age of 366 in *King Hedley II*. Stool Pigeon grieves for her death:

Stool Pigeon: Aunt Ester's the one to ask about that. But it's too late now. She's gone. She ain't here no more. Aunt Ester knew all the secrets of life but that's all gone now. She took all that with her. I don't know what we gonna do. We in trouble now. (*King Hedley II* 20)

Though, as his words above typically indicate, Aunt Ester's death has consistently been interpreted as the loss of African American legacy and history, *King Hedley II* reveals not only the loss but also Wilson's attitude toward the Black Arts Movement and his artistic ideals.

One of the most prominent motives behind the cycle is to depict the relationship between the past and the present, or the temporal nature of the process of one's identity formation. In *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1988), set in the 1910s, this relationship is represented through a surrealistic image: a skeleton coming out of the ocean reclaims its flesh on and walks away. Such a process from skeleton to flesh metaphorically tells how African Americans add American stories to their legacy and history, which

can be interpreted as the creation of brand-new African American identity by means of becoming aware of their own history.

Wilson again contemplates and explores this relationship in *King Hedley II* by representing it differently as the relationship between soil and seeds. King, who has served five years in prison on a murder charge, plants flower seeds in his garden for his wife Tonya. In spite of his mother's warning that they never grow in the infertile dirt, their unexpected budding delights him. This scene shows us the issue swirling around the Black Arts Movement.

Black artists strongly emphasized their blackness and politically utilized their creation, and they developed the movement by utilizing alternative value or aesthetics. Therefore, their strategy performatively expressed their artistic consciousness: their art never stands on European cultures, legacy and traditions, which resulted in criticism that they are excessively separatist. Wilson, however, talks about the relationship between his art and traditional European art as follows:

We are not off on a tangent. The foundation of European theatre that begins with the great Greek dramatists; it is based on the proscenium stage and the poetics of Aristotle. This is the theatre that we have chosen to work in. And we embrace the values of that theatre but reserve the right to amend, to explore, and to add our African consciousness and our African aesthetics to the art we produce. (*The Ground* 40-41)

He admits the great influence of far-off predecessors on his own art, and calls the American theatre, inheriting artistic legacies from them, the "Ground Together." (*The Ground* 46) His thought collapses ideology of the Black Arts Movement.

Throughout the cycle, Wilson has ever explored the relationship

between the past and their identity regarding the realm of art and culture. Even though the Black Arts Movement emphasizes its isolation from European art and its ideology to construct alternative artistry, it is almost impossible to evade the impact of the past, legacy and history. Remember the relationship between soil and seeds in *King Hedley II*. The Black Arts Movement, which never allowed for other schools of art, was, as it were, a seedling without any fertile soil. Furthermore, as King protects the seedlings with barbed wires, The Black Arts Movement politically intensified its separatism aspect. However, King is told that his true father is not Hedley but Leroy. In brief, King himself is nothing other than a seedling that knows nothing about its true past. Finally, he, after knowing Elmore has killed Leroy, removes the barbed wire and tramples upon the seedlings to defeat him. With Elmore's trickery, he is unwillingly defeated. What is more, his mother fires her gun to stop their fighting, and hit by the bullet, he collapses down to the ground and dies.

Although Sandra D. Shannon insists *King Hedley II* is the darkest drama in the cycle, for all it foregrounds is nothing but death (Shannon 2010 126), we also witness the possibility of resurrection. When King's blood splashes on the grave of Aunt Ester's cat, Stool Pigeon recognizes it as a sacrifice and joyously proclaims Aunt Ester's resurrection. It means not merely a revival of African American history and legacy. The symbolic significance of this scene is summarily explained in the following comment by Wilson:

The ground together: We have to do it together. We cannot permit our lives to waste away, our talents unchallenged. We cannot permit a failure to our duty. We are brave and we are boisterous, our mettle is proven, and we are dedicated.

The ground together: the ground of the American theatre on which I am proud to stand...the ground which our artistic ancestors purchased

with their endeavors...with their pursuit of the American spirit and its ideals.

I believe in the American theatre. I believe in its power to inform about the human condition, I believe in its power to heal, “to hold the mirror as ‘twere up to nature,” to the truths we uncover, to the truths we wrestle from uncertain and sometimes unyielding realities. All of art is a search for ways of being, of living life more fully. We who are capable of those noble pursuits should challenge the melancholy and barbaric, to bring the light of angelic grace, peace, prosperity and the unencumbered pursuit of happiness to the ground on which we all stand. (*The Ground on Which I Stand* 45, 46)

The ground he insists on is cultivated with traditional European art, African-American art and also a multitude of other art forms in order to foster genuine American art. Furthermore, this type of art never generates separatism nor cultural imperialism. In short, the dirt on which the blood of King, who has been aware of the past, splashes revives as a basis for renewed American creativity.

Wilson devotes his art to the future by expressing the ruthless realities, such as African American racial and gender issues. Furthermore, he has been dreaming of the new American culture to come.

Restoration of an Aura

After realizing the importance of Aunt Ester’s house, Harmond comes to be aware of his racial inheritance, history and legacy, and abandons the plan of urban redevelopment project against his supporters’ expectation in order to preserve her house. Wilson, throughout the cycle, has ever been skeptical of and thus problematized the reconstruction of African American identity through becoming aware of their racial history. It, as we have discussed in the previous section, is not history based on the idea of black

supremacy but on the aesthetics that goes as far back as ancient Greeks, from which Wilson has inherited his own artistry and creativity. Furthermore, he assembles various cultural motives that have contributed to the creation of his art. For instance, Aunt Ester and her house play a central role in the cycle, as Harmond's line: "[w]ithout a center everything caves in" (*Radio Golf* 72) symbolically indicates. American art by African Americans calls for such a center.

David K. Sauer and Janice A. Sauer describe the relationship between the past and the present represented in the cycle as follows:

Wilson may not have been interested in conducting historical research but he was concerned to trace the history of individual lives and the unfolding story of the African American community in such a way that present attitudes and values are seen in the context of past experiences. (193)

Centers for African Americans work well in an attempt to convince themselves of the notion of their identity and community.

Now, we have to shift our focus onto the ninth play of the cycle, *Gem of the Ocean*, in which we finally encounter Aunt Ester, who has never appeared on the stage so far. She, having passed away in *King Hedley II*, literally resurrects in this play. With redemption and awakening problematized, the play reflects the power of theater Wilson has ever believed in and also the power of the cycle he has created.

In *Gem of the Ocean*, Wilson fabricates a spiritual ceremony for his fellow African American's salvation and return to their shared past: a journey to the City of Bones. The surrealistic depiction in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* of a skeleton reclaiming its flesh and walking away describes the experience in the City of Bones. "Invoking rites which connect the spiritual, the cultural, the social and the political does not simply serve

to correct the past but also serves to interpret it in ways that impact powerfully on the present,” says Elam (2007 86). The process of the journey to the City of Bones is quite insightful. In *Gem of the Ocean*, Citizen Barlow has been tortured by guilt because he laid the blame for his theft on an innocent man, which forced the man to kill himself. He asks a favor of Aunt Ester, and she sends him to the City of Bones. Its redemptive process calls for some realistic quests, such as to find two dimes placed on the ground side by side or to meet Gilson Grant in the upper reaches of a river. In brief, Aunt Ester makes up a scenario for the City of Bones and directs it by herself. When Citizen spiritually trips there, she, according to her scenario, explains the situation, and others wearing masks play various roles and sometimes sings songs, and in this way, Citizen’s initiation to the City of Bones is theatrically conducted. Experiencing or rather playacting the whole journey, so to speak, Citizen is convinced that he truly lives his life now and that his being, both worldly and spiritual, is consisted of the accumulation of the legacy, history and memory he shares with his ancestors. “Wilson does more than record myths, he creates them,” argues Kim Pereira (66). With regard to this point, it can be reasonably said that Wilson has foregrounded the importance of a form of theater, which is somewhat tinged with such ritual senses we can find in ancient Greek and Roman drama, for African Americans to be aware of their history. This is Wilson’s artistic desire to place the cycle at the center of African American culture as a catalyst for their awakening.

Adopting Pierre Nora’s notion of “lieux de memoire,” or the sites of memory, Elam discusses the significance of intertextuality and complementarity in each play in the cycle and adds that Wilson’s own lieux de memoire—Aunt Ester herself and her house in this case—functions as a sort of collective cultural memory for African Americans (Elam 203). Individual plays in the cycle assemble themselves in and around their common center, namely, Aunt Ester, and reformulate this kind of collective

cultural memory. Furthermore, the newly created collective memory is then returned to the cycle, powerfully influencing its creation and coloring its reception.

As discussed above, the cycle functions as one center of African American culture. Therefore, by extension, it is quite possible for us to regard the cycle itself as *lieux de memoire* for American culture in general. Before discussing this issue, we have to scrutinize the relationships between art, artist, audience, and culture. For this line of analysis, Carl Gustav Jung's notion of the collective unconscious⁹, especially its application to his exploration of the meaning of art, is highly suggestive:

Every period has its bias, its peculiar prejudice, and psychic malaise. An epoch is like an individual; it has its own limitations of conscious outlook, effected by the collective unconscious when a poet or seer lends expression to the unspoken desire of his times and shows the way, by word or deed, to its fulfillment—regardless whether this blind collective need results in good or evil, in the salvation of an epoch or its destruction. (Jung 98)

One of the meanings of art is to establish universality by expressing a formative experience or a symbolic landscape lying beneath people's collective unconscious so that they would come to share them. The high sophistication of European art, naturally including paintings and music in the Renaissance and the Baroque eras, was derived from its practitioners' metaphysical connection to the Bible and Christianity, that is, the source of their identity. The Bible functioned as an essential source of cultural formation and artistic creation. Before modernism, there existed a cultural dynamism based on the Grand Narratives, which was also another of artistic inspiration. Created under such a condition, European art was placed in the seam between the realm of metaphysics and the one of physics.

In short, art before modernism, in spite of its being created by those living in the real world, is much closer to gods emanating some sort of transcendental aura¹⁰. However, in postmodern, this kind of aura of art has vanished, partially due to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche: the death of God and the collapse of the Grand Narrative. That has something to do with the fact that New York Dada and Pop art, which did not have any connections to the realm of metaphysics, has flourished in America. With the function of collective unconscious as a trigger for cultural formation disappearing, increasing numbers of art based on individual small narratives have been energetically created, which resulted in what American art critic Arthur C. Danto called “the end of art¹¹.”

Wilson frequently uses the word “chaos” in the cycle. “[Y]ou got to have rule of law otherwise there’d be chaos. Nobody wants to live in chaos,” (*Gem of the Ocean* 76) says Caesar Wilks, and Harmond Wilks says the exact same line in *Radio Golf*. In view of the fact that Harmond is Caesar’s last descendant, it seems likely that Wilson tries to depict the twentieth century in the cycle as a period in which those living in chaos have sought certain a extent of order. Artistic creation without order is outright chaos for Wilson, who has always been intent on foregrounding the relationship between his art and cultural legacy. His artistic ideal is somewhat retrospective: he seems to prefer artistry before modernism, when art was mostly generated from its connection with cultural and social values of its time.

One of the most prominent features of Wilson’s dramaturgy is his deployment of symbolism, surrealistic expressions and metaphysical leitmotifs in a realistically constructed world of drama. He has utilized those symbols like the gate of heaven or also the City of Bones in creating a myth to be shared in American culture, a myth that helps restore to his art an aura deprived in postmodernism. As Citizen rediscovers meaning to his own life through the experience of the journey to the City of Bones, which is ceremonially and also theatrically proceeded, Wilson, as already mentioned

before, has ever believed in the power of theater to deepen the relationship between his art, audience and culture. Therefore, it can be said that, with a much clearer strategy to achieve his goal, he has tried to make his cycle as sublime as to be called a kind of the black bible. This seems not to offer an effective definition of what you call “the black bible,” which is unmistakably the key concept of this chapter.

Even though Wilson has enthusiastically pursued his artistic ideal of creating the black bible, his ambition would never be fully achieved in the United States of his time where African American culture was almost completely swallowed up by the prevailing cultural-imperialistic totalitarianism while separatist movements like the Black Arts Movement were desperately wielding their power. In *Radio Golf*, however, Wilson struggles with such a cruel irony to maintain the cycle’s aura and preserve it for his posterity, hoping that they would continue his exploration of the possibility of art under capitalism.

Commercial success with a multitude of audience is indispensable for Wilson to ever be able to preserve the cycle and its aura in American culture. Recently, as even apparently non-commercial moral issues have seemed to become part of economic activities, supporting artistic creation and preserving legacies are supposed to bring about considerable benefits to businesses, while art and historical stuff can be fully advertised with their support. An episode in *Radio Golf* that Starbucks approves of the preservation of Aunt Ester’s house reveals such a relationship between cultural legacies and commercialism. Once upon a time, those adhering to the sublimity of art abhorred discussing it commercially. However, now we are moving toward a time when art and capitalism are inseparable.

Concerning the relationship between art and capitalism, we have to clarify fundamental components of modern art. An influential philosopher of art George Dickie, who advocates institutional theory of art, defines five components:

An artist is a person who participates with understanding in the making of a work of art.

A work of art is an artifact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld public.

A public is a set of persons the members of which are prepared in some degree to understand an object which is presented to them.

The artworld is the totality of all artworld systems.

An artworld system is a framework for the presentation of a work of art by an artist to an artworld public. (98, 99, 100, 101)

Detecting a retroactive order at work in the process (a work of art defines an artist, for instance) he asserts that an artworld system has supremacy over the rest of the components. Since, however, they move in a circular orbit, it is also possible that a new artist arises from an artworld system (101). Furthermore, Dickie insists that even facing up postmodern ambiguity, “no artwork, no matter how unusual, can escape its relations to its cultural context” (98). Therefore, modern art becomes possible only with a cultural dynamism formed out of the relationship between artists, art creation environments and the art-loving public. Wilson ever claimed the need for improving the financial aspect of theatrical productions, for he thought it would bring about a favorable flourishing of culture, which would fully cultivate art. (*The Ground* 29 - 33) We can observe in this artistic process a series of interconnected events: to produce the cycle without financial problems and to have audience share a legacy, history and the notion of identity, increases its aura, which consequently deepens the relationship between the cycle and the audience.

Conclusion

In the cycle, Wilson explores what American art by African American

can be and how it can function in American culture. In this regard, it can be reasonably said that the cycle is a meta-art that explains American art. Moreover, for Wilson, to complete the cycle in postmodern America is a cultural struggle in its own right to restore to his art a ritual aura having dispersed in capitalist America and to weave a brand-new story, substituting it for the Bible that was unrecognizably the source of artistic creation.

What we have to discuss lastly is artists' responsibility for their influences on society. Mame blames Harmond for being egoistic in attempting to preserve Aunt Ester's house:

Mame: I have a center too. What happens when that caves in? I have questions too. You're acting like a kid who because things don't go his way takes his ball and goes home. That's what your problem is. You've always been the kid who had the ball. You've the one with the glove and the bat. You had the bike when nobody else had one. All your life you always had everything go your way. (*Radio Golf* 72)

Wilson points her words not only at Harmond but also at himself. He is, so to speak, the only one who has every plaything, namely, the one who, as an artist, can express his own ideals and have a great influence on society. Remember Harmond's line referring to chaos. Although he says it to his colleague Roosevelt, his decision to abandon the plan of urban redevelopment also causes a great loss to his supporters and collapses the relationship between him and his wife, which is none other than chaos. Given that the cycle may bring chaos to Americans, there is no way for Wilson to avoid his responsibility as the creator of the cycle for influencing on society.

Wilson, however, does not just express his ideal world to come. He,

sometimes using filthy expressions, leaves social issues, such as racial, gender and class disputes unsolved in the cycle. Furthermore, each member of his audience has to interpret such unsolved issues in his cycle. In brief, he leaves everything to his audience, which is his own way to fulfill his responsibility. “What we do now becomes history by which our grandchildren will judge us,” says Wilson (*The Ground* 40) says. He might have foreseen that individual interpretations of his cycle would come together and join force for a collective cultivation of American art, and its culture someday in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

What is the most outstanding characteristic that American drama generally has? As we have discussed to date, introducing historical, cultural, and artistic legacies into their creations, American playwrights romanticize, universalize, and transform them into American originals. In the early period of American drama, the Genesis was adopted to establish American personal and national identity, which enabled America to be represented as a metaphysical divine nation. Let us look at the contemporary American entertainment industry. We often come across a lot of stories that describe the encounter between primitiveness and civilization and compassion for primitiveness, as we can see in *Avatar*. This phenomenon reveals that America is still searching for its divinity worshiped by other nations, though it is just an illusion woven by the literary imagination.

Representing America as a metaphysical divine nation is deeply connected to the expansion of imperialism. As we have discussed in the second chapter, universalizing multiple historical and cultural motives helps American imperialism make further progress. While America adopts cultural, historical, and artistic legacies of others, alterity is absorbed into American cultural imperialism. Theatrical creativity of American drama is largely depends on such cultural absorption, which many playwrights unconsciously utilize in their works. In other words, American drama itself is the potential medium that inevitably reflects American imperialism.

America has ever struggled to create its divine origin, because of the luck of it. Likewise, individuals in America have always suffered from the same concern. The manner of self-representation of some playwrights indicates a highly postmodern reality: they do not depict their true selves but create their ideal selves. This type of self-representation can be enabled with the vast amount of social, cultural, and artistic legacies. Remember that Tennessee Williams' self-representation is highly influenced by the

aesthetic of Neoclassicism. However, despite such legacies, those who live in contemporary America often consume their ideal identity as American original in pursuing and establishing themselves. Furthermore, even though Sam Shepard notices that he can never be free from a huge influence of the past, his exploration paradoxically results in the drifting self in postmodern America. The influential past, so to speak, has become just another motive to explore postmodernism, one of the characteristics of contemporary America.

August Wilson's art also inherited the characteristic of American drama. Historical, cultural, and artistic legacies from the past cultivated his art. Even though some of these legacies were derived from white centered European art, he positively accepted and utilized them to subvert the ideologies of the Black Arts Movement and multiculturalism. As we have discussed in the last chapter, the purpose of his art is to reclaim the aura that has vanished away from the traditional art. In other words, he eagerly attempted to reconstruct American culture with his Pittsburgh cycle as the central factor. However, this indicates that even Wilson, who had the most sincere attitude toward American culture, utilized the potential power of the traditional art to establish Americanness. It can be reasonably said that he unconsciously Americanized the traditional art in creating his own art.

As a consequence of the chronological analysis of American drama from the early years of the republic all the way up until the present day, we can surely define one of the characteristics of American drama. It is the cultural imperialistic dynamics that support the basis of American drama, whether playwrights are conscious or unconscious of this phenomenon. Needless to say, it is characterized by adoption, romanticization, and Americanization of cultural and historical legacies

David Lindsay-Abaire's *Rabbit Hole*, the recipient of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for drama, problematizes such artistic unconscious deeply connected to the cultural imperialistic dynamics. The play depicts how a couple who

lost their son in a car accident accept and overcome their deep grief. What is the most insightful is a novel that Jason, who caused the accident, wrote. The story tells about a boy who travels parallel universe to search for his dead father. When Becca, the mother of the dead son, reads the novel, she points out the similarity between his novel and the tale of Orpheus in Greek myth. Nonetheless, Jason confides that he has never read the story at all. Some playwrights such as Tennessee Williams were surely aware of the motives from their great precursors. However, in *Rabbit Hole*, these motives are describes as if they were utterly Americanized, universalized, and placed in the American unconscious. (Incidentally, Greek myth itself represents Americanness, because it is one of the most profitable moneymakers for Hollywood.)

In *Rabbit Hole*, Jason suggests that there be tons of other versions of him in the parallel universe, and there be an ideal him somewhere else. It can be surely assumed that such pessimism of not being able to accept the life now is another characteristic of American drama that supports its basis. Furthermore, as we have discussed in our chapters, such pessimism have bestowed the literary imagination upon so many playwrights and allowed them to alter the unacceptable reality in the realm of literature.

Although placed in the network of art, American drama continues to adopt, romanticize, universalize, and Americanize the cultural, historical, and artistic legacies. Such a characteristic of American drama indeed reflects its cultural imperialism. August Wilson certainly problematized cultural imperialism. However, his literary imagination and theatrical creativity are inevitably obsessed by the characteristic of American drama, namely adoption and Americanization of historical and cultural legacies, which is no other than cultural imperialism.

American playwrights have consistently promoted American cultural imperialism through their drama, literary imagination, and theatrical creativity. Some playwrights wrote plays that promote American

imperialism, while others wrote ones to resist and object to such imperialism, among which is minority theater that deals with the issues of gender and sexuality to resist oppressive political power. However, even such minority theater cannot escape from artistic unconscious deeply connected to cultural imperialism of American drama. It is quite interesting to see playwrights of the new generation who lives their lives now and has become aware of it like David Lindsay-Abaire opening up a new horizon of American drama.

Notes

1. Romanticism, which flourished mostly from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, encouraged those suppressed by conventional Christianity and dogmatism to emancipate the selves. Under such a cultural upheaval, nature, also including primitiveness, was treated as an innocent motive that they thought was never ruined by Christianity and dogmatism. See David Brayney Brown's *Romanticism: A & I*.

2. See Thomas Wiedmann's *Emperors and Gladiators* (1992). A study on ancient Roman gladiators shows that not only prisoners and criminals but also some aristocrats and ordinary citizens became gladiators. It is because the gladiator games were highly approved as one of national status. Furthermore, it is said that an early form of gladiator games were performed as some sort of rituals. (Wiedmann 165)

3. Neo-Roman, seen in the following quotation, flourished from the late nineteenth century to the early twenties century broadly in Europe. Those attracted to its notion attempted to restore the original conception of romanticism and to extremely idealize it. For example, William Morris (1834 - 1896), who has designed the chair in Clyde Fitch's *The Truth* (1906), is counted among neo-romanticist. However, since almost a century separates the time of upheaval of Neo-romanticism and the one of neo-classicism, it is not clear why Reed has mentioned Neo-romanticism.

4. "In English, a distinction is frequently made between "drama" and "theatre," drama being the written text and theatre the process of performance." (Carlson 10) says Marvin Carlson.

5. While Kairos is described as an extremely handsome god in Greek myth,

he only has front hair. Chance, also described as a handsome man, is afraid of losing his hair.

6. Seen from the time of the play, it can be assumed that Boss Finely's mansion is constructed in Gothic Revival style. As a reaction against neo-classicism, Gothic Revival flourished mostly in the late eighteen century.

7. See George Ritzer's *The McDonalization of Society*. Using the world's largest chain of hamburger restaurant McDonald as a metaphor, he defines contemporary society as something that people mechanically act along with efficiency and control after losing their autonomy.

8. Dadaists extremely expressed their political stances toward World War I in their artworks. Such a cultural phenomenon, however, took place only in Europe. Although destructive manners are quite similar to Dada, New York Dada, which was first coined by Marcel Duchamp (1887 - 1968), includes no politics. Therefore these two art movements are thought to be different.

9. Although Jung's art theory is tremendously insightful in analyzing and arguing art before modernism, we should not adopt it in analyzing postmodern art, since it scarcely has a relationship with the realm of metaphysics. The objects of his study are arts in classical, neoclassical and Baroque style.

10. See Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. He argues that genuine artworks have aura, a sublime feeling people have when they see them. Furthermore, he points out the ritual aspects of art.

11. See Arthur C. Danto's *After the End of Art*. He calls the phenomenal movement after the 1960s in which many artworks were created without any influence of metanarrative as the end of art.

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正誤表

誤→正

1 頁 19 行 ideologies have shaped → ideologies have been shaped

4 頁 4～8 行 The. [...], were written by John Smith (1580-1631). A
seventeenth [...]. → The [...], written by John Smith (1580-1631), a
seventeenth [...].

5 頁 7 行 Interpretation [...] has influenced [...] → Interpretation [...] has
been influenced

9 頁 7 行 present→presented

11 頁 17 行 pacing→placing

12 頁 24 行 subliminal→sublime

13 頁 28 行 poisoned→prisoned

17 頁 18 行 Americas→Americans

23 頁 15～18 行 the reason [...] are [...]. → the reason [...] is [...].

27 頁 19～21 行 Wilder, [...], by [...]. → Wilder [...] by [...].

31 頁 11 行 The Skin → *The Skin*

38 頁 17 行 lost→lose

65 頁 8～10 行 This [...]. Saying, [...]. → This [...], as Vinnie says, [...].

65 頁 12 行 Simpatico → *Simpatico*

66 頁 4 行 Shepard,, → Shepard,

80 頁 16 行 certain a → a certain

81 頁 3～5 行 This [...]. → トル

83 頁 20 行 Harmond' → Harmond's