Female Exiles in Language: Reading for New Poetic Subjects in Modern and Contemporary Feminist Experimental Poetry

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Abstract

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The research aim in this dissertation is to analyze the experimental poetic languages of H. D., Gertrude Stein, Cathy Park Hong, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, and discuss the ethico-political potential of their languages to sustain "new" female poetic subjects and new experiences for them. For this purpose, throughout the main chapters, the question is asked: Who are these poetic "I"s in their works and what are their major attributes? Is this new poetic "I" a single and coherent subject or else a "becoming" subject of a sentence that does not have any fixed ground? How do the language-oriented poems suggest possibilities for reconstructing the writing and reading subjects and reshaping the conventional female subject's position in language? How do these poems alter the rigid conception of gender/racial division through diverse narrative devices? These questions

are answered in chapters 2–4, covering diverse theoretical perspectives on and approaches to the concept of "difference," from psychoanalytic feminist theory to contemporary queer and phenomenological theories. Chapter 2 explores how the poetic language in H. D.'s later works such as *HERmione* (1927) and *Helen in Egypt* (1955) successfully breaks through the order of phallocentric language and rewrites female unconsciousness. The theories of Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous are drawn on to clarify H. D.'s innovative poetic techniques and their construction of a new female consciousness. Chapter 3 uses Butler's theories of the "performative" subject and "perlocutionary" speech act to examine how Stein's poetic language constructs the speaking subject as "performative." For this purpose, a step-by-step analysis is set out of Butler's theories on "performitivity" and the "lesbian phallus," exploring how they apply to Stein's notions of poetic language and subjectivity in *Tender Buttons* (1914) and *Three Lives* (1909). This chapter also examines Jacques Lacan's language theory and observes how his clinical language for neurotic patients also possesses the constitutive power to implicate and transform one's consciousness. The chapter also argues that Stein's poetic language in *Geography and Plays* (1922) also performs the therapeutic function of transferring one's fixed symptoms to the pure functions of the signifiers. Finally, chapter 4 engages with the modern and contemporary Korean American poets Hong and Cha, each of whom has a unique relationship with Korean language and culture through their innovative and stylish English verses. By using Gilles Deleuze's concepts of "minor literature" and "becoming," the chapter examines the varied rhetorical and formal strategies through which Hong and Cha incorporate the Korean language, history, and culture into their new poetic languages and construct new "becoming" ethnic subjects.

Although the American feminist avant-garde poets and theorists mentioned in the dissertation all define the terms “femininity,” “feminine writing” and “female subject” differently, it is argued that these scholars agree their own representational systems reinvestigate the fixed and permanent relationship between language and the world, produce different notions of poetic “I”s that are rendered less sexist and more transformable by the very process of “becoming,” and finally, express different kinds of desires, pleasures, and happiness in the dominant field of language.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The last five years that I spent in Seattle, Washington have been times when I felt unfamiliar with the capital personal pronoun "I" and often experienced how challenging it was to have a complete understanding of who I am. I daily experienced being lost among other languages, cultures, and peoples, broken down, and often, voluntarily or involuntarily, plunged into an infinite process of cultural "becoming." It seems that these feelings are similar to what Laurent Berlant describes as the sense of "instability that threatens the subject's core patterning." Although I often felt more alive and engaged than I have ever been in my life while staying and studying here in Seattle, I have also realized that it is an agonizing experience to live in a representative system in which I do not have a strong sense of agency of the words I am using. I imagine this was the crucial reason why I started to feel sympathetic and attracted to these four feminist experimental poets in America, H. D., Gertrude Stein, Cathy Park Hong, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. They also lived their lives as exiles and strangers who remained foreign to their own languages, cultures, and nations, thus remaining the "representative singular."

Living as a stranger to the language one uses can be a painful experience, regardless of whether one is a native or non-native speaker of the language. The feminist avant-garde poets I explored in my dissertation, nevertheless, struggled hard to craft a strong sense of agency in their dominant language systems, so that they impose different meanings and visions over the original text and thereby create alternative and livable realities. Through the diverse textual experiments or embodiment of affective senses and feelings, these language-oriented feminist poets were able to make their voices heard

finally and raise important questions about the conventional power relationships regarding one's gender, race, and class in the dominant social and cultural realm. In other words, they were what Sara Ahmed calls "willful subjects" who indefatigably attempt to negotiate with the past and weave the present as a "becoming" state through the invention of new language. I was deeply moved by their efforts to craft the strong sense of linguistic agency that helps them desire, speak, and see themselves more as autonomous and alive beings. Since I could find and resuscitate the notions of a different "I" amidst their signs of hope and beauty, my deepest gratitude and respect should first go to these four poets.

Besides them, through the long journey of finishing my dissertation project, I met many amazing people who supported me and helped me finish this dissertation in numerous ways. I am truly indebted to all of these people. First, I would like to convey my gratitude and sincere appreciation to my advisor, Prof. Brian M. Reed. It was such a blessing to have met him and him as my advisor. From the first time I came to UW and started my PhD program until now, he has given me a vast amount of inspiration and intellectual help. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Prof. Sydney Kaplan, Prof. Phillip Thurtle, Prof. Gillian Harkins, Kathy Mork, and Jennifer Siembor for their valuable guidance, advice, and encouragement for my research and study.

My five-year-long experience of having been lost and then struggling to find a way out without a strong sense of self-continuity or guarantees for the future was more stressful than I could have ever imagined. I cannot recall any time in my life when I more longed to have the solid, strong, and collective personal pronouns "I" and "we." Every

time I felt lost and lonely, I drew my strength from the warm and kind words in the emails of my former advisor, Prof. Youngjoo Son at Seoul National University, and my old colleagues Sunyoung Lee and Soha Jung, who are also struggling to find their ways out in the field of academia, although living in different regions. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Youngjoo Son, who comforted me and cheered me up with so many kind words every time I felt depressed and lonely.

Words cannot express my thanks to my family—my mom, dad, and younger brother Taeyoon (who just became a doctor in South Korea)—as well as my beloved UW friends and colleagues Shin Haeng Lee, Elloise Kim, Sani Chatudomdej, and Sophia Chen, who have trodden the long path of scholarship with me for the last five years.

This dissertation is dedicated to all of these people who have been by my side throughout the long journey. Thank you so much.

Chapter I. Introduction: Reading for New Poetic Subjects in Modern Feminist Experimental Poetry

In this dissertation, I recover and celebrate the works of American feminist avant-garde poets from the modernist and contemporary eras. For this purpose, I widen my historical and cultural scope to assess feminist avant-garde poets with diverse social experiences of gender, class, race and generation, including innovative writers such as H. D., Gertrude Stein, Cathy Park Hong and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. In my wide-angle approach, I attempt to forge stronger connections between voices from different historical eras in the twentieth century and testify to the lineage of feminist experimental poets in America. Moreover, in order to refer to the works of feminist avant-garde poets, including those in "the period of the so-called historical avant-gardes (the 1910's and 1920's)," I will use the terms, "feminist avant-garde writing" or "language-oriented poetry" for women writers, following the lead of Elisabeth A. Frost and Megan Simpson (Frost xiv).

These experimental female writers had vexed relationships with art movements or writing projects such as Dada or Surrealist movements in the early twentieth century or Language Writing in the San Francisco Bay Area and New York City in the '70s and '80s. Frost also says that feminist avant-garde poets in America from the 1910 and onwards had complex and "ambivalent relation to contemporaneous male-dominated avant-garde groups" and their rhetoric (xii). She also points out that these feminist poets, although

sharing goals with other male avant-gardists,[1] "resist[ed] the very notion of affiliation," being alienated from organized movements such as Imagists or Futurists with their manifestos and proclamations and even the contemporary women's political movements (xv). According to her, they rather preferred a linguistically based feminism that located experimental language as the major site of feminist intervention and through it, attempted to revise the category of avant-garde itself (xi, xv). For the similar reasons, Simpson argues that the works of modern language-oriented women poets such as Stein, Mina Loy and H. D. "stand in significant ways outside of both twentieth century traditions" and male-centered avant-garde movements (76).[2] Instead, their works were rather inseparable from the feminist issues such as the "relations among knowledge, language and gender, thus (re)uniting art with philosophy, and both with social critique" (ix). To achieve this goal, they commonly attempted to enact transgression in language and breach the linguistic boundaries "between the creative and the analytical, writing and reading, subjectivity and objectivity, one identity and another, male and female, poetry and other genres and most important, art and knowledge."

Ann Vickery in *Leaving Lines of Gender,* although focusing more on the contemporary Language Writing communities from the 1970s and 1980s, similarly distinguishes contemporary male writers working in experimental forms from female

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[1] Frost defines "avant-gardists" as the group of writers who try to unite "formal innovation with political engagement" and bring "the potential to change the world by inciting a change of consciousness" through language experiments (xiv).

[2] Simpson explains that for this reason, even influential studies of contemporary language-oriented poetry such as George Hartley's *Textual Politics and the Language Poets*, Linda Reinfeld's *Language poetry: Writing as Rescue* and Bob Perelman's *The Marginalization of Poetry: Language Writing and Literary History* omit or do not fully analyze or discuss the works of feminist avant-garde poets (x).

language-oriented poets. She explains that while male language-oriented writers "focus predominantly on the dangers of commodity fetishism," their female colleagues take the gender issue or sexual difference as their main object of critique (7). Of course, it does not mean that these language-oriented female poets didn't share the common goal of "language poetry" which is to understand how power relations in our everyday lives are "veiled through language" and deconstruct the individual social identities produced by social conventions (6-7). From these examples, however, we can conjecture that what makes feminist experimental poets and writers stand out among other avant-garde poets—whether from the tradition of 'high literary modernism' or from more contemporary 'language poetry'—is their interest in a new sexual politics and its construction of a new female-centered language and subjectivity.

Therefore, the primary questions that will be addressed via H. D., Gertrude Stein, Cathy Park Hong and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha in my dissertation are inseparable from feminist issues, since they all concern sexuality, gender and its relation to the conventional representational system. I'll therefore mainly question how these feminist avant-garde poets in America from the 1910 invigorated their poetic language within the patriarchal language system and formulated a new female subjectivity as culturally and socially complex and heterogeneous terms. Many of their works mainly concern how to invent a new language to express the new female experiences and identities. And these projects were often triggered by their shared sense that our language system is structured "by father–son resemblance and by the primacy of male logic, woman is only a gap or a silence, the invisible and unheard sex" in language (Showalter 223). For instance, many feminist avant-garde poets from the early twentieth century thought there was no

language to secure their own voices. The exclusion from the dominant speaking and writing position in the realm of language further caused in them a great schism or divided consciousness between speaking position and object status in language.[3] H. D. thus insisted that the "artistic autonomy [of female writers] depends on her ability to throw off the overwhelming male presence in literary tradition" (Friedman, *Psyche* 150). Mina Loy also emphasized the importance of inscribing "[s]omething taking shape / [s]omething that has a new name" (57) in language of her own making, instead of continuing to use "the language that cut herself out a paper penis" (Cixous, "The Laugh" 84). In other words, in order to be heard, these language-oriented female poets had to choose to "explode [their language] . . . to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of" and name what was sacrificed in the realm of male fetish world (Cixous, "The Laugh" 87).

Although the works of Hong and Cha do not belong to the historical avant-gardes of the early twentieth century, they also look to language as the grounds for examining the tension between feminism and racial complexities in American society and attempted to conduct a new dialogue between the theories of avant-garde poetry and

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[3] The world of modernism was almost mono-gendered and male voices were generally deemed universal and objective. This misogynistic tendency in Modernism period is well demonstrated by the avant-gardist rhetoric such as Ezra Pound's Imagism, F. T. Marinetti's Futurism and Wyndham Lewis' Vorticism. In "Translator's Postscript," for instance, Pound defines intelligence as "concentrated seminal fluid in the brain" (DuPlessis, *The Pink* 26). Marinetti's Futurist manifestos also regard femininity as a huge threat to the autonomy of the world of male avant-gardists. They equated the power of their signifiers and their potential of visual imagination with "phallic" power. Eliot also reduced the literary importance of other contemporary female writers such as Stein, Marianne Moore, H. D. Loy and "segregated female authors to a 'feminine' mode already disparaged as hopelessly miniature and therefore as culturally and morally inadequate" (DuPlessis, *Purple* 58).

Asian American historical and embodied experiences. Moreover, they also struggle to locate their new writing subject precariously in the bounds of hybrid and mionoritized language and subvert the conventional meanings of 'Asian American' and 'female' subject—the subject that was discriminated against and excluded by the dominant cultural realm—sexually and racially. This dissertation thus examines how these language-oriented female poets in America from the 1910s onwards, despite varying definitions of femininity and feminine writing and despite representing different historical eras, commonly expressed concern over creating "a new language for a new feminist consciousness" (Frost xiii).

However, the widespread recognition of these modernist/contemporary female language-oriented poets like H. D., Stein, and Loy is quite recent phenomenon, increased mostly in the 1980s as the result of a historical rediscovery and reevaluation. Janet Montefiore in *Arguments of Heart and Mind* also explains that rediscovery of modernist women poets was initiated from the scholarly accounts of modernist female poetry around 1981. Around that time, the two classic essays on the twentieth century women poetry were also published in *Papers on Patriarchy* (1976)—that of Adrienne Rich's "When We Dead Awaken" and Cora Kaplan's "Language and Gender" (Montefiore 24). Vickery also points out that these language-oriented poems written by women begun to be institutionally accepted and anthologized from the mid-eighties mostly because some well-known feminist poets began winning prizes and received the "endorsement from the poetry establishment" (11). Previously, however, the works of feminist experimental poets were little known. Stein was not an exception. Her works are now viewed as masterpieces by critics of avant-garde poetry and often interpreted as a feminist

reworking of patriarchal language, but she did not initially achieve this mainstream status. Brian Glavey, for instances, explains that Stein had difficulties "placing her experimental writings in the literary journals throughout her career," so she first attempted to publish them in magazines dedicated to the visual medium such as *Camera Work* (26). Glavey further explains that her publication of the verbal portraits on Mattise and Picasso in the 1912 issue made it even "more difficult to recognize her poetry as poetry." It was not until 2000 that her works began to be known and published in so called the 'mainstream' anthologies such as *American Poetry: The Twentieth Century* as one of the country's major avant-garde poets.

Moreover, until very recently, these female poets have been discarded or discussed separately even from the contemporary anthologies of women's literature. Their poems were not well received by conventional feminist poetry critics and scholars, mostly due to their emphasis on formalist issues that do not fit the 'general' category of women's themes. Marsha Bryant explains that contemporary anthologies of women's poetry have tended to filter the works through the categories of racial, sexual and national identity, mostly ignoring the formal dimension to female experimental poetry (9). Due to their emphasis on the certain poetic forms that fit, so called, "women's themes" and "identity politics," Bryant adds, those linguistically experimental poetry by women in America inevitably "falls outside the scope of" anthologies of women's poetry.[4] Frost

[4] Bryant also pointedly notes that it is in the late 1980s that American editors has started to express their doubt and ambivalence about the "Women's Poetry" label and its underscoring 'explicitly female' themes and collective voice of women (14). Especially, through the examples of anthologies such as Carol Rumens' *Making for the Open* (1985) and Susan Aizenberg and Erin Belieu's *The Extraordinary Tide* (2001), she demonstrates how these contemporary editors express their regrets towards the literary trends in which "it is impossible to celebrate poetry written by women without such poetry being

also regrets that "studies of American women poets have tended to focus on a poetics of personal experience, frequently grounded in identity politics" which has further marginalized these feminist avant-garde poets (xii). Vickery also argues that even well known anthologies of women writings such as Kim Whitehead's *The Feminist Poetry Movement* and Cynthia Franklin's *Writing Women's Communities* have placed more emphasis on the identity politics or the community of sameness rather than the issue of "linguistic subversion in constructing a single feminist poetic tradition" (12). Kathleen Fraser thus made a sarcastic comment that "even when a tradition of women's literature began to emerge, its formally radical wing was clipped" (Frost xvii). Deborah M. Mix infers this phenomena from the fact that the conventional feminist critics think the radical sense of feminist experimental poetry weakens women's power and jeopardizes the foundation of the feminist political movement by dispensing with the experientially based female identity built mainly on the body (10). She further states that these poetry critics tend to gravitate toward "so-called expressive feminist writing by poets like Sharon Olds, Judy Grahn, and Lucille Clifton" that focuses more on the experiential elements of women's political practice.

In other words, many feminist critics and editors have turned their backs on women's 'experimental' avant-garde poetry because their poetic languages do not have a coherent and homogeneous voice of a female speaker and thereby lacks the confident self-assertion of feminist identity. Instead, the feminist avant-garde poets whom I have included in this dissertation questioned the very notion of the poetic 'I.' Rather than constructing strong and confessional female voices, these women poets rather invented an

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relegated to the perfumed category known as 'women's poetry'" and its "women-centeredness" (qtd. in Bryant 15).

amorphous, multiple and changeable notion of 'I' that can constantly reverse and undo the clear-cut dualism between subject/object, masculine/feminine, etc. Thus, a major attribute of their poetic languages is an alternative notion of 'I' or what Frost calls the creation of "new feminist consciousness" emerging from their new language. Frost further mentions that this was made possible through the two commonly shared beliefs of the language-oriented female poets/writers: "language shapes consciousness" and "language can change consciousness" (xiii). The feminist avant-garde poets I included here also believe, to varying degrees, that their poetic languages had a constitutive power to implicate human subjectivity—especially female subjectivity—differently from any dominant cultural and social context.

Although this double marginalization still exists in the literary field, however, as analyzed earlier, some contemporary poetry critics and poets began to recognize and raise the political importance of language-oriented feminist poetry and recover the new feminist lineage in the field of innovative American poetry. For example, the poetry critic Margaret Homans in *Women Writers and Poetic Identity* revalues and celebrates Emily Dickinson's innovative language and explains how her poetic power lying "in the manipulation of language" (201) reverses its ordinary meanings, "disrupts traditional relations between the sexes" or sexual determinism, and further helps her break "out of the terms of gender altogether" (209). Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Frost, and Linda A. Kinnahan also highly value the political power of Stein, Loy, H. D., Djuna Barnes, and more recent works of Susan Howe and Beverly Dahlen (Mix 13-14). Juliana Spahr and Mix are another poetry critics who highly esteem Stein, Mullen, Lyn Hejinian, and especially the Korean American poet Theresa Hak Kyung Cha on account of her political

attempts to offer a dialogic relationship between readers and text and reinscribe the dynamics between the groups of the central and the marginalized (Spahr 9-11). Mix also regards Stein as the first to articulate a "feminist experimentalist community" (4).

From these examples, we see that although their literary aesthetics and theoretical measures are distinct from each other, "redefinition," "re-inscription," and "rediscovery" are the keywords that these critics commonly use to describe modern/contemporary language-oriented feminist poetry in America. My research aim in this dissertation is also to analyze the experimental poetic languages of H. D., Stein, Hong, and Cha, and discuss their languages' ethical–political potential to sustain a "new" (female) poetic subject—not based on homogeneous biological/social structures—and her new experiences. For this purpose, throughout my main chapters, I will ask: Who are these poetic "I"s in their works and what are their attributes? Is this new poetic "I" a single and coherent subject or a "becoming" subject of a sentence that does not have any fixed ground? How do the language-oriented poems suggest possibilities for reconstructing the writing/reading subject and reshaping the conventional female subject's position in language? How do they alter the rigid conception of gender division through diverse narrative devices? Do they prioritize language plays with conventional grammar and syntax or mainly use affect-driven language?

I answer these questions in chapters 2, 3, and 4, covering diverse theoretical perspectives on and approaches to the concept of "difference," from psychoanalytic feminist theory to contemporary queer and phenomenological theories such as Judith Butler's "performative" theory and Gille Deleuze and Felix Guattari's phenomenological theory of embodiment. Of course, how these theorists and poets inscribe the pure sense of

"'difference" —whether that is sexual, gender, or cultural difference—in language and construct a new poetic subject are distinct from each other. In chapter 2, for instance, I demonstrate how H. D. and the French feminists Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous attempt to inscribe the "female otherness" and its "sexual difference" in the realm of language and break the paternal law. For instance, Irigaray demands that we register the female subject's intimate relation to her body and its "gratuitous, accidental, unforeseen" pleasures in the realm of language, so that it can be inscribed with diverse messages and meanings (*TS* 96). These self-affective and corporeal meanings are derived from different sexual experiences and feelings, felt differently not only between the genders, but also among different women themselves across boundaries of gender, culture, and race, and even within themselves. Therefore, her notion of "sexual difference" does not depend on Lacanian "phallic difference" or his notion of binary format of the Symbolic. Their perspectives also differ from the Freudian sense of biological or anatomical sexual difference, whose binary structure is based on the presence or lack of a penis. Within this free-flowing economy of écriture *féminine*, my and your identities are often exchanged and become the new. Furthermore, all the fixed representations of people/things in the world are erased and the hierarchical binaries between them are muddled to where "the one is in the other and the other in me" (Irigaray, *Speculum* 200).

Yet to Butler, whose theory I deal with in chapter 3, the French feminists' syntax of "the Other" is inseparable from heterosexual discourse and its logic, and thus still controlled and dominated by the "law of the Father." In chapter 3, I therefore examine how Butler explains both the theoretical limits of these French feminists' aesthetics and how to build on them. Butler's biggest concern is that their feminist

aesthetics does not provide a female subject with linguistic agency. But Butler's "performative" subject, which opens to infinite transformation in the linguistic realm—when applied to gender and sexuality—emancipates women from their subordinate position and makes them fetishists who also have a "lesbian phallus" through which they can claim their own desires by using language. To Butler, the primary signifier, "the Phallus" is an imaginative field that can be covered up by anyone's body parts, and to do so constitutes a different signifying process where the name can signify differently from what is meant in heterosexual norms. What promotes Butler's alternative female imaginary system is thus, rather, historical differences and contextual specificities that function as contingent occasions. That is, each individual's personal, historical, and cultural backgrounds—more than biological differences—offer her female subject the contingent occasions to choose and fill Lacanian "Phallus" with their diverse lesbian phalluses and resignify "the speech in [different] contexts that exceed those determined by courts" (*Excitable* 23). Like Butler, Stein would agree that the symbolic system should be a more transferable and less sexist economy that can constantly express different kinds of female desires and experiences. So, through various phonetic sound games and syntactic experiments, Stein attempts to foreground that different female desires, pleasures and family relations can be also legitimated and approved as literary facts in her material language.

In contrast, so-called feminist phenomenologists such as Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti, whose theories I review and discuss in chapter 4, adopt Deleuze and Guattari's embodiment theory and prioritize the subject's lived bodily experiences and affective senses to escape the workings of conventional social powers and transform our

formal knowledge system. Grosz criticizes Butler's "performative" theory for overstating the performative nature of one's sexed body and for disregarding the potential of one's physical body whose ability "always extend[s] the frameworks which attempt to contain them, to seep beyond their domains of control" (*Volatile* xi).[5] Grosz's project for a future feminism[6] is thus rather accomplished by using one's bodily intuition and its affective register. For instance, her definition of "woman" is an affect-related female subject that can manifest herself both as a singular and collective, through the affective responses towards the world. Like Irigaray, she thus proposes constructing the female subject "as a sieve or cipher through which dynamic forces and intensity emerges" and can be opened into unexpected or uncontained future events (*Time* 168–69). In *Becoming Undone*, she similarly argues that the future feminist subject should not be identified or reduced into a "discourse / representation" of a certain group of people but should be seen as a "mode of resonance or vibration, incomplete modes of connection or disconnection" (79–80). Grosz also uses the term "concept," equating it with the female body and its future

[5] Of course, as Sara Salih claims, Butler does not deny the existence of culturally and socially more specific bodies located in the concrete historical contexts and this is what she mainly argues at the end of *Subjects of Desire* (Salih 143-44). Although "it is true that much of her work is engaged in deconstructing ontological 'grounds' (such as the postulation 'I fell/experience, there fore I am') in order to reveal their groundlessness" (144), Salih pointedly notes that in *Body that Matters*, Butler actually accepts the existence of more primary and emancipated sense of bodies and bodily experiences that "lives and eat; eat and sleep; feel pain and pleasure; endure illness and violence . . . [which] cannot be dismissed as mere construction" (xi). Nevertheless, she fundamentally distinguishes Butler's definition of body and materialism from more natural, unrepresssed sense of bodies and bodily experiences that some Deleuzian scholars and affect theorists emphasize.

[6] Grosz also aims for feminism in the future, trying to make the feminist movement an ongoing struggle without end. To her, our history is a Deleuzian sense of a "virtual realm" in which unexpected things have not yet come: "the history of each discipline can be regarded as the site of unactualized virtualities, of potentialities that never had their time to emerge" (*Time* 168-69).

identity. Seeing the female body as a "concept" implies that our bodies can protract themselves to the outside world and enable something that is currently unattainable or unutterable to be represented in the future (81). In other words, Grosz's "concept" as female identity does not denote what we are or what we know now but what we can be in the future and how we can be opened up to a different future that does not yet exist (81).

Braidotti is another feminist critic who emphasizes the specific and concrete female sexual experiences and their differences as perceptible through bodily organs. But one cannot say that she is a sexual essentialist or biological determinist, since her notion of "sexual difference" proceeds on three different levels: "the difference between men and women," "differences among women," and "difference within each woman" (*Nomadic Subjects* 151). She further argues that this pure sense of sexual differences should not be considered as "a categorical distinction but as an exercise in naming different facets of a single complex phenomenon." Deleuze and Guattari also prioritize this non-reductive nature and account of one's body and its communication with the outside world that does not return to the same "pre-subjective horizon of intelligibility" (Cutler and MacKenzie 65). Their fundamental aim in *Difference and Repetition* is therefore to complicate one's pre-subjective horizon of intelligibility and "connect bodies of learning to the philosophical construction of knowledge in a manner that does not return to a privileged subjectivity and that does not therefore reinstate the priority of knowledge over learning" (67).

From now on, I will outline how I applied these theories on gender and language to the works of H. D., Stein, Hong, and Cha, before moving on to more detailed examinations of their poetic languages in each chapter. In chapter 2, "art thou a ghost, my

sister ...?", I set out my theoretical approach to the conventional psychoanalytic understanding of female sexuality by referring to Freud and Lacan's theories of female sexuality and their relation to language. Without dwelling on the patriarchal limitations to their opinions concerning femininity, I further incorporate Irigaray's notion of "sexual difference" and Julia Kristeva's concept of "semiotics" to explain H. D.'s new poetic technique and its construction of a new (female) poetic consciousness in *HERmione* (1927) and *Helen in Egypt* (1955). H. D.'s new female subject is often represented through her concepts of "over-conscious mind" or "bell-Jar experience." What distinguished her works from the mainstream of high modernism in the early 1920s was her attraction for and engagement with the different types of sexual politics and female-centered language, all of which helped her inscribe new female experiences and desires in her poetic language. Around that time, her literary focus shifted from Imagist topics to the inscription of sexual difference or female "otherness" in language, as seen in *Hedylus, Palimpsest, HER*, and *Bid me to Live.* The main goal of her later works is embracing the diverse female experiences such as maternity, lesbianism, "sororal eros," and bisexuality with the creative power of her poetic language. By that time, she was also possessed by haunting visions of mysterious symbols that resembled the sun-disc, Nike, Tripod, and soldiers, etc. And she wanted to decode the meaning of these hieroglyphs, because she thought that her psychic "otherness" was represented through them and they were linked to her notions of a passionate and spiritual female "otherness" that is otherwise ungraspable by patriarchal dualism. So she attempted to explore this ineffable realm of female unconsciousness in her poetic language and consequently revise the dominant social grammar in which woman is never defined as a "speaking" and "desiring" subject.

I further investigate how H. D.'s concept of sexual difference or female "otherness" is differentiated from Freud's "bisexuality" and can further apply to the French feminist's notion of "feminine syntax", whose major themes are also the split of the female self and reconstruction of a selfhood that embraces this sexual "otherness." Within this context, I further examine how the dilemma of the "female transvestite"— the intimacy between women's mirror images and phallic gaze—was broken and solved by H. D.'s poetic language in her later works. Especially, through the techniques of subject /object confusion, impulsive rhythm, assonance/consonance, repetition, oxymoron, and punning substitutions of similar words, I argue that H. D.'s female subject of "seeing" successfully escapes the dominant male gaze and allows herself the reflective distance from which she can analyze her own gestures without using the masculine lens.

In chapter 3, "A Room with an Open Window: Reading Gertrude Stein with Judith Butler's Performative Theory," I explore how the alternative writing subjectivity is constructed in Stein's poetic language, with a theoretical emphasis on Butler's "performativity" and "perlocutionary speech act." I apply Butler's linguistic theory to Stein's poetic language, which does not guarantee that speech will depart from the speaker's original intention and return to the addressee in a conventional manner. Like Butler, Stein maximizes the unpredictable nature of language and reconstructs her poetic subjects in the dominant cultural/social realm. In other words, through the repeated use of "perlocutionary speech act," the contents of her language are constantly revised, recreated, and restaged in different contexts and make an infinitely altered and ungraspable "performative" subject. Using examples of Stein's "landscape" language, I also closely examine how they represent the speaker's subjectivity as "performative."

This "performative" subject is without foundation and always opens to the infinite process of transformation when encountering new and unfamiliar desires derived from the realm of signification. To explain this, Stein developed the container motifs in *Tender Buttons* (1914) and readapted them to the "landscape" motif in "Plays." In "Plays," she compared "the excitable play" to a "landscape" that "make[s] itself its own landscape," and suggested that our language is a phenomenological space where one cannot predict fixed meanings but can only identify the power of its contingent and immediate meanings in different contexts (*Lectures* 125).

To support Stein's ideas on language, I analyze Butler's concepts of "performative subjectivity" and "perlocutionary language," arguing that Stein also believes one's reality is relevant not to what is represented inside but to how s/he is represented in the language. In other words, Stein's notion of "reality" takes place within the realm of writing and is perceived there. In "Portraits and the Repetition," she thus writes, "I was empty of them I made them contained within the thing I wrote that was them" (*Writings 1932-1946* 308). Moreover, her definition of "fun" and "excitable" language means a language in which the act of "spreading," "blending," and "cooking" the infinitely changeable referents of the words takes place (*LMNHI* 189). In other words, Butler and Stein both make the most of the unstable and intrusive nature of language and emphasize the diverse ways of interpreting the realities of things and people.

Chapter 4, "The Language as a Sounding *Mo'um* (Body)," explores how the poetic languages of the Korean American poets Hong and Cha serve as cognitive rupture and evoke the unknown "otherness" within the speaker's or readers' mind by using Deleuze's theory of embodied language and "becoming." I mainly argue that their poetic

languages—especially Hong's unique usage of native Korean words and Cha's reimagining words as white/blank space—function as anonymous signifiers and help their new poetic subjects progress "from the 'fully limbed' [state] . . . to the 'fully limbless [one]'" in the Deleuzian sense (Yau). According to Joseph Jonghyun Jeon, a new generation of Asian-American literature emerged from the group of writers born after the 1960s and gained prominence in the 90s. This new generation, Jeon says, distanced themselves from the old "ethnic literature" published before the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and struggled to embody myriad more diverse forms of cultural "differences" in their works (Rev. of *The Children of 1965* 529–31). Min Hyung Song also argues that this new generation of Asian American writers felt "compelled to distinguish their own work from what became reified as typical Asian American writing, a body of work perceived as replete with clichés derived from a lexicon of tired tropes and predictable characteristics" (qtd. in Jeon, Rev. of *The Children of 1965*, 529). These arguments suggest that one cannot simply describe this new group of Asian American writers in relation to "ethnic literature." Their works should be, rather, considered a new space where "a kind of individual artistic agency 'distinct from the social context from which art springs'" is represented (530). Especially, Song's *The Children of 1965* refashions Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of "involution" and "becoming," explaining how these theoretical concepts help us understand this new Asian American literature's tendency to invert the negative formulation of previous ethnic identity "to [a] more positive formulation that privileges the becoming of a possible future Asian American subject" (531). Similarly, in this chapter, I argue that Hong and Cha belong to this new generation of Asian-American writers which Jeon and Song defined, and that their affect-

driven languages "not only deterritorialize oppressive, racist structures [of the old poetic "I"] but support the works of reterritorialization and production of new assemblages" of identity. In *Translating Mo'um*, for instance, Hong often uses native Korean words, which remain untranslated and indecipherable, but their mimicked sound of Korean often relates to the speaker's intimate feeling of touch and bodily senses. In other words, Hong's speakers use their parents' mother tongue as physical and material sounds inseparable from their bodily experiences and senses. The body here thus serves as a bridge that regenerates the conventional relationship between the inner and outer world and imbues it with different meanings. In this regard, Hong's unique ways of using Korean words can be considered an effective political tool when applied to the doubly discriminated-against bodies of "Asian American" and "female" subjects, because this hybrid and minoritized language becomes the entrance through which the fixed meanings of her sign system—which the speaker uses to perceive her own body and self—are changed and re-formatted. In this regard, John Yau rightly points out that Hong writes from terrain in which her poetic language is always in continual collision and becoming something else by undergoing the process from "'fully limbed' (those in control) to the 'fully limbless' (those at the mercy of others)" ("At Play in the Fields of Language"). This statement also strongly resonates with Deleuze's notion of "Body without Organ" and its "rhyzomatic" explosion or transformation, which is a necessary process to re-form the new poetic subject in the state of "becoming."

In the second half of chapter 4, I similarly examine how Cha's recurrent motif of language as white/blank space and her insertion of white spaces throughout *Dictée* invert the negative formulation of "I" as a conceptual category to a "becoming" or "in-between"

ethnic identity. Besides *Dictée*, in many of her performances, such as *Aveugle Voix* (1975) and *A Ble Wail* (1975), she wears white clothes or white Korean traditional clothes with a white virtual screen beneath or in the background. This white body intermingled with the cotton clothes also often undermines her "fully limbed" state of previous "I" and re-inscribes her body with immediate and multiple meanings in the present tense. Her body and voice here thus become the anonymous space where different forms of communication take place and the clear distinction between "I" and "you" is constantly eliminated so that its meaning can be constantly deterritorialized and reterritorialized. Trinh T. Minh-Ha thus rightly notes that Cha's voice in her performances is composed of the "plural and [the] utterly singular" at the same time ("White Spring" 33). For instance, the narrator's voice in *Dictée* covers the ranges of different voices from her own mother to the foremothers of Korea such as Yoo Guan Soon to other female figures that influenced Cha's past selves: the nine Muses in Greek literature and Joan of Arc ("White Spring" 33-34). This new female poetic identity, which emerged out of her language as a phenomenological space, always anticipates the arrival of new and different forms of identities, without seeking to redeem any coherent and collective cogito.

Although the feminist avant-garde poets and theorists mentioned above all define the terms "femininity," "feminine writing," and "female subject" differently, I believe they would agree that their own representational systems reinvestigate the fixed relationship between language and the world, produce different notions of "I"s that are rendered less sexist, more incoherent and transformable by the very process of "becoming" and, finally, express different kinds of desires and pleasures in the dominant

field of language. My reading of these four feminist poets as feminist exiles, who struggled to be emancipated from the deadening effects of the dominant language and culture, also reflect the endeavors of contemporary feminists and their fundamental political aims to reject the "identity politic" and embrace the diverse possible others and minorities into the terms "female subject" and "femininity." My future research will be also oriented towards future-oriented feminism and its movements that are involved in an "ongoing" process of "becoming-Others," rather than feminists and their movements that seek only to attain a stable and fixed political position for the female subject. I believe that it is only through this "collective" yet simultaneously "singular" act of "becoming" that we can arrive at a series of different "nows," which transcend and transform our sense of gender/sexuality and imbue it with "things new / and old" (H. D., *Trilogy* 49).

Chapter II. "art thou a ghost, my sister. . . ?"[7]: Reading H. D.'s *HERmione* and *Helen in Egypt* with Luce Irigaray's *Écriture Féminine*

1. Introduction

This chapter argues that the poetic language in H. D.'s later works, such as *HERmione* (1927), *Trilogy* (1946), and *Helen in Egypt* (1955), breaks through the phallocentric order and rewrites female unconsciousness. I draw on the theories of Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva to clarify H. D.'s literary aesthetic and innovative techniques. H. D.'s later works demonstrate an urgent need to throw off the phallic pressures of contemporary male writers and poets and find more authentic and autonomous female voice. Megan Simpson also says, due to her sexual frustration and anxiety within the patriarchal literary tradition, many of her writings "stand in significant ways outside of both twentieth century traditions" (76). In other words, H. D. struggled hard to escape the male speculative economy Irigaray compares to the omniscient "Father's eye" or "Panoptic mirror-world" where the female subject only becomes "the inverted other of the masculine subject (his *alter ego*)" (*TS* 129) and to find more fulfilled, diverse and evolving forms of female identities and voices—that do not share any homogeneous biological/social structures—in her own language.

For instances, her relationship with contemporary male writers such as Ezra Pound was complicated and difficult. Thomas Simmons says that Pound was to her "the

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[7] H. D. cited Algernon Charles Swinburne's poem, "Before the Mirror" in *HERmione* (126). This poem was inspired by J. M. Whistler's three paintings: *Symphony in White No. 1*, *Symphony in White No. 2* and *Symphony in White No. 3*, each illustrating his mistress, wife and prostitute respectively. Swinburne's poem also has three parts, each describing one of these female figures. The second part of "Before the Mirror" concerns the image of Whistler's wife looking at herself in a mirror and calling herself "ghost, my sister" while questioning her own existence.

master enthraller [and] the father–lover whose lure was both passionate comforter and an emblem of mortality" (41). H. D. also suffered from Pound's constant demand that she be the perfect sexual opposition to him and his art-world. Pound's *Hilda's Book* shows how much he advocated the "oppositional, hierogamic, and coequal male–female relationship," even comparing it to the marriage of earth and heaven in which "characters are dynamic opposites and thus form a balance of power" (DuPlessis, *The Career* 120). Throughout her career, H. D. thus struggled to resist Pound's misogynist phallicism and restore an autonomous selfhood. Susan Stanford Friedman also argues that H. D.'s later works insist that the "artistic autonomy [of a woman writer who] depends on her ability to throw off the overwhelming male presence in literary tradition" (*Psyche* 150).

This was a noteworthy change from her earlier Imagist poetry, which mostly focused on the immediate transmission of meaning, to her later poems and to novels such as *HERmione*, *Trilogy*, and *Helen in Egypt*, which are more engaged with techniques that induce discontinuous deferral or endless transformation of meaning. That is to say, as Chisholm states, whereas her earlier Imagist poems such as "Oread" have a style of hardness and clarity that Pound thought produced a direct "presentation of phenomenological immediacy and intensity," *Trilogy*, for example, asks more fundamental questions about female writers' ability to see themselves as speaking, knowing, desiring, and self-signifying subjects (52). Elizabeth A. Hirsh also calls H. D. both an "imagist" and "post-imagist," defiant of Pound's formalistic Imagist technique that prioritizes clarity of meanings and the evocation of their timeless knowledge (439). For instances, H. D.'s later works such as *Tribute to Freud* (1944), *End to Torment* (1958), and *The Gift* (1943) re-conceptualize Pound's Image "in terms of a structure of

deferred interpretative action, a kind of psychic writing, that is very much at odds with the imagism of Pound" (438). Hirsh thus clearly distinguishes between H. D.'s and Pound's images, arguing that his regime of 'Imagism," including tenets such as "don't be viewy" and "use no word which does not contribute to the presentation of the object," aims to rid his language of "decorative metaphor." She further explains how this image as autonomous speech and knowledge is made by "removing 're' from representation through the elevation of interpretive metaphor" and thus presents something that is actually absent (448). In other words, Hirsh views Pound's Imagism as a male ideology where the female subject only reflects male forms. She therefore compares Pound's aesthetic to Lacan's explanation on the creation of the Symbolic that excludes different forms of gender. In other word, the common male attributes connecting Pound's ideogram to Lacan's phallic symbol, Hirsh says, are narcissism and disregard for the disappearance of the black spot, or the female being.

For these reasons, we can say that what makes H. D.'s works stand out from other mainstream modernist avant-garde poets is her interest in new sexual politics and constructing a female-centered language, an interest resonant with the theories of Irigaray and Cixous. While H. D. could not have been influenced by feminist theories flourishing in the 1970's, her rejection of one-sided male-female relationships and her urgent need to inscribe the 'other' female voices in language strongly resonates with Irigaray's ideas in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974) and *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1977), which were published thirty thirteen years after H. D.'s final book of poetry, *Helen in Egypt*.

Although not directly influenced by these psychoanalytic feminists, H. D. was in fact a great admirer of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. According to Kristina M. Darling,

psychoanalysis became increasingly popular in America during the first half of the twentieth century. It was used to modernize social mores and broaden sexual discourse, and even incorporated into popular culture, such as mysteries and the interpretation of dreams (2). H. D.'s own relationship with psychoanalytic theory is traceable to 1930, when her sessions with Freud began. Friedman says her earliest acquaintance with psychoanalysis began even before she and her friend, France Josepha Gregg "left for Europe in 1911" (qtd. in Chisholm19). But, after finding alternatives to Freud's restricted structure of sexuality, H. D.'s later works such as *The Walls Do Not Fall* (1942-44), *Tribute to the Angels* (1944-45), *Trilogy* and *Helen in Egypt*—all written after Freud's death—start to deal with issues disregarded by Freud, such as more co-equal and fluid bonds of twin-ship between men and woman and how to inscribe diverse and evolving forms of femininity and sexual difference in language. In other words, as Dianne Chisholm mentions, during the session with Freud, she found her own hermetic formula, the perfect medium for her self-signification which was her "visionary gift of writing . . . her sign, her reading [which] was her victory" (35) and this has "poetic roots outside of Freudianism" (43). More importantly, to seek freedom from patriarchal thralldom and express new experiential female consciousness called "jelly-fish experiences," H. D. replaces the mother's role as child-bearer with more diverse and transformable sexual roles and relations to the child. DuPlessis thus argues that H. D.'s solution to Freud's definition of woman as a lack is to enter the heterosexual love and make it complete "by matrisexual passion—child to mother, mother to child . . . [which also] includes the sororal services of love for both mother and child from another 'mother-child,' a wise woman" (*The Career* 124). The key elements of H. D.'s new poetic consciousness are

thus the repressed "pre-Oedipal erotics" and what DuPlessis calls, the intimate sororal love between the two women, sage femmes, both of which the Symbolic cannot represent but her visionary writing/reading can. Therefore, instead of arguing that H. D. coalesces and transcends her inner dualism to achieve a perfect and united self, with fixed meanings, in this chapter, I'll observe how H. D.'s 'priestess' or 'sage-femme' figures, in her later works, interact with each other and constitute their new female consciousness from a post-structural perspective. There are still many contemporary critics who argue that H. D.'s female characters aim at recovering the 'One' truth—whole and perfect. They emphasize her rhetorical and narrative technique of "pairing the polar opposite" and "unities in dualism" and argue that these methods fundamentally "release a 'heroic' self'" that has a complete and united meaning, created through "H. D.'s old dream of 'man-woman,' 'woman-man,' the balanced opposites" (Ostriker 36, 37). But, I argue that H. D.'s new poetic subjectivity is a more fluid and dynamic one that constantly shifts and reembraces more diverse sexual experiences and differences. This perspective differs from the definition of women both in Freud's binary structure of sexuality—based on the presence or lack of the penis—and Lacan's notion of social genders—defined by his absolute mechanism of sexual difference, 'having' or 'being the Phallus.' Most of all, following the theoretical leads of DuPlessis and Claire Buck, I'll define H. D.'s subject formation as the process of "ever unraveling and reconstituting of a subject-in-process/ subject-in-question" (DuPlessis, *The Career* 110). That H. D. often changed her pseudonyms and initials throughout her career also supports this definition (110-11). That is, H. D.'s innovative narrative techniques and styles contribute to constructing a new, amorphous, anonymous and constantly shifting female subjectivity. Before more closely

exploring the relationship between H. D.'s new female consciousness and French feminists' ideas on "the other" femininity and female syntax, I will first analyze *Tribute to Freud* and explore how H. D.'s search for her perfect and united selfhood began during her sessions with Freud and how it took on a new aspect by confronting his ideas on the female subject as a 'lack.'

2. H. D AND FREUD

While H. D. did endorse Freudian theory and use his techniques such as "projections, repetition, compulsion, repression" for her own treatment and free association process (Friedman, *Psyche* 28), there was a fundamental gap between how H. D. and Freud approached the idea of true femininity and female sexuality. H. D.'s definition of "perfect femininity" is opposed to 'Master's explanation on the woman who is herself perfect because "she has lost her spear" (*TF* 68-69). The first part of *Tribute to Freud*, *Writing on the Wall* (1944), is H. D.'s memoir of her sessions with Freud and her experiences with Bryher (Annie Winifred Ellerman), who was her best friend and lover for over forty years. The second part, *Advent* (1948), is also the journal H. D. wrote during her sessions with Freud. While Freud's theory concerns phallocentrism, female hysteria, penis-envy and the definition of woman as a lack, H. D. often demonstrates a feminist revisionist attitude towards these issues and considers that more fulfilling female experiences and identities—that are not confined to the male-centered discourse—might exist. H. D.'s later works thus often bear similarities to Irigaray and Cixous' feminist readings of Freudian and Lacanian theories. This is because their critical readings also resulted from the complaints that the male lineage of psychoanalytic discourse—from

Freud's binary structure of sexuality to Lacan's notion of the Symbolic—didn't adequately represent the 'true' female voices and desires hidden underneath. Moreover, the years from 1933 to 1934, H. D. had sessions with Freud, was when British and German psychoanalysts, Ernest Johns and Karen Horney questioned and began to correct Freud's biased definition of a woman as a castrated being (Buck 99).

H. D.'s sessions with Freud began in 1933 at Dr. Hanns Saches's recommendation. Besides Dr. Saches, H. D. also had sessions with Mr. Havelock Ellis and Miss Mary Chadwick to discuss her nervous breakdowns caused by the collapse of her friend (Pearson vii). But, unlike with Chadwick and Saches, H. D. confesses that her first impression of Freud "not only demonstrate[d] the power of her immediate attachment but also present[ed] an infrequently observed aspects of great man" (Friedman, *Psyche* 19). H. D. trusted him as a spiritual guide who could illuminate her darkness and cure her inner schism and even mythologized him as a great scientist (24). But, though she admired and was on good terms with him during the sessions, H. D. stopped seeing him after 1934 and focused on her works such as *Writing on the Wall* or *Helen in Egypt* and continued her interaction with Freud only "in the aesthetic world of memoir and poem" (20).

Although her initial justification for therapy was her nervous breakdown caused by painful experiences during WWI, "such as breaking up of her marriage with Aldington, the death of her brother in service in the war and her birth of her child, her break up of her literary circles in London" (Pearson v), the deeper reason was her desire to heal her internal schism and forge a perfect framework of her female self. From the earlier years, H. D. felt a schism inside her and wanted to bridge over those binary

polarities towards "the transcendental synthesis to construct the new whole that incorporate the thesis and anti-thesis" (Friedman, *Psyche* 152). Of course, as previously mentioned, I'd argue that her sense of "wholeness and integration of a self whose many polarities fuse in the psychoanalytic crucible" does not have any fixed and homogeneous meaning (Duplessis, *The Career* 110). But, in *Tribute to Freud*, she actually confesses that her life is a series of doubles—"two's and two's and two's and two's in my life" (31). For instances, she had two half-brothers, the twin graves of two sisters—although one was a half-sister—and two sets of parents, her own parents and her grandparents, and she even lived in two countries. H. D. also thought there were two opposite selves inside her and by combining them she could fill a fundamental gap and be a perfect and fully-satisfied whole: "So in me, two distinct racial or biological or psychological entities tend to grow nearer or to blend even as time heals old breaks in consciousness" (*TB* 32). This sense of self-alienation was also represented through the forms of "external sexual division in the family, the opposition between female and male, mother and father" (Buck 104). H. D. thus tried to record her memories, her unconscious and private visions and symbols and showed them to Freud. Like Freud, she started to believe that there existed "the great forest of the unknown, the supernormal or supernatural" inside her and wanted to understand how she could cope with this mystery to live her future life (*TF* 13).

But Freud analyzed her dream images and symbols only in terms of a family complex. As is well known, his theory of sexuality revolves around the issues of a having / lacking or wholeness / loss dyad. For example, Freud applied the idea of castration only to the female subject, claiming that a woman cannot "see" and therefore cannot be the subject of "seeing." He supported the idea by using the example of how girls and boys

differ in initial perception of the absence of a penis in the female body. Whereas a boy "disown[s] what he has seen, soften[s] it down and endow[s] it with a meaning in relation to the boy's own subjectivity," that is, fetishizes his body, a girl, on the other hand, finds it hard to be a fetishizer because of the closeness of her body, which keeps reminding her of castration (Doane 23). When confronted by the anatomical difference between the two sexes, Freud's "normal" girl apparently accepts her lack and gradually becomes a passive object of male fetishism. In short, his "normal" femininity, as expounded in "Femininity," is initiated when a girl's "self-love is mortified by the comparison with the boy's far superior equipment and in consequence she renounces the masturbatory satisfaction from her clitoris" (Freud 354). He further explains that a girl's rejection of her mother as a love object and devaluation of her own sex organ becomes "the very necessary precondition for that process of 'becoming a woman'" (Irigaray, *Speculum* 109). When it comes to the "Oedipal phase," he further claims, a little girl no longer identifies with the phallic mother and instead seeks to have a "penis baby" from her father to be the object of desire for men (Mitchell 105-8)[8]:

> The pre-Oedipal girl abandons her mother as love-object under the influence of her sense of the ultimate inferiority of her clitoris. At the same time, she is likely to give up her clitoris too – that is to say her manual masturbation of it. She wants nothing to remind her of the wound to her narcissism – neither her all-

[8] According to Juliet Mitchell, this process of the development of "normal" femininity further extends to Freud's binary division between the male as a "seeing" and "desiring" subject and the female as an object to be seen and desired. After a girl recognizes her lack, she shifts the source of her pleasure from her clitoris to her vagina and constructs her body with an inactive and passive libido. This further makes her an object in the realm of "seeing" and "speaking," and allows her to see and speak only when wearing a male "penis-eye" (105-8).

> responsible, 'castrated' mother, nor her own 'little penis.' The two go together. The girl realizes that she cannot possess her mother, hence the clitoris loses its active connotations, . . . (107)

For these reasons, Freud interprets the Egyptian princess in H. D.'s recurring "Princess dream" as her pre-oedipal mother, identifies the baby floating down the Nile river as the baby Moses and H. D. herself as "the child Miriam" who "had stood half hidden in the river-reeds, watching over the new-born child who was to become leader of a captive people" with jealous eyes (*TF* 108):

> But the Professor insisted I myself wanted to be Moses; not only did I want to be a boy but I wanted to be a hero. He suggested my reading Otto Rank's *Der Mythus von der Geburt des Helden* (120).

In *Advent,* too, Freud diagnosed H. D. as a narcissistic and dependent being who had not gotten over her desire for pre-Oedipal mother. Freud mentioned that she "had not made the conventional transference from mother to father, as is usual with a girl at adolescence" and from this fact he even extrapolated that her father might have been a cold man (*TF* 136). Moreover, when H. D. explained how her journey to Corfu island with Brhyer was a perfect experience and how long they had been together, Freud simply qualified their relationship as "Not normal, so much as ideal" (168). This way, he gradually began to position himself as having absolute "Truth" in his relationship with H. D. and she thus called him "a Supreme Being" who can "break something in [herself] of which [she] was partially aware—something that would not, must not be broken" (16). But meanwhile she also vaguely sensed that "the Professor was not always right" (18). For example, H. D.'s free association process was often interrupted by Freud, who

indicated his own desires for what he wanted to hear from her, and this made her often frustrated and unsure of what to say to him. Even during early sessions, he told her that she came to him to find her 'mother': "But you felt you wanted to tell your mother" (30). H. D. clearly remembers how this strange foresight puzzled and confused her because her mother had long passed away and the little child inside her that longed for mother was already gone (17):

> The Professor had said in the very beginning that I had come to Vienna hoping to find my mother. Mother? Mamma. But my mother was dead. I was dead; that is, the child in me that had called her mamma was dead. Anyhow, he was a terribly frightening old man, too old and too detached, too wise and too famous altogether, to beat that way with his fist, like a child hammering a porridge-spoon on the table.

But as time passed, as though trying to meet Freud's expectation, H. D. began to recall her childhood memories and connected them mostly to her relationship with her mother and brother and suspect she might have been her brother's keeper: "Am I my brother's keeper? It appears so" (101). For instance, the memory of a tall 'Flying Dutchman' is followed by the memory of playing in the backyard with her 'tall' brother. H. D. remembered how they lifted up a heavy log under which swarming larva and insects were hidden. She also recalled that she went to downtown Bethlehem with her brother and mother during her childhood, but when her brother disobeyed mother and didn't move on the street, her mother had left them with a cool and indifferent laugh. H. D., however, mentions that Freud's interpretations of these memories were always too clear and illuminating as if his words held "something of death, of finality, of Dead Sea Fruit" (30).

For these reasons, although she knew Freud was not always right and her "bat-like thought-wings" were struggling underneath, she still found herself trying not to contradict his expectations nor "cheat the recorder of [his] Book of Life."[9] H. D. thus often compares Freud's rigid and businessman-like interpretations with the terms such as "Recordings of Angel," "Book of Life," "Day of Judgment" and the "tapestry of cause and effect." But, at the end of *Writing on the Wall*, H. D. finally begins to distance herself from Freud's approach to her hieroglyphs and confesses that she didn't want her symbols to be turned into the simple "reconstruction of cause and effects" through Freud's "overworked technical terms . . . [while having] side-tracked the issues in hand" (87-88). Besides her mysterious symbols, to Freud, even the sacred statue of Pallas Athena, representing a 'perfect' woman, was reduced to a mere 'good' with material value or a

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[9] Regarding this transfer, Buck in *H. D. and Freud* explains how H. D.'s initial aim of seeking her united and complete self-identity was impossible from the beginning, since she accorded Freud the place of "the significant Other" and identified her desires with those of Freud, who was the "subject supposed to know," to use the Lacanian term. To Lacan, one's subjectivity is the series of linguistic effects and therefore an inessential/insubstantial thing, because one's selfhood is attained only after the subject presumes the desires of the "significant Other" and locates himself/herself in the realm of language. Lacan thus warns against Freud's analytic attempts to substantiate or materialize the patient's unconsciousness and invest it with pre-ontological meanings. For these reasons, Buck claims that the position of this "Big Other," which H. D. assigned to Freud, not only failed to cure her but intensified her symptoms and internal schism (124). In contrast, the fundamental aim of Lacan's psychoanalytic sessions is to make the analysands recognize that the analyst does not have the solution to their symptoms and thus the omniscient knowledge they have attributed to him is nothing but their own illusions. In other words, patents should be disillusioned about the omnipotent power of the analyst and realize that they themselves are responsible for what they say and desire during a session. Lacan thus warns against the risks of letting patients become permanent objects of the analyst's desire. However, this transfer seems to have occurred in Freud's session with H. D. In *TF*, for instance, we can readily notice that Freud often gives clear hints about how he would interpret her dreams and memories, whereas she leads her free-association process more towards what she thinks Freud wants to hear. Buck is concerned about this possibility that H. D.'s free-association process was consciously manipulated by Freud's comments and interpretations (121).

"common property of the whole race" that must have common value "in translatable terms" (71):

> [H]e had dared to say that the dream symbol could be interpreted; its language, its imaginary were common to the whole race, not only of the living but of those ten thousands years dead. The picture writing, the hieroglyph of the dream, was the *common property* of the whole race. (*emphasis mine*)

Freud's secular aspects are further satirized through the images of "precise Jewish instinct in the general, for the personal in the impersonal or universal for the material in the abstract" (71). In the conversation with Freud, right before WWII, H. D. also compares him to biblical figures in the Old Testament whose major concern is immortality and ironizes the way Freud runs over the names of his grandchildren as if reciting "historical, genealogical references in a small print school of Sunday-school Bible" (62). To H. D., the book of Genesis, which describes the prehistoric period and the creation of the world, was somewhat limited since it left out "the exciting verses about the birds and the reptiles". This statement further suggests that H. D. acknowledges the existence of numberless 'others' who were excluded from both the patriarchal genealogy of the Bible and the male lineage of psychoanalytic discourse. She rather believes that "there is another region of cause and effect, another region of question and answer" beyond Freud's patriarchal discourse (99). That is, whereas Freud precludes any possibility that her dream symbols signify anything besides her lack or penis-envy, H. D. relates her hieroglyphs to the gift of femininity, or maternal signs (or the sign of maternal phallus) that the Father's paternal symbol has substituted for the girl's identification with the primary mother. For instance, H. D. recalls that when she found a big magnifying

glass in her father's study, she thought it resembled an ancient Egyptian symbol of eternity, a female sign. While Freud interpreted her 'gift' symbols given from paternal figures—such as "the slip from a cactus tree, given by the family gardener," an Ester-lily given by a 'General from the South'; or a branch of oranges from Freud (Buck 108)—as biological signs of her lack, H. D. found among those images an ancient maternal symbol, a sign that could serve as "a passport to her [mother], equally significantly, [as what] originates with her [mother]" (Buck 109). Buck further argues that her "phallic gift symbolizes the gift of a femininity which is not lacking, self-completion and sufficiency as woman." For instances, H. D.'s hieroglyphs, seen on a hotel room wall in Corfu island, including such images as a soldier, a goblet or chalice, a tripod and a winged woman ascending a ladder, were interpreted by Freud as "'freak' thoughts that had got out of hand, gone too far, a 'dangerous symptom'"(*TF* 51). And Buck explains that this is because her hieroglyphs do not belong to the psychoanalytic readings "Freud and psychoanalysis can give," since his theory "construes the question of desires and sufficiency [only] in terms of a relationship to the phallus, being or not-being, having or lacking" (123). In other words, the sufficient and perfect femininity H. D. sought through female symbols was an impossible thing to Freud from the beginning, since he assessed them only through the measure of phallus "which as a woman she cannot lay claim to" (123). At the end of *Writing on the Wall*, H. D. thus identifies herself with Mignon from Goethe's "Mignon's Longing" and her desire to escape the gaze of male 'Masters' becomes more heightened: "Dahin! Dahin! Geht unser Weg! o Vater, lass uns ziehn!" (*TF* 111).

In *Advent*, H. D. continues to read her hieroglyphs as fluid and alternative terms, not as a fixed significance that guarantees the truth of her identity. In her free association process, the meanings of her symbols are more phonematically construed by their connection to alliterated words such as "seal, symbol, serpent certainty, signet, Sigmund" (*TF* 88). While Freud interprets her hieroglyphs based on visual resemblance, as in the case of her 'gift' symbols, H. D.'s free association relies more on the words' sounds, rhythms and her instinctual sensations, not the male subject's visual obsession and pleasure. She further describes her hieroglyphs as a mysterious song, "not Schumann's music" that has technical and scientific musical notes, but a song that does not require an identifiable tune (90). This music is also compared to "the rhythm or language . . . only for cats and children" (124). In this way, H. D. continues to have her symbols float in this endless cycle of metamorphosis and lets them sing by themselves "like an echo of an echo in a shell—very far away yet very near" (90):

> I could not have trusted myself to say the words. They were there. They were singing. They went on singing like an echo of an echo in a shell—very far away yet very near—the very shell substance of my outer ear and the curled involuted or convoluted shell skull, and inside the skull, the curled, intricate, hermit-like mollusk, the brain-matter itself. . . . And even the words sing themselves without music, so it does not matter that I have not been able to identify the 'tune' as we lilted it.

Buck also notes that H. D.'s mysterious symbols in *Advent* are all described in the present tense and their meanings are left to the reader's immediate interpretation, rather than having a fixed and homogeneous meaning (127). For that reason, she makes a further

distinction between this free association process in which "another associative chain is being formed, [and] makes the notes a continuation of the analytic process" and a fixed and completed analysis with Freud. More importantly, to critique Freud's view on femininity and create a new female position in language that is not reduced to a mere "good," H. D. summons the existence of a primary mother in her literary texts. Regarding her evocation of the mother, Buck also argues that *Writing on the Wall* "ends by referring from the father to the mother" and *Advent* begins with H. D.'s intimate relation to her mother in the town of Bethlehem, which is also known as the town of Mary (129).

H. D., thereby, pushes the boundaries of language and creates new linguistic modes to represent more fulfilling and profound female consciousness. This project also appears in the feminist aesthetics of Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva. Throughout her career, Irigaray seeks new linguistic space that allows more fulfilling female voices and contains diverse sexualities. She also emphasizes the necessity of exploring an alternative feminine representational system that can undermine patriarchal discourse and "provide a mode of representation for women as women" (Grosz, *Lacan* 168-69). Irigaray's 'Imaginary' is thus not a place where the female subject recognizes her primary lack as inevitable castration, nor is it a Freudian mono-sexual space that reaffirms masculinity as the universal sexuality. Just as H. D. found different representational system beyond Freud's patriarchal discourse, Irigaray defies Freud and Lacan's notion of "sexual difference based on the 'a priori of the same'" and its insistence on "the primacy of the phallus" and seeks an altogether different representative space for woman, the "one not defined in relation to men, but in their own terms – a 'B' rather than a '-A.'" (Grosz, *Lacan* 172).

Kristeva also invented a new representational/Imaginary system called the 'semiotic,' where the third term, the imaginary father, already exists and helps the child enter the symbolic with more love and warmth (Grosz, *Lacan* 160). This alternative pre-verbal space and new Imaginary somewhat corresponds to Lacan's "Imaginary," designed only for the emergence of the male subject, but Kristeva's precedes Lacan's and resides in the pre-Oedipal realm. Although her "semiotic" is not solely drawn on by the female subject, Kristeva's new imaginary space also aims to disrupt Freud's dichotomy between pre-Oedipal and Oedipal realms by showing how the non-sexual and pre-Oedipal libido that preexists the emergence of one's gender can subvert patriarchal discourse. They are called "post-Lacanian" feminist theorists, who propose changing the Lacanian symbolic order by inventing and articulating new female imaginaries. They commonly argue that a new female language, based on more fluid and multiple female imaginaries, can emerge and subvert the order of patriarchal language. Although their theories share Lacan's basic ideas of how the sexed subject is constructed as linguistic effects in the Symbolic—in other words, how the "male" or "female" subject is constructed and defined by its position or relation to the primary signifier, "the Phallus"— their major concerns are much different from Lacan's. The fundamental goal of these feminist theorists is to establish a new representational system independent of the male speculative economy and thereby restore the ability to "see," "speak," and "desire" in the realm of signification.[10]

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[10] Although Lacan shifted the definition of the female subject from Freud's emphasis on biological attributes to linguistic effects, his notion of femininity or female being—as a fundamental "lack" in the Symbolic or "being the Phallus" for the Others—still deprives women of the active roles of "seeing" and "speaking" in language and makes them function only as ghost-like objects or pseudo-male subjects.

3. H. D.'s "Over-conscious Mind" and Female-centered Language

I will now explore how H. D.'s concept of the "over-conscious mind" is represented through her hieroglyphic symbols and enables the construct of a new female consciousness, one not fixed or predetermined. H. D. first invented the term "over-conscious mind" in *Notes on Thought and Vision* (1919), where she hypothesized that minds have "three states of manifestations—sub-conscious mind, conscious mind, over-conscious mind" (49). "Over-conscious mind" in particular refers to the poetic consciousness in which the conscious mind recognizes and embraces the "otherness" or hallucinated voices coming from other regions. Deborah Kloapfer thus points out that H. D.'s language, written in this double state of mind, becomes "the mark not of absence but of presence," with signs that do not produce the internal schism or "a split between 'I' and the narratizable 'me,' between self and others, between signified and signifier" (195).[11] This suggests H. D.'s female-centered language and poetic subject have a dynamic changeability in their meanings, due to its close link between self and the others. For the reason, Buck also points out that H. D.'s language "is not knowledge, but [only] a hiatus, 'a memory forgotten,' which only has power by virtue of being lost, or a 'pause in the infinite rhythm of the heart and of heaven'" (154). For instances, the hieroglyphic images in *HERmione, Helen in Egypt*, and *Trilogy* are all flesh-made words reverberating with the heroines' affective feelings and bodily senses. Her heroines thus often interpret

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[11] Kloepfer also compares H. D.'s "over-mind" with Julian Jaynes's notion of "bicamerality," which refers to the state of ancient man's mind which "responded to the instruction and admonition of the other through the mediation of hallucinated voices-the muses, gods, and goddess of ancient texts" (195). She further explains how the development of the written text "disempowers the auditory hallucinations" and direct communion between oneself and the "otherness," since the written sign represents only "a loss, a gap, a split between the 'I' and the narratizable 'me,' between self and other, between signified and signifier."

their symbols in a way similar to how the blind read Braille through their bodies. For the reason, as Hirsh explains, this subconscious reality represented through H. D's hieroglyphs is differentiated from the high-modernists' epiphanic language based on the male subject's optic vision or the new criticism's perspective of modernism as "a 'timeless' artifacts and self-sufficient objects of aesthetic contemplation" (431).

Through this changeable/fluid nature of her language, H. D. presents her concept of the "bisexuality" of the female subject, which also relates thematically to the feminist insights of Irigaray and Cixous. According to Buck, for instances, H. D.'s "bisexuality" accords with Cixcous's idea of "another bisexuality." In "The Laugh of Medusa," Cixcous uses the terms "sexual difference" and "other bisexuality" in ways that defy and exceed the limits of patriarchal semantic binaries of the Symbolic. That is, Cixous's "bisexuality" has nothing to do with the "sexual difference" made by dialectical polarities in the phallic discourse nor is made by "posit[ing] a fusion of masculine and feminine" (Buck 79). H. D.'s notions of "sexual difference" and "bisexuality" should also be understood as exceeding the Freudian sexual division, since, as Simpson explains, H. D.'s opposition rather "shatters the binary structure on which notions of "female" versus "male" ways of knowing depend" (72).

H. D., however, often synthesizes opposing ideas such as male/female, mind/ body and civilization/nature and attempts to integrate the split-selfhood between the two forms of knowledge. Even in her later works, she continues synthesizing opposing ideas and elements such as "Paris and Perseus; Egypt and Greece; emotion and intellect; heart and mind . . . Night and Day; and most fundamentally, life and death" (Friedman 151). By doing so, she ostensibly seems to construct a Freudian sense of "bisexual" or

"androgynous" poetic subject. But by integrating the opposing ideas, H. D. aims not at a precise rendering of her heroine's authentic and united identity so much as at transcending the patriarchal dualism and expecting some unknown forms of their future identities to come. Simpson thus pointedly notes that "H. D.'s 'over-conscious mind' does not suggest that this opposition will come in the articulation of a unified 'I' with a fixed perspective" (71). Gelpi also agrees with Simpson's argument and states that H. D.'s juxtaposing and synthesizing semantic binaries such as "classical and Christian, Greek and Hebrew, Greek and Egyptian, Sphinx and Centaur . . . gradually fall away . . . and find their contradictions [constantly] lifted and . . . released her to the chances of the future" (12).

4. The Voice of "the Other" Women in *HERmione*

Continuing the discussion in the previous section, here I closely observe how H. D.'s different mode of writing creates "the notion of a residue still undefined" in the identities of her female characters in *HERmion*e rather than fixing them to the representational system (Buck 150). In *HERmione*, the female characters in Pennsylvania initially appear trapped within a huge mirror-world. But they begin their spiritual journey 'through' the looking glass to the real world beyond the 'Law of the Father' and relearn how to speak their own language. The initial world of Pennsylvania in *HERmione* is dominated by the male gaze that strips them of the agency of "seeing"—the possibility of a female gaze—that Freud and Lacan said does not exist. Hermione also often suffers from feeling she is held hostage by a huge microscope lens that shows nothing but her image as a mere object. This scene reminds me of H. D.'s childhood memories of how

her brother played with their father's huge magnifying glass and used it to burn things on the ground (*TF* 21, 25). H. D. in *TF* also recalls how her brother used to brag that he "brought fire from heaven" (25).

H. D.'s representation of the mirror-world in *HERmione* can be productively juxtaposed with the feminist theory of Irigaray, who also compares the patriarchal representational system to the image of a mirror-world in *Speculum*. She explains that the surface of the silver-plated mirror is where only the male subjects are projected when they are reduced into "sign-objects," or an "effigied copy of the living being," while the real "living beings" are seated crouched in the back of the cavern, the other side of mirror (355). Irigaray, however, compares this "male fetish" or "sign-object"—that helps the male subject perform on the screen of Plato's cave—to "the corpse by morphology."[12] According to her, this mirror screen or magician's curtain was sublimated into the symbolic field by ignoring the existence of the blind spot. Therefore, the surface of the mirror is the space of self-deception or illusion, since only the dead effigies or phantoms pretend to be the real beings, while the "real" living beings are excluded. Irigaray describes this as a world of self-mimicry dominated by the Father's eyes in which everyone mimics his forms and thus there exists only one absolute order. Within Father's looking-glass enclosure, his eye, like the sun, becomes the sole source of sameness that "sees All instantly and for all eternity" through which the sons "can measure the faithfulness of their resemblance to the model of sameness" (*Speculum* 357).

But Irigaray says the image of God that is infinitely procreated in the mirror world is only a partial image, imperfect. The visual circularity of the kaleidoscope makes

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[12] In Part Two of *HERmione*, Fayne also describes the male subject as "a shadow or a spirit or a bit of fire or something holding together a corpse" (145).

the partial image of God duplicate itself and appear to be perfect and whole, while excluding things on the other side of the mirror "that [are] not measured in neatly measurable units but in repetitive rhythms that are hard to pin down" (354). Lacan also relates the mirror's matrix to the function of alienation or separation in the Symbolic. Lacan's sense of the mirror is thus "a screen of fantasy" that privileges one subject at the expense of the other. The mirrored world in *HERmione* also demonstrates how society functions as a huge distorting glass that castigates anyone who deviates from the heterosexual norm and nullifies her attempts to search for what has been lost and repressed in herself.

Under the sunlight symbolizing Irigaray's "Father's eyes," many female characters in *HERmione* are also reduced to the "dreadful beauty of abstraction" or small domestic things like steel engravings, blue ribbon, pin cushions, flowers, and Romantic tea-sets. (195). Although Hermione knew that using male language was fatal to her, "like a saw in a sawmill reversed, turned inward, to work horrible destruction" (15), she was also aware that she could not survive without "repeat[ing] words, words, words out of someone else's mouth, spew back words that have been already chewed and chewed" (95). But Hermione constantly tries to escape this suffocating male-discourse that deauthorizes her access to the "real" world and strips away the "grey-gelatinous substance of some sort of nonthinking, of some sort of nonbeing" that used to block her eyesight (8). And Hermione escapes her object position in the mirror-world by finding her own hieroglyphic images and inventing a new meaning system. This is a different representational system since it is based on her bodily senses and relationship with other women, and thus cannot be thought of by the logic of male specularization. From the

beginning, Hermione often has difficulty putting certain names to what she feels vaguely, as she always prioritizes her "perception [that] was ahead of her definition" (13). While the screen of the mirror only establishes "the specular relation between male subject and woman as his inverted and imaginary other" (Taylor 379) and thus becomes a symbolic field based on phallomorphic images, Hermione's language functions as flesh-made words written by her own body. When she uses this language, her body often feels like the octopus that has thousands of eyes on its arm, so that she can inscribe multiple and shifting meanings according to her ever-changing bodily senses (71):

> Hermione let octopus-Hermione reach out and up and with a thousand eyes regard space and distance and draw octopus arm back, only to replunge octopus arm up and up into illimitable distance. Something in Her should have warned Hermione. Something far and far that had to do with some scheme of biological mathematical definition had left Her dizzy.

She also continues to hear and see something within her as if her body was the "ouija-board that feels something" and tells her the message (122).[13] Through this non-stable language, she could successfully escape the male subject's logic of self-sameness and "supersede a scheme of mathematical biological definition" (76). The term that epitomizes H. D.'s poetic language can be also found in her poem, *The Walls Do Not Fall*, where the female speaker confides that her language is:

> *Indecipherable palimpsest* scribbled over
> With too many contradictory emotions,

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[13] Hermione's "oujia-board sensation" often shows her some unexpected signs and images like those of birds skimming across the window or lets her hear "something that has no words, to which words fitted" (122).

Search for finite definition

Of the infinite, stumbling toward

Vague cosmic expression. (*Trilogy* 42, *emphasis mine*)

Hermione's language also bears likeness to the feature of Maria's "Book of Life," whose pages "are the blank pages / of the unwritten volume of the new" in *Tribute to the Angels* (*Triology* 101, 103). What corresponds to these metaphors of an "indecipherable palimpsest" and the blank page of the "Book of Life" is the picture writing of Hermione and Fayne in *HERmione*. Hermione often compares Fayne's speech to the technique of a painter whose hands "make a pattern like moonlight across the black leaves of swamp, of March lilies" (81). One can also see that Fayne and Hermione's languages often draw hieroglyph-like patterns in the "Forest of Arden" in ways quite different from the conventional technique of painting black over black and green over green. Moreover, since the lily symbolizes female narcissism or the female being cut out to fit male discourse, Fayne's new language that draws new patterns on the black field of lilies implies the possibility that she can bring a different mode of "difference" to the current meaning system. Hermione also finds her own hieroglyphic images, such as the "reflections of star and meteor and shooting star seen in the polished top of the piano that was a black pool," through which she confirms her own existence: "I am out of the Winter's Tale. I am Hermione" (109). Unlike the "geometric pattern . . . [that] cut[s] things up" on the clean glass slab like Miss Stamberg's musical notes, these hieroglyphic images can be thus said to make a 'true' difference, or "different" difference (110). This "different" difference is also distinguished from Lacan and Freud's rule of "one

difference" or what Irigaray calls a "logic of self-sameness" that deprives women of their genuine sexual differences.

The most important attribute of her narrative technique is fluidity that encompasses ever-changing meanings derived from her sensations and feelings. Adalaide Morris describes H. D.'s poetic technique as "in-betweenness" moving across the different border between "the mind and the wall, between the brain and the page, between inner and outer, between me and you between stages of being, across dimensions of time and space" (qtd. in Simpson 72). This in-between nature of her language also evokes Cixous's language of "in-betweeness" or "language of unconscious." Cixous's female-centered language always undergoes "a multiple and inexhaustible course with millions of encounters and transformations of the same into the other and into the in-between, from which women takes her forms" ("The Laugh" 84).

Besides Cixous, DuPlessis also finds H. D's palimpsest language in many ways similar to Kristeva's definition of poetic language. Kristeva regards the current meaning system as a product of the integrated process of "the semiotic" and "the symbolic," arguing that the former is the heterogeneous field where there exists no fixed semantic content but the signifier. H. D.'s palimpsest language and Kristeva's poetic language, however, share a common feature, which is 'indecipherability' of meaning. H. D.'s palimpsest language, for instance, evades rigid interpretation and opens up into an infinite process of becoming others. DuPlessis also notes that this is the language where letters are "erased," but imperfectly to make the "room for another," and in this way ensures the operation of a "particular permutation of consciousness –her visions—and . . . the affirmation of (un)readability" ("Excerpts" 261).

Of course, Kristeva in *Desire in Language* underplays the relationship between a woman writer and the potential of semiotic register in language. Kelly Ives thus mentions that compared to other French feminists, "Kristeva is much more uncertain about the notion of 'women's writing,'" since she disregards the potential of female writers and poets, while setting male avant-garde writers as credible users of the "semiotic" (37)[14]. In other words, although the "semiotic" or "maternal Chora" is a neutral space to Kristeva, she seems to believe that female subjects are not stable enough to master the signs to convey the unnameable primary (m)other and are easily engulfed by melancholic depression, which further transforms them into death-like nothingness. Unlike Kristeva, however, DuPlessis highly esteems the potential of female avant-garde writers, especially their ability to inscribe the "female otherness" in the symbolic. She further proposes that H. D. not only successfully interweaves the semiotic with the symbolic but also well naturalizes the idea of incest and taboo subjects such as mother–daughter dyad and the depiction of sister and brother romance within the family framework in *Helen in Egypt* ("Excerpts" 257). To DuPlessis, what saves H. D., from the envelopment of its otherness and falling into the nothingness that concerned Kristeva is none other than readers' capacity to listen and inscribe the indecipherable meanings of what they see and understand: "It is a listening reader, the reader whose book is always waiting, the tolerant listener" (258).

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[14] In *Black Sun*, Kristeva, however, encourages depressive women to resort to the artistic forms, which are the only way to help them "bypass complacency and, without simply turning mourning into mania, secure for the artist and the connoisseur a sublimatory hold over the lost Thing" (97).

For these reasons, H. D.'s language is sometimes represented through the image of the world underwater as in the rainstorm scene in *HERmione*. Hermione could escape from the suffocating mirror-world and its "logic of self-sameness" through this formidable rainstorm at sea, caused by the monsters "growling under deep-sea water, [that] shook the water above their heads, broke through it and let down more water through a funnel" (87). In the scene, the Gart family is depicted as being locked within the ship and cast away. There also appear the images of the Gorgons and Perseus—the Greek hero who cut off Medusa's head. According to the Greek poet Heisod, the Gorgons were three sister monsters often represented as having snakes for their hair, wings, and eyes that turn anyone looking into them into stone. They are also known to bring danger to mariners by submerging deadly sea-reefs. In feminist theory, however, the Gorgons or Medusa often symbolize the unrepresentable and unspeakable female *jouissance* or female sexual pleasure that escapes male construction of sexuality. Thus, the unreachable space underwater where the Gorgons live seems to suggest the possibility of "the return of female unconsciousness" and its radical capacity to assail phallocentric discourse.

Although the female characters in *HERmione* are described as being under the dominance of the Sun that symbolizes "optical-centrism" of male sexuality in Irigaray's terms, there also exists another realm that constantly obscures their specular vision as seen in the rainstorm scene. This world underwater strongly resonates with H. D.'s notion of "over-conscious mind" demonstrated in *Notes*. In the book, as discussed earlier, H. D. distinguishes among the different states of consciousness and adds that one's highest creativity is produced when one "incorporates the body, the mind and the spirit to which she gave the name, "over-mind" (Friedman, *Penelope's Web* 10). This is also the state of

mind where her language constantly washes itself apart as her private "imagining, vision, thought and perception begin to intersect" (Kloepfer 195). For this reason, "over-conscious mind" is linked to the specific reality that has a fluid and changeable nature like water. In *Notes*, H. D. also compares this state of mind as the feeling when one wears a transparent cap over one's head, which makes "things about [her] appear slightly blurred as if seen under water" (18).

> That over-mind seems a cap, like water, transparent, fluid yet with definite body, contained in a definite space. It is like a closed sea-plant, jelly-fish or anemone.
>
> Into that over-mind, thoughts pass and are visible like fish swimming under clear water. (18–19)

This in-between state of mind also resembles what she defines as "bell-Jar" experience in *Advent*. In the text, she confesses that her postpartum experience was like when one is enclosed by a fluid globe rising from her feet and in it, she felt safe "seeing things as through water" (*TF* 130). Thus another attributes of this "over mind" or "jelly-fish" consciousness is its association with female body that gives birth and its affective sensations (*Notes* 20). DuPlessis also says H. D.'s "over-conscious mind" is similar to the pre-Oedipal state between mother and child before the baby is born and "falls into sexual division" ("Romantic Thralldom" 413). This third consciousness occurs when the body and mind are intermingled and conflated each other as seen from her expression of "think[ing] with the womb and feel[ing] with the brain" (*Notes* 20).

We can hear the strong echoes of this "over-conscious mind" in the rainstorm scene in *HERmione*. The female characters in the scene, for instances, appear to be silent

and react strangely. Hermione suddenly flings the window open and tries to be soaked in rain; and the color of Mandy's face changes to bronze or green, like sea creatures. Eugenia also starts to pull out her repressed memories such as her pregnancy experience and her intimate relations with other women:

> "It was all over in a few hours . . . it was so funny. It was all over in a few hours. It was so odd. I had you in the morning."
>
> The morning stars sang together. Words of Eugenia had more power than textbooks, than geometry, than all of Garl Gart and brilliant "Bertie Gart" as people called him. . . . "Then the doctor came. But she was such a dear nurse, so much better than the doctor, she was like a mother to me . . ."
>
> Demeter (such as dear nurse) lifting the tired shoulders of a young Eugenia had driven the wind back, back . . . (89-90)

This scene also strongly resonates with Irigaray's emphasis on the room for the language of "love among women" and its sexual pleasure beyond the law of the phallus whose "relationship partakes of the preoedipal relationship between mother and daughter, without, however, recreating their roles" (Burke 48). Although Irigaray maintains a cautious stance about what the female unconscious might be, she proposes that "the relation of woman to the mother and the relation of women among themselves" can be the possible contents that were neglected and constituted the realm of the female unconscious (*TS* 124). In this mutual relationship among women, there is "no need to seal off oneself from the other" women and through which one can get a true access to her own being (Burke 48).

We further witness that these narratives among women in *HERmione* are characteristics of repeating similar phrases and sentences or juxtaposing oppositional yet non-compensatory words side by side. For instance, Eugenia's narrative is noticeable for her repeating the similar sentences, such as "it was such a funny time to have a baby," "it seems a funny time to have a baby," and "it was so funny" (89). This repetition not only maximizes the incantatory effects, but also produces the pure "differences" in its meanings. This sound effect is also often found in the dialogue between Fayne and Hermione. At the beginning of part 2, Hermione repeats the same phrases and sentences to Fayne again and again:

> "I mean to see you now in this small sitting room makes the sitting room . . . I mean it makes the sitting room seem like a gauze curtain." "How exactly gauze? And how exactly curtain?" "I mean the curtains, the potpourri-coloured curtains . . . "The—what exactly?" "I call the curtains potpourri-coloured. I mean everything in this house is potpourri-coloured. You make everything in the world seem shabby." (143)

As Hermione's relationship with Fayne gets deeper and more intimate, more she tends to repeat her or Fayne's names as if she tries to escape from the patriarchal dualism that had limited her being: "Anyhow I love—I love Her, only Her, Her, Her" (170). Besides repetition, the heroines often maximize the sound effect or dramatize the reader's affective experiences by using phonetic sound plays such as assonance, alliteration or juxtaposition of similarly pronounced words such as "petunia," "word petunia," "putrid purple," "purple carpet," (107) or "Bella, most Bellissima, how do you like Belinda? (104). We further see that these sonic ruptures constantly blur the clear boundaries of

objects like Henri Matisse' painting whose "[h]eavy clots of paint [that] should be smeared on everything" (107).

Besides the repetition of similar words/phrases, Hermione emphasizes one's irregular bodily rhythm such as heartbeats that are often dissolved into the waves of her sentences or an old Greek and Latin choriambic metron, whose syllables also have irregular pattern of long–short–short–long—such as Theocritus' "Choriambics of a forgotten Melic" (149). This irregular bodily rhythm that is often melted into one's sentences recalls Kristeva's notion of "semiotic process" or "drive-relative discourse" of female melancholic. Kristeva's secret language is characteristic of disruptive silence and repetition of similar words and their creation of irregular rhythms in poetic style (*Black Sun* 101). From Kristeva's perspective, Eugenia and Hermione can be seen as the female melancholic patients who are foreign to the language they use. In *Black Sun,* Kristeva thus compares female speakers to the depressed, who often inscribe their sadness and affect in their flesh, while speaking only a dead and mechanical language dissociated from their affected life or her primary "Thing" (67). She further observes that the language of her female patients mourning for the lost object is not a normal language of desire but a "secret language" (67). The meaning of this depressive discourse—or "secret language"—however, can be grasped and melted into a temporary meaning only when reaching to the level of language's "suprasegmental level (intonation, rhythm)" (55). She calls this a "semiotic process," that can withstand their death (99–100). Only through the sublimatory practices "that insert into the signs the rhythm" or "by building up a plurality of connotations around the sign" (97), Kristeva says, the female depressive can "weave a

hyper sign around and with the depressive void" and thus restore the meaning of nothingness or her lost 'Thing" (99).

The ways Eugenia, Hermione and Fayne use their language much resemble the way Kristeva's female melancholic patients use their "secret language," since they all emphasize and attempt to extract this "infra-signifying meaning of depressive discourse" such as sound, tones, melody and irregular or impulsive rhythms of language hidden in the fragments of patriarchal discourse. Especially, Hermione and Eugenia's possessed narratives well illustrate their experiences of powerful pull toward the 'pre-Oedipal mother' or other women and anxiety around the "lost Thing" often concealed in the current meaning system. Similar to Kristeva's "semiotic," Cixous in "The Laugh of Medusa" emphasizes the possibility that female speaker can evoke the diverse bodily senses coming "from below, from beyond 'culture'; from their childhood" and by using them, break through the conventional language (79). Cixous believes that the Symbolic can be transformed into an infinitely diverse space, when the female subject unties the bundle of her bodily pleasures and senses, called the female *jouissance*, and this way, can be "the taker and initiator, for her own right, in every symbolic system" (82).

Another rhetorical technique H. D. uses in *HERmione* is "oxymoron," the form of speech that juxtaposes contradictory elements side by side, such as "*brown bright nightingale amorous* came from somewhere, came from nowhere" (124), "fire and water made rhythm in Her" (170), "The dust was so hot . . . it's quite isn't it cool?" (139) or "Down the street, down, down, down the street. . . . The street is running like a spiral that runs up and up and up" (159). This rhetorical technique is more strongly marked when Hermione is with Fayne as seen in the sentences like "Fayne Rabb saw not the potpourri-

coloured curtains, not the figure drawn a little apart, drawn just too far, just too near" (143), "A hand swift, heavy; small, heavy swift hand" (144-45) or "You are and you just aren't" (145). The following is the conversation between Fayne and Hermione:

> "I am, Miss Her Gart. And I am not. I mean, looking at Miss Her Gart, I see a green lane. There is some twist to it, a long lane winding among birch trees." "No-oo—not birch trees." "Yes, I say the are. I say they are birch trees. We are and we aren't together . . . there is fear and disaster but Fayne and Hermione don't go together. . . There is wash forward, wash backward, there is wash of amber-specked weeds beneath the water. I don't know where this is. I can see you are and you aren't here. *You are here and you aren't here*. . ." (145, *emphasis mine*)

Not only in *HERmione*, but in many other works, H. D. enjoys using 'oxymoron' to defy being tied to a certain type of meaning. In other words, it calls readers' attention to the words' non-complementary natures and inscribes a sense of fluidity and difference to the point where "ordinary words aren't always ordinary" (*HER* 144). The semantic differences invested by Hermione and Fayne's oxymoron also serve as undoing the patriarchal polarization that used to confine women into only one gender category. Instead of reaffirming the images of opposite sex nor the boundary between I and not "I," as Buck mentions, it rather "challenges the idea of masculinity and femininity as separate and stable sexual identities" (89). The series of combinations of contradictory images and terms used in *HERmione*, this way, produce the different type of poetic identity, "a new figure which, rather than an image of unity or wholeness, a new identity, display[ing] a subjectivity which is predicated on difference" (Buck 89).

All these rhetorical features we've analyzed so far serve to represent H. D.'s well-known female narrative as "weaving," the "Penelope's web" on which the female speaker records her experiences by "writ[ing] them down . . . weav[ing] and re-weav[ing] the thread" (*TF* 161). H. D.'s motif of weaving, not spinning, is also demonstrated in Irigaray's female syntax. Rachel Connor explains that H. D.'s metaphor of weaving has strong resonance with Irigray's female-centered language, given they both emphasize the expression of tactility and resist "masculinist discourse . . . [and] regime of the scopic" (202). In *This Sex*, Irigaray also compares the language of "the other women" to "the metaphor of weaving as a feminist strategy" (Connor 202). Out of this different syntactic, new female subject emerges that is woven into constantly-changing contexts, narratives and meanings. In other words, this language of interval not only explores the pure "sexual difference" and transforms its meaning but also switches the subject position from one to another.

Through these diverse rhetorical techniques and varieties of sound play, Hermione attempts to escape the patriarchal definition of female being and regain the sovereignty of her body. To this aim, she lets her affect-driven impulses take certain forms and tries to insert them in language with diverse meanings. Whereas Perseus cut off Medusa's head with the help of winged shoes, Hermione now moves her body by using small feelers through which she receives a heightened perception of colors and sounds flowing through her body. And now, these living symbols or "[w]ords from nowhere impelled Her Gart forward" (*HER* 156). She now shifts the center of woman's desire from the visual to the tactile economy in language.[15] For instance, when Hermione

[15] Irigaray's feminine syntax also emphasizes the tactile senses. She thus criticizes how

closes her eyes to escape the reign of visibility, she experiences a totally different world is opened up to her, the world of the tactile. Whenever she is enchanted by nature, her body recognizes her living symbols (or hieroglyphs) such as the images of bee or bird' wings against the blue sky and they become "a sort of writing on a wall" or the feminine symbols whose deeper meanings are yet unknown to us (125). Moreover, her relationship with Fayne makes her body feel more alive, capable, and stronger and furthermore makes their dynamic language contain pure "differences" every time they use it. This not only successfully challenges the male specular economy but also opens "a path running through a forest" and gives her the access to her own body so that she can move and see the dazzling spectacles of the forest by herself (189).[16]

From the second chapter, Hermione's mobility induced by these affective bodily senses has appreciably increased, especially when compared with the beginning, when she was identified with a marionette in a show-window. In earlier scenes, she could not even move her body or see anything but a black depth of her nothingness in her eyes (8). At most, she could move her body by being tied to the small things around her like "a parasite, drifted here and there to perch a moment parasitically" (219).

But now, this new language allows for the space where she can get access to her body and her autonomous relation to herself is revived. In other words, Hermione uses her bodily senses as an important way to escape from "the logic of self-sameness."

"under the reign of a dominant visibility," the tactile sensation—which is "the intrauterine precondition of all sensation"—is forgotten and "speaking body is organized by a previously structured language" (Glendinning 327).

[16] In *The Wall Do Not Fall,* H. D. also emphasizes how this reilluminated language containing both "*things new / and old*" is written and reread by "*every scribe / which is instructed*" or enchanted by the fertility goddess (*Trilogy* 49).

Especially when she finds out that George had been cheating on her, this disillusioned moment immediately gives her "a small bridge, a book with a map, a path running though a forest" (189). What George wants from her was for her to become a tree, the fuel to burn his own flame. The recurrent 'tree' metaphor in *HERmione* also alludes to H. D.'s relationships with Pound. In *Hilda's Book*, for instance, Pound often "cast her in romantic versions of the archetypal feminine" by comparing her to the names of tree nymph such as Dryad, a Hamadryad or addressing her as "Ysolt" (Dennis, *Cambridge* 273). For example, Helen Dennis points out that Pound used to restrict the roles of his female partner to the "angelic messenger from the divine beyond, confirming for the male artist the preordained validity of his enterprise" or the "intermediary with the 'beyond' which it will be the poet's life's work to translate into song" (*Context* 405). This is further exemplified in his Vorticist Manifestos, which often "exaggerated masculinity and concomitantly, enunciated the range of the traditional version of femininity" (Dennis, *Cambridge* 264).

Similar to the relationship between H. D. and Pound, Hermione was suffered by the limited relationship with George. He has always obstructed Hermione's field of vision. When he kisses her, she feels that it smudges out her hieroglyphic symbols such as "circles and concentric circles and the half circle that was the arch of a beech branch" and makes her feel she has transformed into "*the brown bright nightingale amorous*" (73).[17] The more Hermione attempts to escape from his amorous kisses, the relationship

[17] The nightingale implies to Aedon, the tragic Greek mythic figure who murdered her own son by mistake in a fit of jealousy and turned into a nightingale, or Procne, the daughter of Pandion who also "stabbed her son Itys to death to deprive Tereus of an heir and served up his flesh to her husband" (Howatson 433). Both figures are known as the primary scapegoats of patriarchal Western legacies where women are reduced into

with him brings her only the "fresh barriers, fresh chains a mesh" (12). However, Hermione later succeeds in escaping from his clutches and regains the lost circles, the "circles [that] made concentric curve toward a ceiling" through the "bell-Jar" experience with Fayne (164). Especially towards the end, she becomes the "message-bearer," who is responsible for delivering an important message, written in forgotten meters, to the next generation of women. This shows a considerable stride forward towards her autonomy when compared with her past, often identified with the images of "Undine" and "Mermaid" who lost both her voice and sea-inheritance for feet (120).

After running out from Jimmie Farrand's old memories that were all reduced to the "formalization and exact fitting to one type," Hermione's feet now impulse towards homeward (233). Although the white snow benumbed and "stupefied her, cleansed her . . . [and] annihilated" everything surrounding her to the same whiteness (222), she keeps moving forward and leaves black footprints on the snowfield. In this scene, her feet are depicted as a "narrow black crayon" writing hieroglyphic images across the white snowfield (223). As a wasp's flapping wings became a pencil to write a hieroglyph note on the sky, Hermione's body now writes her own symbols independent of the law of submission and oblivion white snow demands from her:

> She trailed feet across a space of immaculate clarity, leaving her wavering hieroglyph as upon white parchment. When Her got to the little declivity that supported the railroad, she looked back. Her track was uneven and one footprint seemed always to trail unsteadily. (224)

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masculine sexual desires and pleasures.

At the end of the novel, we further witness that the mirror-world surrounding her is finally shattered. When Hermione looks at the mirror, "[t]he glass fell breaking Hermione" into the small pieces of herself, "One I love, two I love, three I love" (208). Her mirror reflection here no longer shows a single image nor a narcissistic reflection of herself made by referring to the Oedipus triangle or Lacan's notion of "Phallus." These small pieces, rather, signify a bewildering multiplicity of Hermione. While Lacan's mirror matrix is the representational system that offers us a fixed self-identity and "the structural dynamics . . . by means of which the psyche of the conscious subject may be interpreted" and analyzed, in H. D.'s world of the shattered mirror, everything appears connected with each other and cannot be divided into separate conceptual categories, like the amoeba-like relationship with Hermione and Fayne (Vasseleu 141).

So my next question is: how does H. D.'s palimpsest language further add up to her investigation and invention of a new female subjectivity? The female characters in *HERmione* often appear changeable and protean, which makes it hard for readers to come to a conclusion about their essential natures. For an instance, Hermione and Fayne appear to have multiple identities, as they often change their names and mood like Proteus. Fayne, for example, is often depicted as a "wild goat" on the hill, "an unborn phoenix" or an "albatross" by Hermione. Hermione is also defined as an "in-between" being quite different from others: "I am swing–swing between worlds, people, things exist in [the] opposite dimension" (25). They also undergo a process of splitting their selves and reconstructing themselves in relation to each other. This way, their identities are expanded and metamorphosed to the point where they appear indistinguishable. For instance, they often exchange their colors with each other, becoming intermingled and

divided into twin-halves of an amoeba, to the point where "She is Her. I am Her. Her is Fayne. Fayne is Her." (181). Here, Hermione's name, "Her," and Fayne's female objective pronoun form, "her," are mixed up and used confusingly. For this reason, their relationship are often represented through the images of mollusk such as "octopus with thousands of eyes," "jellyfish," or "amoeba" always born in the process of "becoming" (120). Moreover, her interaction with other people constantly changes her essential natures and roles to others. This way, H. D. breaks the subject/object or observer/observed dichotomy to emphasize female being as multiplicity and fluidity. DuPlessis also mentions that in Hermione's relation to Feyne, "subject and object (she and her) twin and double each other, mirror each other and reproduce themselves by doubled words" (*The Career* 64).

A traversal between subject and object position of the kind we see here also is often present in Irigaray's female-centered language. In *The Sex*, she argues that the voices of "the other women" are heard only through this "different mode of the 'syntactic,' in language and in the body" (147). In *Speculum*, too, she explains how this free-flowing economy and techniques, which often mix and integrate subject and object positions such as I/you and myself/yourself, further allow a new female subjectivity to emerge. This is where my and your identities are freely exchanged and become the new. In other words, in this flowing economy, all the possible representations of things and people are erased, and hierarchical binaries between I/you and here/there are muddled to the point where "the one is in the other and the other in me" (*Speculum* 200). Within this "cauldron of identification," the only way "the other woman" can escape the erasure of herself is through "reciprocal living" between you and me and "identifying—together"

(196). That is, only by my becoming your image and yours becoming mine, she says, can the identity of "the other woman" be constantly rediscovered as the other and thus be "both singular and plural one and ones" (197).

This idea also parallels with what Lacan refers to as the "different strata of language" in which he thought female *jouissance* might emerge and give women access to their own being (*Feminine* 55). Although Lacan generally displays an ambiguous and skeptical point of view of the existence of female language,[18] he does not entirely rule out the possibility that a female *jouissance* might exist beyond phallic discourse and somehow can be returned, revolutionalized, and challenge 'the Law of Father' in his latter works. In *Seminars XX*, for instances, he asks many questions as to what the female being's "otherness" would be like and how this can break paternal law by bringing up something belonging "outside." But, he also makes it clear that female unconsciousness can emerge in language only on the condition that female difference is not a "phallic difference." If female difference still depends on the standard of binary format of the Symbolic and constitutes a "'consistency' of that difference—of the body or anything else—the division it enjoins," he says it is none other than an illusion of the difference made by inside law (56). For an example of this "different strata of language" representing a "female break," Lacan further comes up with St. Theresa's commentary on

[18] To Lacan, the female being is a series of linguistic effects, namely, the negative meanings constructed by semantic binaries of the Symbolic, not a real being. So to him, the term "women" cannot secure the "status as an absolute category and the guarantor of fantasy" either (*Feminine* 48). But, at the same time, any speaking subject can exist only when they inevitably "line themselves up on one side or the other of this division in language" (49). This is because there is "no pre-discursive reality, no place prior to the law which is available and can be retrieved" (55). More importantly, he clarifies that this does not mean that "woman is excluded from the nature of words," or "women might have of themselves an entirely different speech" either (49).

"The Song of Songs." One of the characteristics of her language is, similarly to Irigaray's 'feminine' syntax, that her desires are not derived from the sexual connotation of words she used but from "the instability of its pronouns—a precariousness in language which reveals that neither the subject nor God can be placed" (52). He further mentions that "the subject demonstrative that the pronouns designate constantly shifts its positions" in her writing and women's sexual identity belongs "on the level of its, and the subject's, shifting."

So far, we have looked at how the French feminists' 'the other' syntax resembles H. D.'s language that constantly wanders, ruptures and reorders its meanings, and dislocates the fixed natures of her female characters. Through this process, she makes her language an anonymous and deviant space emancipated from conventional gender ideology and Hermione gradually learns a different way of using language, "like a Hindu learning to speak English" (*HER* 93). In this regards, a strong connection can be found between Hermione's ways of using language and the colonial contexts where Asian-American speakers in Hong's poems use English as demonstrated in chapter 4, although H. D.'s poetic figures do not embody any transnational or cultural mobility.[19] I'll come back and address this connection in more detail when I look at Cathy Park Hong and Theresa Cha's female personae in chapter 4 and explore how the speakers in H. D. and Hong's poems turn to their advantage language being cut off from authentic ways of

[19] In Hong's *Translating Mo'um*, for instance, the Korean-American speakers intentionally use their parent's mother tongue in corporal ways, which further reveal the failures of constructing their bodies as objects of conventional desires in American society. In this way, they attempt to construct their writing subjects as "in-between" or "becoming" ethnic subjects that do not belong to any homogeneous cultural or national categories.

speaking and constantly deterritorialize and reterritorialize its meanings to locate their new poetic subjects precariously in the dominant language system.

5. Helen's Subjectivity as Multiplicity in *Helen in Egypt*

The undecipherable and 'in-between' natures of H. D.'s heroines are also illustrated in her late epic poem *Helen in Egypt* (1955). As Hirsh observes, two different images of Helen in *HE*: one who is "in quest for an authentic self-perception," or "perfect-knowledge" of herself and another that H. D. infinitely multiplies by superimposing "the variant myths and narratives . . . in such a way that there can no longer be any question of which represents 'the original' or authoritative one" (441). So the male protagonists in *HE* repeatedly ask which is the real Helen. But their questions prove "futile as in the course of Helen's interior quest what emerges is rather a bewildering multiplicity of selves, a multiplicity obscured by the singularity of the proper name" (442). For this reason, Simpson compares Helen's identity to a palimpsest, paper that has been rewritten on and is thus "indeterminate, self-referential, never finally whole, . . . [and remain as] a layering of readings of herself " (68). This idea also fits with Joseph N. Riddel's perspective that H. D.'s female subjectivity "is the body of the text, neither presence nor absence, but the sign of the sign" (qtd. in Simpson 68).

This section analyzes how H. D.'s new female subjectivity as multiplicity is constructed with the help of her hieroglyphic symbols in *HE*. The book is composed of three sections of seven books, eight poems per book. They are written in unrhymed *terza rima*, a poetic form invented by the Italian poet Dante, consisting of a series of three-line stanzas with the rhyme scheme ABA, BCB, CDC, DED (Hirsch). H. D.'s *terza rima*,

however, does not have any specific rhymes, nor the ending couplet repeating the rhyme of the middle line found in Dante's *terza rima* (Gregory viii). Rather, they are series of three-line "choral" stanzas "in a semidramatic lyric narrative," and each poem begins with "a brief interlude in prose" denoting the change of scene and the voice of the speaker (Gregory viii).

As mentioned earlier, Helen appears to have multiple natures, which coexist and characterize different attributes of herself. She is also adaptable to various role changes; she is often identified with her twin sisters and brothers, her daughter, her mother, and various Greek, Roman, or Egyptian fertility goddesses who are sexually desirable and virginal. As Burke argues, Helen, in this way, goes beyond the traditional myth of "Helen of Troy" that symbolizes her only as "a public scandal / in any case, a cause of shame / to Agamemnon and Menelaus;" (*HE* 251) and becomes reconstituted in the "becoming" process. Besides Helen, the images of Greek and Egyptian goddesses such as Cypris/Cytheraea/Isis/Thetis are also combined to the point that their stories are confused and interwoven.

Epitomizing Helen's nature as multiplicity are frequently used words such as "veil," "vision," "dream," "impersonation," and "apparition." In the first section, Helen calls herself "both phantoms and reality," which leads to the dominant theme of *HE*: Helen's versatile and fluid subjectivity (3). Since she is often metamorphosed into the images of her twin brothers, Castor and Pollux, and her twin sister, Clytemnestra, as well as other fertility goddesses such as Thetis/Isis/Aphrodite, the Greek army "of the King of Myrmidons" often asks whether Helen is "sister, brother, whether she is alive or dead." First of all, Helen's destinies are deeply rooted in the lives of her sister, Clytemnestra and

their two daughters, Iphigenia and Hermione. For instances, she is identified herself with her sister and this Helen/Clytemnestra double parallels the dual image of Egyptian goddess sisters Nephthys and Isis. They undertake opposite roles with each other: Nephthys represents the death experience, Isis represents the rebirth experience. Similarly, Helen is often identified with Iphigenia, Clytemnestra's daughter, and she often behaves like her. In Greek mythos, Iphigenia was trapped by Agamemnon and deceived to believe she would marry Achilles. Achilles, realizing she was trapped, attempted to save her from being sacrificed. Some versions say Iphigenia was moved to Tauris by Artemis just before her sacrifice, and that she became Artemis' priestess. In other stories, she metamorphoses into Hecate. Because Helen is often called Hecate by Achilles, this image of the Iphigenia/Helen/Hecate triplet constantly confuses and transforms the Greek myths surrounding "Helen of Troy."

> Achilles was the false bridegroom,
> Achilles was the hero promised
> To my sister's child,
> promised to her,
> promised to me,
> promised to Iphigenia; (80-81)

Theseus, in the "Leuke" chapter, also emphasizes this mother–daughter relationship as something that cannot be separated from each other. In the chapter, he strengthens and encourages Helen to forget her past and go "to the Towers and the blackened Walls" so that she can be reborn: "her soul must return wholly to her body" (162). Theseus also asks her to return to her mother—"Leda, Thetis or Cytheraea" (165)—and overcome her

tragic memories of Troy and Sparta by offering a soft woven wool through which she can "disappear into the web, the shell, the shell, [and thus] re-integrate" herself (170). H. D. here touches upon the erasure of the primary relationship between the mother and daughter in the male discourse. Freud once mentioned that "the daughter–mother relation is so dimmed by time" that one should "go back to the time before Greek civilization to find the traces of another civilization that would make it possible to detect the status of that archaic desire between woman and mother" (Irigaray, *TS* 138-39). Although Freud refused and failed to excavate the archaic relationship between mother and daughter, Theseus, the mouthpiece of Freud in *HE*, gives Helen another chance to reunite with her archaic mother and desires.

Hecate, a goddess often related to Artemis and associated with ghosts, infernal spirits and witchcraft, is another important figure with whom Helen's soul is deeply involved. Hesiod describes Hecate as the daughter of the Titans Perses and Asteria, and as symbolizing wealth, victory, wisdom and good luck to sailors. She is also often confused with Artemis, whose functions overlap with hers (Howatson 261). But in Greece, Hecate is also associated with the ghost world, for sending ghosts and demons into the world at night, or as an attendant to Persephone—queen of the Underworld. As a result, Hecate/Artemis/Persephone are often called the triple goddess. Even Hecate's statue is three identical figures, with each pair of arms holding different attributes such as torches, whips, and knives. This triplet image recalls the Iphigenia/Helen/Hecate triplet and even the image of the twin-sisters Hermione/Fayne in *HERmione*, who were often depicted as 'amoeba-like.' Most importantly, Hecate symbolizes the crossroads where all paths meet. Similarly, Helen in *HE* serves as the crossroads in which all the "opposites

meet, dark-light, life-death, death-life and so on" to become one reality (190). However, this triplet figure in *HE* continues to expand and transform into "other and that other and that other" through a non-countable series of encounters and separations (219). In this way, all the different mythic figures of various regional and temporal dimensions are superimposed upon each other to create a new female subject based on pure differences and not on Helen's nostalgic past. For this reason, Helen is often depicted through metaphors like "a swarm, an infinite number, / yet [which become] one whole, one cluster of bees" (43), "the thousand petalled lily / [where] they are not many, but one" (21), "the thousand and one darts" (38), or "The Hawk with the thousand pinions" (46).

It is not just Helen's identities that are mixed and used interchangeably but also those of the Greek, Roman, and Egyptian gods, as in the expressions such as "Amen La and Zeus" or "The great Amen, Ammon, or Amun" (11). Achilles' identity is also confused with Orestes. By making Achilles Orestes in the "Pallinode" chapter, H. D. both reestablishes the relationship between Helen and Achilles as a mother–son relationship, and drastically reinvents the Greek tragedy of Clytemnestra and Orestes. Paris, in the "Leuke" chapter, is also compared to Adonis or "Eros-Adonis" since both vacillate between two women (160). Adonis is born of Cinyras and his daughter Zmyrna (or Myrrha). Zmyrna causes problems with Aphrodite who, in return, sets up the union between Cinyras and Zmyrna. When Cinyras discovers the deception, he tries to kill his daughter but the gods turn Zmyrna into a myrrh tree from which Adonis is born (Howatson 6). However, "Aphrodite fell in love with Adonis and placed him in her chest and gave him to Persephone to take care of," and Zeus decreed Adonis should spend half of the year with Aphrodite and half with Persephone. Within this context, Helen is

identified with Zmyrna, Adonis' mother, since both are closely related to the 'tree' metaphor. For example, Helen's image is so often mixed up with that of a myrrh tree that she is called "Rhodes' Helena, *Dendritis*"[20] in *HE* (142). In the same chapter, Paris is also identified with the son of Achilles (Euphorion) and consequently Achilles is equated to Priam, king of Troy, as well as with Proteus, king of Egypt. And the speaker says it is Paris who killed his father, Priam/Achilles/Proteus (185). In this way, their relationship as slayer and the slayed transforms into a father–son relationship, one where they compete with each other for Helen: "The slayer becomes the son of the slain" by Helen (184).

> he of the House of the Enemy,
> Troy's last king (this is no easy thing
> to explain, this subtle genealogy)
> is Achilles' son, he is incarnate
> Helen-Achilles; he, my first lover,
> was created by my last; (185)

This family romance where Helen's "first lover, / was created by [her] last" strongly resonates with the story of Oedipus. Throughout *HE*, Paris is often compared to Oedipus while his mother, Hecuba, is compared to Jocasta / Helen double (184). As mentioned earlier, in the "Eidolon" chapter, Paris is identified with Orestes and Helen identified

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[20] Concerning Helen Dendritis, please see *Pausanias Description of Greece,* vol. 2. According to Pausanias, Helen, after Menelaus' death, was driven out of Sparta by Megapenthes, Menelaus' son, and fled to Rhodes to seek Polyxo's help and protection. But Polyxo, queen of Rhodes, lost her husband Tlepolemus in the Trojan War, and therefore regarded Helen as her enemy and conspired to kill her. When Helen was bathing, Polyxo commanded her handmaidens to pose as the Erinyes (Furies), and hang Helen from a tree (vol. 2 123).

herself with Clytemnestra, the mother of Polyxena, Iphigenia and Paris/Orestes. Paris, here, by becoming the son of the Helen/Clytemnestra twin, tries to remind Helen not to repeat the tragedy of Clytemnestra and Orestes. In other words, in *HE*, we witness that both Paris and Achilles are described as Helen's sons and lovers and in doing so, H. D. releases the repressed pre-Oedipal power and subverts the patriarchal values in the Symbolic. Regarding this, DuPlessis mentions that H. D.'s family triangle—in which a father can be either lover, or child baby—is "not a result of phallocratic fixation but was done to reimagine their combined sexual and spiritual force as a family" (*The Pink* 34). In this way, "[H. D.] draws all of the roles together into a family structure."

In book four of the "Leuke" chapter, Helen is further identified with Theseus' old lovers such as "Ariadne, Phaedra, Hippolyta" (163). Especially, in books six and seven, Helen's deformality or fluidity is maximized to where she finds the answer, the ultimate balance amid all the opposing forces through her mother, Thetis, an "egg-shell" (197). And these opposing forces are often represented through the technique of oxymoron as in "day, night, wrong, right?"(192), "this is Leuke, / a-drift, a shell but held / to its central pole" (193), "her sphere / is remote, white, near" and "this is the ship a-drift, / this is the ship at rest" (194). The way these opposing words/phrases are juxtaposed and analyzed, however, maximizes an uncertainty of meanings instead of revealing any ultimate truth or fixed identity of Helen. In this chaotic yet peaceful atmosphere, Helen now silently waits to be claimed by "the Dark Absolute," Death, Dis, Hades, and most importantly Achilles so that she can "reflect, . . . re-act . . . [and] re-live" as "another and another and another;" (196, 187).

But, above all, Helen's story is constantly forgotten and relived mostly within her relationship with Achilles. At first, Achilles could not quite understand "how are Helen in Egypt / and Helen upon the ramparts, / together yet separate?" (63). But as time goes by, Helen's inner vision of Achilles becomes clearer and more wholesome and she learns to read "the uindecipherable script," when the mysterious sign recalls the star of Achilles from the night sky (85). In relation to Achilles, the meaning of Aphrodite/Cytherea's veil no longer depends on Helen's past memories in Sparta or Helen in Troy "walking upon the ramparts," but on a white scroll of history "un-sung as yet by the poets" (48, 50). That is to say, Helen breaks from recorded history and rewrites the unrecorded myths through her love with Achilles. Thus in the "Leuke" chapter, Theseus mentions that Helen's different myths are just dreams or illusions "until Achilles came," since it was Achilles who "would recall, re-vitalize and re-awaken Helen" as one reality (160). Alicia Ostriker similarly points out that H. D.'s later poems center around the "feminine principle," and what controls this principle is no other than a love relationship through which any internal chasm is bridged (40). In other words, Helen and Achilles' mysterious relationship—that belongs to a different dimension of temporality where "time values have altered [to where] present is past, past is future" (*HE* 57)—becomes a key point to solving "the wisdom of Amen and Thoth" that she sought.

In this manner, H. D. dramatizes the poetic space as one where an infinite transformation of the meanings of her living symbols and the natures of her heroines is possible. In other words, H. D.'s hieroglyphic language functions by constantly reconstituting the speaker's inscribed meanings. For these reasons, Helen's multiple and transforming identities in *HE* are epitomized in the terms of "eidolon" or "apparition."

"Eidolon" is originally a (Neo)Platonic term used for the Platonic "Form" or "Idea." According to Plato, our reality consists of two realms: the physical world that we can observe with our five senses and "a world made of eternal perfect 'forms' or 'ideas'" (Vlach). Unlike humans' imperfect intelligence or senses, Plato's "Form" or "Idea" refers to the perfect schemata or templates of reality, or "ultimate reference point for all objects we observe in the physical world." Whereas Plato's "Eidolon" is indicative of the individual soul's ultimate and fixed knowledge about the world, Helen's version of "eidolon" is a feminist revision of Plato's true "Image." For instance, at the end of *HE*, the meanings of eidolon constantly mutate over time, sometimes referring to "a wooden-doll" (291), "the child in Chiron's cave" (288), "Hermione" (290), and even Achilles himself, "the half-god hidden in Scyros" (292).

But most of all, 'eidolon' in *HE* implies multiple inessential identities of Helen who moves across different dimensions of time and space by being "slipped from a husk" (141) and fading into the air through the "veil" (138), "transparent folds" or "a blasted shell" (133). Paris thus often compares Helen to a "torn garment" (145) or an impersonation of Helen who "walks barefoot toward the door; / stop; vanish into thin air;" (146). At the end, Helen's identity finally appears to shatter into diverse fragments to the point readers can no longer distinguish one fragment from another. The image of the "third Helen," for instance, is totally confused with that of Jocasta—Oedipus' mother—and Thetis (255).

At this point, Irigaray's notion of the changeable identities of "the other" women and their relationship to her "feminine syntax" can give us a better understanding of Helen's multiple identities. Like H. D.'s female characters could not be fixed nor

predetermined in her fluid/transformable language, in Irigaray's economy of flow, the proper nouns preclude any form of exclusive possession of identities. This is because in her notion of syntax:

> [T]here would no longer be either subject or object, "oneness" would no longer be privileged, there would no longer be proper meanings, proper names, "proper" attributes. . . . Instead, that "syntax" would involve nearness, proximity, but in such an extreme form that it would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation. (*TS* 134)

Unlike the specular economy of patriarchal language where the female subject only becomes "the inverted other of the masculine subject" (129), Irigaray's feminine syntax "reject[s] all closure or circularity in discourse—any constitution of *arche* or of *telos*; . . . [and thus] entails a different relation to unity, to identity with self, to truth, to the same" (153-54). This idea is strongly reminiscent of Helen's multiple and fluid identities which are often compared to "the thousand-petalled lily; / [where] they are not many, but one," (*HE* 21) or "the thousand-and-one darts" (46).

Moreover, within this flowing economy of exchange, the female subject often recognizes herself by touching her body and encountering God's "divine passion . . . she neither can nor will translate" (Irigaray, *Speculum* 200). The image of "the other" woman often confused and intermingled with God also appears in H. D.'s heroines who are often in communion with God/Goddess. At the end of the "Pallinode" chapter, for example, Helen, rather than return to her tragic past to annul God's decree, chooses to come under the control of her own star, Absolute God in "a flash in the heaven at noon / that blinds the sun, / in their Meeting" and prepares to be summoned by them (100). Helen in this

scene is depicted as waiting, calm and unquestioning, to be summoned by her God, "the Absolute, the King, Proteus or Amen, 'the Nameless-of-many-Names'" (105), so she can remain "one name, [but] inseparable / from the names of the Dioscuri" (104). H. D.'s other female characters also often entreat Goddesses to "invoke the true-magic, / [and] lead back to the one-truth," which is not really one (*Trilogy* 48). In *The Walls Do Not Fall*, for instance, the female speaker also entreats God to "devour" her, so that she can be digested and remain warm in his belly (*Trilogy* 31):

> hide me in your fleece,
>
> crop me up with the new-grass;
>
> let your teeth devour me,
>
> let me be warm in your belly,
>
> the sun-disk,
>
> the re-born Sun.

Finally, Helen asks Theseus to "let [her] be lost" in the darkness of the island, so that only "an ever widening flight" can touch her body and help her remember (*HE* 199). Before returning to Achilles in Egypt, however, she says she first needs to "have time to remember / Dis, Hades, Achilles." And to do this, rather than fling herself out into "widening star-circles" to be consumed in eternal time, she attempts to attach herself to the personal time or the power of "the moment" that has been "undecided yet" (200, 271): "[I] will bring the moment and infinity together 'in time, in the crystal, in my thought here'" (200). In other words, Helen does not disregard the phenomenological and personal meanings of her symbols in the present 'moment' and tries to make her memories an a-historical/a-temporal field where she "rephrases and reorganizes the era of

her life in each memoir" (Duplessis, *The Career* 117). She also realizes that Achilles can help her synthesize this personal time to eternal time and inscribe these living symbols with true meanings in the present tense. Of course, this Achilles with whom Helen is reunited in the "Eidolon" chapter is a 'new' Achilles "*not as Lord of Legions, 'Kings of Myrmidons,' but as one dedicated to a new Command, that of the 'royal sacred High Priest of love-rites*'" (210). Through the effort to synthesize the tension between opposing forces, not only Helen's Amen script and new hieroglyphs but, *HE*, the text itself also becomes to have a balanced structure where the ending scene—where Achilles and Helen met on a desolate coast in Egypt—meets the very beginning like a never-ending "spiral-stair, the maze" (264). This structure also confirms the a-temporal or in-between nature of H. D.'s narrative in which the past is always superimposed upon the present and the present seen as identical to the past.

Above all, this united state of consciousness is possible because "she herself is the writing" (91). H. D's hieroglyph motif is not separate from Helen's indecipherable mind. H. D. presents her mind as closely linked to the living symbols that are to be interpreted and reinterpreted throughout *HE*. Like these living symbols, Helen's subjectivity also becomes the white space on which multiple meanings are superimposed and new interconnections between her past and present selves are simultaneously discovered. Friedman thus points out that H. D.'s "[h]ieroglyphs of the unconscious were hieroglyphs of the self . . . [and thus] H. D.'s poetic use of the image frequently became a form of self-exploration" (*Psyche* 59). Since the process of her writing reconstitutes her changeable identities, Helen's true identity does not come from the completely translatable meanings of "the oracles of Greece or the hieroglyphs of Egypt" (82) but

rather from the experienced sensations or personal memories provoked through the hieroglyphs. In other words, Helen is a scribe, a writer who is at the same time a reader, the one who reads "things new / and old" (*Trilogy* 49) or things "different yet the same as before" (105), and, in doing so, can resurrect and reconstruct herself to another. With regard to the issue of a conflict between Helen's hieroglyphs and their possibility of interpretation, Darling also emphasizes how Helen imbues the living symbols with different ranges of meanings and nuances so that she "negotiate[s] objective with subjective" (2). According to her, Helen's hieroglyphs are not intellectual symbols but "intuitive or emotional knowledge," translatable only when Helen/Isis/Thetis become "instructed" or "enchanted" (*HE* 13). Thus, throughout the poem, these symbols are compared to "*the indecipherable Amen-script*" or the "temple wall" on which mysterious patterns or riddles wait to be deciphered (32). Helen, however, says they do not necessarily have to be "read or ciphered" since "*the pattern in itself is sufficient and it is beautiful*." She also states that these letters are interpreted only through her "inner sense of the hieratic" (22). For instances, Helen often appears haunted by strong bodily feelings or sensations that come from nowhere. These affective experiences often give her an impetus to repeat her stories about the mysterious hieroglyph: "I tell and retell the story / to find the answer" (84). It even seems that Helen reads her hieroglyphs in the multilayered world of Aphrodite's sheer veil through her body and its tactile senses, like Hermione's flesh-made words in *HERmione*:

> I place my hand on a pillar
> and run my hand as the blind,
> along the invisible curve

or the line of chick or bee;

where are we?

And what is the answer? (46)

This bodily inspiration often becomes an access point for her symbols and creates their own values and impact on readers. In *TF*, H. D. similarly emphasizes the importance in her hieroglyphic symbols of personal impression and its affective register "that come in their own way, make their own sequence" (14). What matters to Helen is thus not seeking the fixed meanings of "timeless, hieratic symbols," but to find "the symbol in time" and listen attentively to their "subtler meaning" (*HE* 108):

let rapture summon

and the foam-flecked sand,

and wind and hail,

rain, sleet and the bewildering snow

that lifts and falls,

conceals, reveals,

(the actual

and the apparent veil),

Helen—come home.

In the flux of Helen's personal memories, the hieroglyphs now constantly "lifts and falls, / conceals, [and] reveals." Towards the end, the magic evoked through these hieroglyphs finally reconciles the opposing forces, such as "La mort, L'Amour" (288), "Trojan and Greek" (297), Paris and Achilles, and Love and Death, to a more productive and

fluctuating movement. By untangling and reweaving her past memories to the present tense, H. D. now makes all the different myths about Helen "the one reality" (151).

6. Conclusion

I have so far analyzed how H. D.'s female subjectivity is engendered through the disruptions in syntax and narrative techniques such as repetition, subject/object confusion, oxymoron and metaphorical sounds in *HERmione* and *Helen in Egypt*. These rhetorical techniques and sound plays not only prohibit each subject's from belonging to fixed categories of meaning and identity but also contribute to interacting the past image of their "I"s with the present moments to foster the notion of different 'I' in the process of self-discovery. Therefore, H. D.'s female subjects should not be defined as an unified whole made by the binary oppositions in phallocentric discourse but more as amoeba-like "in-between" selves freed from all the divisions and binaries imposed by the conventional gender ideology. Buck thus argues that H. D.'s narrative always creates "a new figure which rather than an image of unity or wholeness . . . displays a subjectivity which is predicated on difference" (89). Not only the protean nature of her female characters but also her notion of "over-conscious mind" or "bell-Jar experiences" referring to the state of one's mind or "consciousness [that] was sexless, or all sex" (H. D., *BML* 62) supports H. D.'s notion of 'bisexual' identity. This bisexual realm of consciousness that "occurs above and beyond the cultural institution of heterosexuality" is thus strongly reminiscent of Cixous' "another bisexuality" (DuPlessis, "Excerpts" 412). Cixous' concept refers to the state of speaking subject who "is not shut up inside the spurious Phallocentric Performing Theater, [but] sets up his or her erotic universe," by undergoing the millions

of different encounters with others and transformation (Cixous, "The Newly Born" 41). This should be therefore distinguished from Freudian "bisexuality," since his concept is rather made from "posit[ing] a fusion of masculine and feminine" in the Symbolic (Buck 79). In contrast, Cixous and H. D.'s "another bisexuality" was something that exceeds the limit of the semantic binaries in phallic discourse and embraces the pure sexual difference to form "a subjectivity in-process."

I have also explored how H. D's new rhetorical experiments are analogous to the features of Irigaray's feminine syntax that is not constructed on the phallic grid and presumptions. For example, H. D.'s recurrent motif of "weaving" as a central metaphor of female narrative or the "Penelope's web" on which she can "record the details of experience and . . . weave and re-weave the threads" (*TF* 161) parallels Irigaray's notion of 'weaving' motif mentioned in *This Sex*. Connor also draws the strong analogy between H. D.'s metaphor of weaving and Irigray's female-centered language and explains that their commonality lies in the resistance to the language structured by the male scopic economy that represents female beings only as an object of masculine desire (202). In H. D.'s works, this project is accomplished through her heroines' flesh-made words operating on the level of their tactile senses and affective registers. In *Helen in Egypt*, the female protagonists transcribe ancient hieroglyphs in the way that the blind person reads Braille. That is, they often see the reality as the blind man feels the dim light of the world that "the outer eye cannot grasp" (*BML* 162). And this subconscious reality surrounding them is often represented through H. D.'s notion of "over-conscious mind," which is different from the epiphanic moments of traditional modernists, whose meanings are constructed based on male optic senses. Friedman thus compares H. D.'s "over-conscious

mind" to the mind of "the poet-as-fetus" or "the enclosed sea" in which she can be "both contained and container, both inside and outside, child of the mother and mother to the poem, her child," thus something both born and birthing (*PW* 10). Through this way, H. D.'s female characters gradually learn to become the creators and masters of their own language, who can invest the words with their own bodily experiences and feelings beyond the economy of flat mirror.

But one thing that we should note is that both Irigaray's feminine syntax and H. D.'s poetic language do not necessarily require the complete subversion of male-centered language. Irigaray, for instance, does not demand the total disposal of phallogocentric discourse to launch her new language; she not only preserves the existing representational system but also says the entire "overthrow of all previous thought, the radical disconnection from the concepts and language of the past" is not necessary (Grosz, *Time* 165). As Grosz mentions, "a revolution in thought can only use the language and the concepts that presently exist or have already existed, and can only produce itself against the background and history of the present." In other words, both Irigaray and H. D.'s linguistic revolution requires the historically pre-given context and horizon onto which "a deflection and broadening, an opening up rather than a closing down and replacement of existing forms and structures" should take place and inscribe the pure differences of the female unconscious (Grosz, *Time* 165).

In this regard, more effective mechanism to challenge the patriarchal discourse can be, as Irigaray mentions, the mimicry of male language "with a playful difference that is a critical difference, producing the knowledge that is not a nature but an alienating identity constructed for women" (Tylor 133). Irigaray argues that women should mimic

female roles while not being dissolved into them. Namely, she requires "a female female impersonation" (Tylor 101). Through this female impersonation of female subject within phallocentric discourse, she believes that woman can distance herself from the target objects of mimicry and at the same time denaturalize gender ideology. Mary Ann Doane also emphasizes the importance of women masquerading the femininity from a distance, in order to dismantle and diversify the dominant discourse. Doane says even without erasing themselves completely and becoming a man, by 'masquerading' femininity, one can "attain the necessary distance from the image" of women in patriarchal discourse and laugh a healthier laugh since this masquerading "involves a realignment of femininity, the recovery or more accurately simulation of the missing gap or the distance" (25–26). From this perspective, the language of playful mimicry can be a positive tool on which the future female subjectivity can be built and thus initiates an alternative sense of female writing and poetic subject.

In chapter 3, I examine how Stein's poetic language constructs the speaking subjects as "performative" by using Butler's theory on "performative" subjectivity. For this, I move from H. D. and Irigaray in combination to Stein and Butler's feminist theories and highlight how the latter is distinguished from the former type of feminine reading and writing by French feminists. For instances, on the issues of gender and sexuality, Butler expresses concern that French feminists' aesthetic and female language do not provide the female subject with linguistic agency. Moreover, while these French feminists generally assume that the 'real' or 'authentic' female body or identity exists outside or prior to dominant language system, hidden and unspeakable, Stein and Butler

rather problematize the existence of this pre-ontological "I" and try to take control of female body and subjectivity within current meaning systems.

In Chapter 4, I'll come back to the issues of female body and language and make a further connection between H. D.'s priestess-like female subject and Cha's 'dictée' figure. Cha's shaman-like speaker in *Dictée,* for example, often allows herself to be possessed or enchanted by unknown forces, so she may evoke the different dimension of temporality through which her present self and unpredictable past are reconnected and create a transformed cohesion through the medium of language. In this sense, Cha's 'dictee' overlaps with the image of H. D.'s Helen waiting for her unknown past to be recalled, reimagined and incorporated through her present self. Moreover, these images are closely linked to the issue of reconstruction of oneself in the realm of language as a constantly moving and becoming subject.

Chapter III. A Room with an Open Window: Reading Gertrude Stein alongside Judith Butler and Jacques Lacan

1. Does 'Female' Language Really Exist?

In the previous chapter, I discussed how female unconsciousness—an 'outside' realm of the Symbolic—can be voiced/heard and further free the female subject from structural polarities in patriarchal discourse through H. D.'s later works such as *HERmione* and *Helen in Egypt*. This chapter uses Butler's theories of the "performative" subject and "perlocutionary" speech act to examine how Stein's poetic language constructs the speaking subject as "performative." Stein's writing subject mirrors Butler's "performative" subject in that they both lack foundation and infinitely transform when encountering new desires in the realm of language. Butler's "performing" subject is made by the effects of promiscuous and ambiguous speech act that both adheres and challenges the conventional norms while Stein's writing subject also parodies patriarchal language to thwart its own boundaries. In other words, Stein and Butler create new (female) subjects using the intimate bond between one's speech and actions and further attempt to legitimize different types of sexual desires and family relations within patriarchal discourse. To demonstrate that "[i]dentity is an artificial construct" that is assembled and reassembled according to how one uses language (Reed, "Confessional" 113), I will set out a step-by-step analysis of Butler's theories on "performitivity" and the "lesbian phallus," exploring how they apply to Stein's poetic language and subjectivity in *Tender Buttons* (1914) and *Three Lives* (1909). This chapter will further examine Lacan's language theory and observe how his clinical language for neurotic patients also possesses the constitutive power to implicate and transform one's consciousness. His

clinical language underscores the ambiguous and unintended effects of the patient's words in order to help traverse the patient's fundamental fantasy and make him a 'desiring' subject in the realm of language. Later sections will thus examine Stein's syntactical experiments and phonetic games in *Geography and Plays* (1922), arguing that Stein's poetic language also performs the therapeutic function of transferring one's fixed symptom to the pure functions of the signifier and reformulating one's consciousness.

I will now explore how Stein's variety of experimental language and Butler's concept of promiscuous and ambiguous speech distinguish them from French feminists' écriture *féminine*. While said French feminists assume that more authentic and fulfilling female voices and desires exist outside the dominant linguistic system, hidden and unspeakable, Butler makes such a notion problematic. As we have seen, Irigaray's type of feminine text assigns women no space to speak from within the dominant meaning system. In *This Sex Which is Not One*, for instances, Irigaray consigns women to "the zone of silence" or a voice that flows, fluctuates and blurs and implies that women cannot be listened to "unless the proper meaning (meaning of the proper) is lost" (112). She further claims that women cannot be heard or expressed through male discourse, except when they express themselves in the forms of "a murmur, an exclamation, a whisper, a sentence left unfinished" (29). Thus, she proposes the need for 'another' ear to hear and understand this feminine "'other meaning' always in the process of weaving itself, of embracing itself with words." But I think this type of feminine text, often equated with somatic unconsciousness or bodily drives, could deny women the linguistic agency to articulate their own desires in the dominant language system. Frost also takes up the issue of the "impossibility of speaking a feminine language" in French feminists' theory,

criticizing their general assumption that systematic thinking is inappropriate in feminine language (xxii). Most of all, in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), Butler severely critiques the French feminists' attempts to trace the origin of female desire to the pre-oedipal or pre-historical realm that precedes the application of the Father's law. She especially doubts their division between the realm of consciousness,—often identified with the symbolic—and that of unconscious—the deeper sense of one's psyche or its excess remainder, unincorporated into the framework of signification. Butler blames them for making the latter, the unconscious realm, the preconditions for language use and celebrating its subversive potential that can confound the injunction of the normalization of ego. She rather argues that insofar as one participates in the dominant language system, one cannot know what is 'outside' or 'prior' to it, because any description of 'before' will always and already be in the service of the "after" (*Gender* 101).

For instance, in *Revolution of Poetic Language*, Kristeva celebrates the disturbing syntax of modernist poets and writers. As Sara Beardsworth mentions, Kristeva thinks their poetic languages functioning "as artistic sublimation [can] recover the dynamic of loss and, thereby, the subjective process" (128). While she highly esteems the subversive function of their libidinal languages, Butler contends that this 'outside' or 'pre-discursive' language is merely the speaker's choice of "always already there" words—the language that is perceived to be natural or inferior, but is actually the product of human intellectualism (*Body* 105). Fraser also mentions that this disturbing syntax still depends on the "stability and reproduction of the paternal law" and that by aligning the libidinal power with the lost maternal body, the same structural polarities/binaries in phallic

discourse such as man/woman, culture/nature and mind/body are legitimized and perpetuated (163).

To Butler, the unconscious is not an ahistorical and primitive realm that precedes the application of Father's law, but a product of it, "structured by the power relations that pervade cultural signifiers" (*The Psychic* 88). She thus asks us:

> What makes us think that the unconscious is *any less structured* by the power-relations that pervade cultural signifiers than is the language of the subject? (88, *emphasis mine*)

Butler continues to argue that the subversion of the subject 'I' should rather take place 'within' the dominant social/cultural discourse, since that is what exists. She further supports this idea by selectively reading and analyzing the theories of Freud and Michel Foucault in *The Psychic Life of Power*. Using Freud's concept of "melancholia," she suggests that the melancholic incorporation and identification with the repressed love object creates social gender. Only by abandoning the prohibited love object and equating oneself with it, can s/he take on the certain characteristics of a conventional social gender. In other words, identification with this lost or prohibited love object accompanies, and does not precede, the emergence of one's social and gender identity. Butler also utilizes Foucault's ideas of "docile bodies," "social power" and asserts that material body cannot be the true source of subversion to the subject's normalizing process, because the "resistance" of the body itself appears "as the effect of power, as a part of power" (92-3). In other words, Foucault's notion of material body is also made by the investment of social power, and this is due to the fact that "discourses not only

constitute the domains of the speakable, but are themselves bounded through the production of a constitutive outside: the unspeakable, the unsignifiable" (94).

In this context, "the unspeakable, the unsignifiable" realms that French feminists emphasize as a form of rebellion, such as somatic unconscious, the abject female body, female *jouissance*, and incest taboos involving mother-daughter relationship, are just a "constitutive outside" to Butler. This "constitutive outside," instead of serving as an excessive remainder and bringing the ultimate change to the field of signification, reaffirms the subject's normalizing process (88). Therefore, for Butler, the only way a female subject can curtail the current meaning system is "through the proliferation and variation of corporeal styles" within the dominant language discourse, not outside it ("Sex and Gender" 45).

Butler continues to demonstrate similar views in *Antigone's Claim* (2000) in which her critique is directed more towards Lacan's idea of 'the Symbolic.' She blames Lacan for assigning the symbolic an ahistorical, generalized and transcendental status. Because Lacan allows the symbolic to establish its own boundary by using taboos, she argues, its generalized effects can be further maintained and preserved. Moreover, he often situates the ideas of "contingency," "symptom" of language, and "death instinct" outside the boundary of the Symbolic. To Butler, however, these ideas do not belong 'outside' the symbolic order but rather function as 'ghosts' of totality that sustain the conventional structure of the symbolic and secure traditional family relations by setting up a sign of transgression (111). Similarly, Lacan locates Antigone's 'death instinct' outside the boundaries of the Symbolic and idealizes her relation to Polyneices as a pure love that can be restored only 'behind' the veil of the field of signification. In other

words, he believes that Antigone's seeking for her 'death instinct' drives her outside the Symbolic world and incorporates this idea in his later work, *Seminar XX,* to discuss feminine *jouissance*.

In contrast, what makes Antigone so compelling to Butler is not Antigone's sublime beauty or radical passivity driving towards her 'death instinct' but her promiscuous and "catachrestic" ways of using language that operates its own contingency within the dominant language system. By doing so, Antigone satisfies the demands of both Polyneices and Oedipus and simultaneously confuses kinship related norms. Allison Hugill also explains that Oedipus' curse that Antigone should "love no one more than him" was read by her promiscuously "insofar as the web of kinship relations in which they are caught has been rendered incoherent by Oedipus' foundational incestuous act" (4). Hugill further notes how Antigone uses the term 'brother' as "an interchangeable signifier for Eteocles, Polyneices and Oedipus himself," whose demand does not elevate one over any of the others (4-5). Moreover, when she contests Creon's edict "that has the power to do what it says," Antigone's ambiguous sentence, "I will not deny my deed," successfully marks the failure of Creon's edict by both refusing to perform a denial and not precisely claiming the act itself (Butler, *Antigone's* 8).

Antigone's promiscuous language that both adheres to and challenges conventional norms and family relations also mirrors Steins' poetic language that parodies and mimics the patriarchal language in order to confound its own boundaries—boundaries that determine who is a livable subject and who is not. Stein's characters, like Melanctha in *Three Lives*, or Susie, Ada, Miss Skeeny and Miss Furr in *Geography and Plays,* for instances, are all "parodic" figures who use the voice of patriarchal language

but inscribe their diverse desires and experiences regarding their sexuality and gender roles upon it. Moreover, like Antigone's voice, these figures are made by the intimate bond between one's speech and its action. Antigone, for instance, assumes the authorship of her act through the use of promiscuous and ambiguous language and thereby deconstructs Creon's and Oedipus' curses. Stein's female characters are also constructed and reconstructed by the effects of their ambiguous grammars, which further approves and legitimizes different types of female desires and family relations in the dominant field of signification.

This idea applies to Butler's notion of gender as "performances." To Butler, the female subject is no longer an object or a lack in the Symbolic, but a 'performing' subject that has its own linguistic agency. But, this may also imply that this female subject is trapped in the dominant representational system and thus can never escape its binaristic polarities. On the other hand, however, due to their systematic and political natures, Butler's performing subjects are able to situate themselves in the realm of signification 'differently' from other subjects in that they can deconstruct or denaturalize their gender identities by using ambiguous languages. So far, I have investigated some contrasting views between the French feminists and Butler, especially the questions of what is female language and how the female subject can bring the changes to the realm of signification. In the next section, I will engage more with Butler's "performativity" theory, its relation to "perlocutionary" speech and how this interplay offers alternate ways to be liberated from the power of Father's curses.

2. JUDITH BUTLER'S "PERFORMITIVITY" AND "LESBIAN PHALLUS"

Butler's notions of "performativity" or "performative" subject include the idea that one's identity is constructed through the repeated usage of language in the dominant cultural discourse. To her, all subjects are actors who recite the script of performative language and by repeatedly using it, they become coherent, intelligible and recognizable subjects. To her, even the natural body and its sexuality are not natural things, but "performative" products that are real "only to the extent that [they are] performed" ("Performative" 278). That is, even those identities that appear to be the most natural are brought to life and become effective only through the repetition of authentic speech in the dominant signification system. So, the key element for a "performed" subject would be "repetition." Butler also adopts a Foucauldian reading of performativity to explain that "reiterative power of discourse ... produce[s] the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (Butler, *Body* 2). In other words, to her, "I" is none other than a citation of the culturally given signifiers in a repetitive process.

But, unlike Althusser's "interpellated subject," she acknowledges that a subject can never achieve a full social identity and thus the subject formation process is always incomplete due to the risks of the signifier's own undoing by virtue of its instable nature. So she went one step further and took account of Lacan's notion of "primitive" language dominated by the reality principle. This states that language always has an excessive point where the signifier does not necessarily designate the systematically mandated point (Butler, *Body* 90). To Butler, there are thus two different ways to perform the language in terms of subject-formation: using alive and dead language. In *Excitable Speech*, she thus states that "language lives or dies . . . [and] the question of survival is

central to the question of how language is used" (8-9). While dead language is used to capture conventional references, reaffirm them and "facilitate recognition [of pre-existing subjects who] are themselves conventional, . . . often through exclusion and violence", living language "refuses to 'encapsulate' or 'capture' the event and lives it describes" and derails from the speaker's originating intention, by which speech acts have their own causal effects (9). Especially, the latter usage of language, she argues, has a blind spot that opens up to contingencies and "tie a speech to certain contexts . . . [and] break with the prior contexts of its utterance and acquire the new contexts for which it was not intended" (14). She calls each of the languages both "illocurionary" and "perlocutionary" speech acts in *Excitable Speech*.

These terms are originally from J. L. Austin's language theory in *How to Do Things With Words*. Austin here mainly argues that that all utterances are performative and thus have interpellative functions that constitute one's identity. He divides speech acts into three kinds: "locutionary," "illocutionary," and "perlocutionary" speeches. He further adds that even "locutionary" speech, where one delivers the objective truth, is inevitably performative, as it brings certain contexts from which the speaker guesses or conjectures the sentence. Even descriptive or informative sentences, he said, are "selective and uttered for a purpose" in a certain speech situation as a whole and therefore, all speech acts and utterances necessarily become "performative" (144). And "Illocurionary" speech refers to how utterance are acted upon the intended addressee, and how saying something immediately exerts an expected power to a subject, as seen in the cases of declarations of marriage, ownership, baptisms, inaugurations, and legal sentences, like "I do." However, he says not all speech is necessarily efficacious and

some of these speech acts might bring about unintentional consequences. This is called a "perlocutionary" speech act:

> [The] perlocutionary act . . . brings in a greater or less stretch of 'consequences' always, some of which may be 'unintentional.' There is no restriction to the minimum physical act at all. That we can import at an indefinitely long stretch of what might also be called the 'consequences' of our act into the act itself is, or should be, a fundamental commonplace of the theory of our language about all 'action' in general. (Austin 106-7)

That is, although all speech functions as performative, "illocutionary language" only reaffirms socially interpellated identities and generates the irreplaceable and ideological subject when someone calls him, whereas "perlocutionary" language makes the subject emerge as active and free, emancipated from socially interpellated names by the reterritorization of language. Butler took account of Austin's distinction of these two kinds of speech acts in order to explain, too, that one's subjectivity, once constituted in a dominant cultural discourse, can be reconstituted differently within different discursive arrangements. Butler's notion of "performative" language is thus based on the presumption that "deterrence may be the sequel of an illocution" and the subject might fail to respond to the police's call as expected (Austin 117).

Butler's "perlocutionary" language is also influenced by Lacan's theory of language and his definition of "the Phallus." Lacan's introduction of phenomenological possibilities into the realm of language and especially his idea that language can designate some empirical objects beyond the sets of fixed referents has much inspired

Butler's concepts of "performativity" and the "lesbian phallus".[21] For instance, to Lacan, language always includes the uncertain point where the "signifier can come to signify in excess of its structurally mandated position" (Butler, *Body* 90). Due to this precarious nature of language, he defines "the Phallus,"—the primary signifier—as the phantasmatic field marked by impossibility, and therefore it is not synonymous with the penis. He further argues that "the Phallus" functions only when it becomes a 'veil' or a 'mask,' that is, "a sign of the latency with which any signifiable [can be] stuck, when it is raised (*aufgehoben*) to the function of signifier" (*Ecrits* 581). So, in "Lesbian Phallus," adopting Lacan's own logic, she claims that any attempt to equate "the Phallus" with a male organ is male narcissism, since the phallus is always an imaginary field marked by impossibility of meaning.[22] In this sense, a biological female subject can also have a "lesbian phallus" in her imaginary realm and fetishize her body. Moreover, if "the Phallus" can be represented by anyone's body part, it can simultaneously constitute a signifying process where names signify differently from the meaning of heterosexual norms. She believes that this logically promotes an alternative female Imaginary or consciousness. Especially,

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[21] I will come back to discussing the positive effects or benefits of using Lacan's clinical language in more detail in section IV. In that section, I will mainly use Bruce Fink's ideas to propose that Lacan's talking therapy creates a 'desiring' subject that distances itself from the fixed object of the Other's demand.

[22] Likewise, in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins,* Kaja Silverman questions Lacan's heterosexual ideology associating the Phallus with the male organ. Silverman posits that society is a "make believe" world, a dominant fiction of masculinity, constructed based on "the penis/Phallus equation" (47). In other words, she says that Lacan's heterosexual ideology is a virtual reality dependent on male narcissism and fantasy, since "the ego is situated from the beginning in a 'fictional direction'" (20). Moreover, Silverman's definition of "Object *a"* is a blank space or the symbol of lack, but she argues that this space is filled by the male organ, which not only makes the male subject a being of fullness by "restoring lost wholeness to the subject," but also excludes the female subject from the Symbolic (20).

historical differences and contextual specificities among individuals, she thinks, contribute to the process of "restaging and resignifying speech in [different] contexts that exceed those determined by the courts" (*Excitable* 23). Butler further mentions that it is "this slippage between discursive command and its appropriated effect which provides the linguistic occasion and index for a consequential disobedience" (*Body* 122). Due to these temporal and spatial specificities and gaps, one's language entails a degree of counter-agency and thus the repetition of the same language would not be identical to existing social norms (Butler, "Performative Acts" 526-27). This way, Butler's notion of 'alive' language can displace a penis from its privileged position and destabilize Lacan's heterosexual norms.

Judging from what we have discussed, Butler's performative subject can be understood as the result of a series of sedimented acts "which are [always] renewed, revised and consolidated" through the repeated usage of the language of misconception, "rather than a predetermined or foreclosed structure, essence, or fact, whether natural, cultural, or linguistic" ("Performative Acts" 523). Moreover, if we assume that her concept of "lesbian phallus" points to the possibility of initiating and constituting the "perlocutionary" language system, one can also say that this different kind of language use allows women to be emancipated from the subordinate position of "being the Phallus" in the Symbolic, as postulated by Lacan.

Butler's language theory strongly resonates with the formation of a new poetic subject in Stein's language. In that language, one cannot guarantee that speech will not be derailed from the speaker's original intention, either. Stein also abandons the fantasy of Adam's language in which everyone could perfectly understand each other. Moreover, to

Butler and Stein, repetition is the most important syntactical tool for generating diverse "linguistic occasion[s] and index[es] for a consequential disobedience" to social norms (Butler, *Body* 122) and for forming one's life as both a compositional effect of language and "a differential site" (Ruddy 54). Ulla E. Dydo thus compares Stein's repetition to a self-conscious and theatrical learning process wherein the repeated language of the speaker develops into a "cultivated code for the unnamable something" (254). As Rosmarie Waldrop quips, "*Je est un autre*" (I is another), in Stein's language (234). Just as the key element for Butler's "performative" subject was the repetition of a "different" language, Stein's poetic subject is also created through the ambiguous effects of repeated words and phrases. For instance, in her poems, many relative pronouns such as which, that, whom, who, and auxiliary verbs such as do and have, are constantly repeated as empty signifiers. Similar pronouns and prepositions also repeat and rearrange the contexts of Stein's narrations.[23] In this way, Stein's writing subject resignifies the text differently in each moment. In "Portraits and Repetitions," Stein also remarks that "there is no such a thing as repetition" since repetition always includes the difference of insistences, meaning that her language is a moving landscape where no two moments are identical (*LMNHI* 99):

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[23] 'Repetition' was a common technique shared by many Cubist painters, such as Cézanne, Picasso and Braque. They were faithful to the geographical system of canvas and frequently used overlapping planes of similar colors to produce various points of contact as demonstrated in Cézanne's or Picasso's paintings. These vantage points not only dissect the object into a multitude of small facets, but also reassemble and reconfigure their structure in different contexts. Richard Shiff thus mentions that Cézanne's originality was derived from "the repetitive or perhaps systematic technical procedure which is something more than what is found or in the subjective inner self [of the artist]" (114). In other words, Cubist aesthetic suggests that there is no predetermined form for what humans or the art objects should be. This idea closely resembles Stein's literary aesthetic on reality and her new writing subject.

> Then we have insistence insistence that in its emphasis can never be repeating, because insistence is always alive and if it is alive it is never saying anything in the same way because emphasis can never be the same not even when it is most the same that is when it has been taught. (101)

In *Three Lives*, too, words such as "wisdom, excitement, understand, know, certainly, deeply, wander . . . are repeated with slight variation" and lead into ever-changing contexts or attributes of characters (Perloff, *The Poetics* 93). That is, it is these repeated rhythms or patterns of similar words and sentences, not the actions or dialogue, that determine the provisional identities of the characters. The repeated sentences expose the characters to different contexts of narrations and create different relations between the characters and the words. For instance, in "Melanctha," the meaning of Jeff's statement "what it was to have deep feeling" or "what I always been feeling with you" constantly changes through repetition (*TL* 144-47). In the first repetitions, the sentence indicates the strengthening of Jeff's romantic feeling for Melanctha. In the third and fourth repetition, however, it implies his disappointment in her careless or unfaithful past behavior and here his "deep feeling" is used synonymously with terms such as "sick" and "very heavy" (145). By the fifth repetition, Jeff's "feeling" is more associated with his belated regret that he cannot truly understand what is real about Melanctha (155-57).

Perloff also notes the importance of the repetition of similar words/phrases in *Geography and Plays*. She says the words such as "pleasant" and "cultivating" in "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" are repeated and re-contextualized with different narrative tones and styles ("The Extra" 675). Perloff especially points out that the meaning of "pleasant" in its third repetition shifts from "comfort and ordinary pleasures" to boredom of the

domestic bourgeois family (675). In its fourth repetition, however, she says, along with the substitution of "pleasant voice" for "pleasant home," the term takes on the meaning of the speaker's expectation for new events. Perloff further notes that the term, "pleasant" is then replaced by the word "gay" in the sixth sentence, hinting at some desirous but unspecified space where Helen wants to "cultivat[e] something, voices and other things needing cultivating" (*GP* 17). But in the tenth sentence, "pleasant" regains its former erotic connotation. In the ninth repetition, the romantic connotation is stripped away and the sense of weariness returns: "Helen Furr had a pleasant enough home and then George Skeene went to a place where her brother had quite some distinction" (18-20).

Another effect of Stein's repetition is how female desires and family relations are inscribed, legitimized and approved as new literary facts in her material language. As discussed earlier, Butler's "performative" subject is not a fixed and permanent social entity. Instead, it is the site where different meanings can be inserted under the category of 'woman' or 'man' when diverse historical and cultural conditions are taken into account and repeated over time. Stein's repetitious language also seeks alternative ways of realizing and constructing one's gender/sexual identity. And the repetition allows her language to be arranged and rearranged so that reality and one's gender identity is constructed differently from social norms. In "Portraits and Repetition," for instance, Stein claims that her poetic language contains "new ways of making portraits of men and women and children" and has "nothing to do with remembering any one or anything," because remembering always "consists in knowing that one is a kind of a one" (*LMNHI* 98, 104, 105). In this way, Stein's language retextualizes different types of female desires and establishes them as alternative yet legitimate social facts by giving the female subject constant opportunity to revise,

recreate and re-stage signifiers in different contexts. In "Sacred Emily," Stein also emphasizes the "necessity" to "See girl says" their new sexual desires and experiences by using language as a differential site. Stein's language is often churned into the ice-cream and "[w]hen a churn [language] say suddenly when a churn say suddenly" (*GP* 184), it brings "[a new] primer of female experience" that "rewrites the Eve story of women as temptress" (Pondrom, xlix). Stein's poetic language therefore achieves a strong feminist breakthrough via repetition. Like Butler's "performative" subject, repetition helps Stein's writing subject to be a "drag," a gender that is performance. Sarah Ruddy also calls Stein "a materialist feminist," claiming that "Materialist feminism's wielding of language . . . enables to create such a position through composition, even—and especially—where one might not have been structurally possible otherwise" (64-65). However, Stein in her lifetime did not identify with the feminist Suffrage movement in the early twentieth century or the second wave of feminism whose ideas are mostly grounded in the 'experientially based' female body. As Frost mentions, her poetic language and its "perverse desires had no contemporaneous feminist exponents" (5). Regardless, many contemporary critics of avant-garde poetry such as Sphar, Frost and Mix interpret her works as feminist re-workings of patriarchal language. Mix sees her as an initiator who started to articulate "a feminist experimentalist community" in American literary history (4). Hejinian in *The Language of Inquiry* also mentions that the vulnerability of Stein's poetic language—that it constantly fails to effect the meanings the speaker originally intended— produces both infinitely alternate female subjects and counter-speeches against conventional gender norms and relationships.

3. What Constitutes the Realness of Stein's Reality

In this section, I apply Butler's language theory to Stein's definition of literary realism and its construction of her new poetic subject. In "A Transatlantic Interview-1946" with Robert Bartlett Haas, Stein makes her concept of literary realism clear: it is not the image of things in the world that gives us a sense of reality but how the language representing these worldly things constructs the world we know. In "Portraits and the Repetition," Stein emphasizes an intimate bond between the speaking subject and its statements, saying, "I was empty of them I made them contained within the thing I wrote that was them" (*Writings 1932-1946* 308). Stein's idea of reality does not lie outside the cognitive system composed of language but takes place "inside the writing, [is] perceived there, not elsewhere, outside it" (Hejinian, *Language* 105).

Hejinian is another critic who recognizes and emphasizes the 'non-referential' and 'non-essential' nature in Stein's language. In "Two Stein Talks," for instance, she explains that it is the linguistic simulacrum, the representational system that constantly fashions and refashions the characters' lives and natures, that constitutes the realness of Stein's "literary realism" and characters. She also observes that Stein's "literary realism" can be traced back to the nineteenth century tradition of literary Naturalism. For instance, naturalists such as Emile Zola and Ivan Turgenev emphasized the note of scientific methodology in the representational system and claimed that "a great style is made of logic and clarity" (qtd. in Hejinian, *Language* 88). Zola, who was a close friend of Cézanne, "whom in turn Stein so admired," was not the only one who felt this way. Paul Alexis, a member of Zola's literary group, also claims that "realism is not a 'rhetoric' but . . . [a] method of thinking, seeing, reflecting, studying and experimenting, a need to analyze in order to know" (88). In other words, literary 'realists' significantly changed

the approach to the terms 'truth' and 'reality,' going from seeking the terms' essential and original nature, to scientific ways to write and perceive their effects in the representational system. Stein also shared the realist idea that language is "an order of reality itself and not a mere mediating medium" (90).

Perloff also discerns a connection between how Stein prioritizes the effects of language over the subject's interior and how Flaubert emphasizes the functions of formal and discursive language. Flaubert, for an example, establishes the axiom that "there is no such thing as subject—[only the] style in itself being an absolute manner of seeing" the reality of things (qtd. in Perloff, *21st-Century* 55). Flaubert and Stein's shared idea of reality as a linguistic simulacrum bears strong thematic relation to Butler's "performativity" theory, which also emphasizes one's 'non-referential' and 'dramatic' natures. Moreover, Butler's notion of language possesses the constitutive power to implicate and transform human subject as its own effects. To Butler, one's existence becomes visible and recognizable only through repetitive usage of language. Likewise, Stein's poetic language emphasizes a high visibility that assists in imagining the constantly changing natures of oneself. Stein also takes advantage of the intrusive nature of language to show diverse ways of interpreting one's subjectivity and reality. This idea further emphasizes Stein's notion of "equality" in the realm of signification. Judy Grahn explains, "Stein in her works with words used the entire text as a field in which every element mattered as much as any other" (8). This "flat," "equal," and "auto-functioning" nature of Stein's language is well illustrated in *Tender Buttons.* In the next section, I will therefore explore how Stein's "vulnerable" language in *Tender Buttons* brings about a

radical openness comparable to Butler's enactment of diverse meanings in the dominant social and cultural discourse.

4. The Room Metaphors in *Tender Buttons*

Tender Buttons is composed of repeated words and phrases that constantly alter their meanings. Stein often uses prepositions, relative pronouns, and auxiliary verbs to arrange and rearrange the sentence elements and produce different meanings while minimizing the use of nouns and adjectives. Stein thereby ensures that her language does not depend on the heterosexual meaning system that occludes diverse differences between words and the world under 'the name of Father.' The constructive principle that dominates *Tender Buttons* continuously, in this way, goes astray and generates uncertainty in the poems. This non-heterosexual structure of Stein's language system is further supported and illustrated by her room or container metaphors.

In *TB,* Stein often uses the metaphors of transparent container and receptacle like vase, carafe, canister, cup, glass and eyeglasses, etc. These containers are depicted as phenomenological spaces in which its fluid contents become susceptible to changes and erase their former meanings through infinite regeneration of contexts. In the poems like "A PIANO," "CUP," "NOTHING ELEGANT," "RED HAT," and "BOX", for instances, these transparent containers are further described as enabling whatever they can signify, "being all in size, . . . being full of size" or all in forms, without having any essential nature inside (*LMNHI* 182). In "CARELESS WATER" and "MUTTON," Stein also uses the metaphors of "cup" and "eyeglass . . . [which] is water" (176). This statement means her receptacles have the potential to be mingled with any of the surrounding objects, such

as “handle and meadow and sugar any sugar,” take on different meanings according to the different contexts and always become “in between” spaces (182).

In *TB*, Stein’s language is further compared to the image of a small room with a window. Like Hejinian’s room metaphor in *The Cell*, a phenomenological space where clouds create the mutable views and raindrops blur the scene, Stein’s room also metaphorizes the surplus value of the meaning system where “silk and stockings were . . . present and [became] not any more of either” (*LMNHI* 176). Hejinian’s room in *The Cell* is the space on which unexpected weather and its temporal contingency imparts “additional weights” and makes her word the “unit of endurance, and the waiting” rather than “a clear-cut conceptual unit” (148). Her notion of an “insatiable” language that always falls short of one’s expectation, also seems influenced by Stein’s aesthetic. In *TB*, for instance, Stein’s poetic language commits to a pure contingency in deciding its meanings and becomes a field of semantic deferral. Its referents neither fix nor exhaust significance and therefore free the subject from the tyranny of a full signifier. That is to say, Stein’s room is well-ventilated by an open window through which the wind freely flows so that a pure “difference is spreading” and thus “pleasure i[s] not getting tired of it” (158, 159). In order to emphasize the airiness, she also uses the metaphors of wind, breath, moonlight, coolness and the west as seen in “Chain-boats are merry, are merry [when wind] blew, blew west, carpet” (185). In contrast, sunlight, dryness and clear eyesight suggest the tyranny of the full signifier that makes the room suffocating and “air less,” as in “ale less” (169).

The cognitive gap in language that brings unknown meanings is further represented by Stein’s images of a gate in “rose and there is a gate surrounding it” (161)

or a window whose "curtain is [always] shorter" so that air can freely pass and "be circulat[ed] in summer and winter" (162). This gap is the very source out of which infinite connections among words "provide poetry with its enormous mobility and its transformative strategies" (Hejinian, *Language* 328). This gap forces language to undergo the process of "being broken in more places and mended . . . in more water" and further enables the infinite process of "replacement," "exchange" and "transformation" of meanings (*LMNHI* 166). Stein thus often uses metaphors of "spreading," "exchanging" "blending" and even "cooking" in *TB* to suggest that her language is a 'fun' place where the free exchange or rearrangement of meanings is allowed (189). The door/window metaphors thus sometimes symbolize the advent of hope for the unknown future: "hope in gates, hope in spoons, hope in doors, hope in tables, no hope in daintiness and determination" (174). The very idea that the referents of words are transformable or replaceable can free the mind and open the unknown future to hope. For these reasons, Stein's objects in *Tender Buttons*, even ones of social stigma and aversion such as "excrement" and "dirt," transform into "a new knowledge," or "a new sense"—the misheard referents to "a no since" in the future (187).

> Pain soup suppose it is question, suppose it is butter, real is, real is only, only excreate, only excreate a no since.
>
> A no, a no since, a no since when, a no since when since, a no since, when since a no since when since, a no since, a no since when since, a no since, a no, a no since a no since, a no since, a no since.

Moreover, Stein sometimes lists a series of domestic feminine objects that are often regarded as male fetishes, such as "SHOES" (169), "A white dress" (170), and "a hat."

But when a typical male subject such as "a real soldier" tries to interpret those objects in a conventional manner, the male subject soon becomes the "seizer of talks" as seen in "a sizer a sizer of talks," the one who "shut[s] up" the difference between names and its referents and "seizes" its free movements: "if he can read he is a size to show shutting up twenty-four" (170).

In Stein's language, each moment of utterance thus becomes the first moment of deciding and creating meaning through which one's previous habits or memories are violated and turned into new memories, habits, futures, and hopes (Watson 40). Stein's word association process often parallels the actual process of forming one's consciousness. Dana Cairns Watson therefore claims that Stein's writing subject that constantly (re)modifies itself without a fixed foundation strongly echoes William James's "psychological ego." James equates the way words associate with each other with how the mind associates with ideas (qtd. in Watson 39). In *Principles of Psychology* (1890), James also states that one's consciousness undergoes constant remodification since our brain is in a "state of change like a kaleidoscope in which the figures are always rearranging themselves" (qtd. in Watson 39). James's concept of "the stream of the consciousness" thus suggests that there is no state of consciousness that is repeated or always returns to the same. The active movement of (re)forming linguistic associations derails and plunges the speaker into unknown futures and identities. James also adds that the more "wide spreading" this linguistic association becomes, the more "conscious" the thinker must become (40). In this regard, Stein's gestures toward the multiple connections of the words in *TB* can be said to bring what James calls 'the heightened state of consciousness, that "cause[s] our instincts to contradict" former memories or

habits in the realm of language (42). Just as Butler's notion of the "perlocutionary" speech act brings "deterring and even, say, surprising or misleading" effects to the subject's mind (Austin 109), Stein's language also makes one's desires ambiguous so that they can be explored in multiple ways and so maintain a "heightened state of consciousness." This further suggests that Stein's new writing/reading subject does not know about "a way of being constituted for that constitution to work in an efficacious way . . . [because] a chain of signification . . . [always] exceeds the circuit of self-knowledge" (Butler, *Excitable* 31).

In contrast, what would happen if the meaning of words is preserved and fixed at the center? Stein remarks, "[T]here is no use in a centre." She also uses metaphors such as "erection," "standing," or "climbing" in *TB* to recall the image of the swollen penis and suggest that meanings can be accumulated and fixed. However, she warns that "[t]his makes no diversion" (*LMNHI* 189). It does not mean that her words do not have any meaning or referent, but that a fixed representation of a word "as a guarantee of certitude in the figure of phallus is false" (Leonard 192). Moreover, Stein worries that the function of a full signifier that "protect[s] the centre" (*LMNHI* 162) might deprive the subject of the pleasure of fetishizing language with diverse meanings and consequently "silence" the voices of "the others": "Something that is an erection is that which stands and feeds and *silences a tin which is swelling*. This makes no diversion that is to say what can please exaltation, that which is cooking" (189, *emphasis mine*). In this case, language no longer serves as a free ticket to anywhere but rather becomes a "detainer" of meanings (160). This is also the moment that a free flowing "current" (194) of air transforms into "currency" (196).

The failure of free exchange or the "equal division" (173) of meaning results in a dry, airless, and silent room, reminiscent of what "silences a tin which is swelling" (189). Through these images, Stein demonstrates that limited ways of using language can impose a dead and ready-made speech, the "speech ready" (191): "No eye-glasses are rotten, no window is useless and yet if air will not come in there is a speech ready, there always is and there is not dimness, not a bit of it." In "MUTTON," Stein is also worried that a full signifier that refutes any "dimness" of meaning may turn into "a letter which can wither" or "a sample of smell ... [that] makes a certainty a shade" (176). Here, she implies that language can be a violent tool that separates people into different hierarchical groups and evokes hatred among them, as evidenced by the sentence, "A pleasant simple habitual and tyrannical and authorized and educated and resumed [language] and [it] articulate[s] separation" (167). Once meaning becomes "habitual," Stein knows that her language can turn into a "tyrannical" and "authorized" means of communication, prioritizing or marginalizing certain people by fixed identity categories such as "male/female."

In other words, Stein seems to fear that language can no longer challenge the status quo of power relationships among different groups of people and thus perpetuates group stereotypes. This idea strongly resonates with some of Butler's claims in *The Precarious Life* (2006). Butler, too, argues that the use of hegemonic language or "dead" language produces hierarchical differences between different racial and cultural groups, making certain groups acceptable and other groups invisible and unnoticeable through social stigma (63). The language of mass media especially contributes to constructing and perpetuating the hegemonic paradigm, deepening the conflict between 'us' and the

'other' (63). Words such as 'victim' or 'terrorist,' for instance, cannot be used except when referring to 'others' living outside the U. S. Butler further notes that this restricted way of using language not only justifies the American and Israeli government's violence against Palestinians, but also prohibits those killed from being publicly mourned.

5. STEIN'S "HEALING" LANGUAGE IN *GEOGRAPHY AND PLAYS*

Having shown that Stein uses language performatively in the previous section, now I move from Butler's to Lacan's theory and explicate more in-depth relationship between Lacanian 'talking cure' and Stein's 'healing' language. Here, I argue that Stein's ambiguous and promiscuous ways of using language bring the therapeutic benefits to the speaking subject, which in many ways parallels the functions of Lacan's clinical language for neurotic patients. For instances, the "primitive" language[24] used in Lacanian psychoanalytic discourse does not so much aim to understand or excavate the 'true' meanings behind the patient's speech as to separate him from "the bedrock of castration" that Freud mentions in the "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937). Rather, the

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[24] In "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," for instance, Lacan encourages analysts to use this "primitive" language, which is dominated by "reality effects," when treating patients. The 'desire' generated by the operation of "primitive" language can supposedly help the speaker escape from a fixed type of imaginary ego and release him/her into the open sea of *langue* (*Ecrits* 233-34). Moreover in order to renew the "never-exhausted power of symbol" (234), Lacan says, the speaking subject should undergo the process of losing himself in the language as an object, so that he can realize himself and his history only "in the process of becoming" (247) or "in its relation to a future" (249): "What is realized in my history is neither the past definite as what was, since it is no more, nor even the perfect as what has been in what I am, but the future anterior as what I will have been, given what I am in the process of becoming" (247). Therefore, to him, the question of exactness in interpreting the patient's words does not matter as much as recognizing the patient as a new desiring "subject" constructed by this "true speech" whose meaning is relegated to the "parenthesis of the resistance it manifests" (248).

goal is to move him beyond the trauma so that he can be "desiring" subject in the field of signification. Here, "the bedrock of castration" means the origin of a patient's trauma or neurosis that Freud argues is impossible for the patient to overcome. For instances, when an analyst excavates the mind of the neurotic patient like a 'Rat man,' he will reach the certain point that he can no longer penetrate into and this is "the rock of castration" (Fink, *A Clinical* 69). Bruce Fink in *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis* further explains that this is also the place where the patient's deepest senses of deprivation or loss are located whose traumatic memories are painfully repeated and protest against the parent's castration even when he became an adult. However, unlike Freud, Fink in *The Lacanian Subject* claims that the speaking subject cannot only traverse the fundamental fantasy by constructing a new fantasy through language, but also can be a new 'desiring' subject. In the book, he uses many synonyms to refer to this "metaphorization" process occurring in Lacanian language, such as "the precipitation of subjectivization," "the signification of the master signifier," "the invention of the new metaphor" or "traversing the fundamental fantasy," etc. That is, in Fink's sense, neurotic patients are those whose life meanings are lost by the fixed referent of the master signifier (S1) and thus cannot impose any further meanings in language. But, he says when they learn to create 'new' chains of signifiers (S2) that can replace the former meaning of S1, s/he can unsettle the former symbolic chain and escape the painful state of fixation on the Imaginary form of themselves (130-37). For instance, when treating a neurotic patient, Fink claims that an analyst should constantly shift the direction of their conversation by asking the questions the subject didn't expect to hear (*A Clinical* 57). The analyst should also spend much time analyzing and discussing the patient's dreams, fantasies, daydreams only to discover

where the subject's fixed desire lie. By doing so, the analyst can make the subject's fundamental fantasy thrown into question, shaken up, and reconfigured and induce him to realize that his view of the Other's desires may not be real or be the product of his own making (58-59). This is the moment that Lacan's analytical treatment ends.[25] Lacan's agency of subject thus exists only as the momentary effects of the signifiers and the 'subversion of the subject' is also possible by the help of these signifiers (Boucher 167). Besides Lacan and Butler, various other psychoanalytic critics such as Geoff Boucher and Richard Boothby emphasize this potential of the symbolic that can "actualize the unbinding of energies of bound in the alienated structure of the ego" (Boucher 167). In this section, however, instead of directly dealing with Lacan's theory, I will use Fink's explanation on the functions of Lacanian 'talking cure' in his two books titled *The Lacanian Subject* and *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis.* I will further explore how Fink's ideas further apply to the therapeutic effects of Stein's poetic language, which also erodes one's stable and conventional ego. My research aim is thus not so much to provide an exhaustive account of Lacan's language theory as to simply indicate some suggestive correspondences in the relationship between Stein and Lacan's

[25] The fundamental aim of Lacan's treatment is thus to avoid the patient's permanent transference with the desire of "the significant Other" and induce the "falling away of the subject supposed to know" (Fink, *A Clinical* 63). Here "a subject supposed to know" refers to the omniscient position or knowledge that the patient assumes the analyst has and therefore completely trusts, which initiates Lacan's analytic process. Although the knowledge that the analyst is presumed to have is nothing but the patient's own illusion, Lacan mentions that this illusory belief is the crucial factor that initiates the whole analytic process and further makes the analysand alienated or disillusioned about the omnipotent power of the analyst. In order to draw this "disillusionment" process, Lacan also emphasizes the specific "ways the meanings shift about as the products of different ways in which the speech happens" and argues that this particular language can affect the ways in which the patient's subjectivity is constructed and reconstructed (Frosh 177).

perspectives on the construction of 'desiring' subject, the subject that constantly reconnects the signifier to different referents within different contexts.

In *A Clinical Introduction,* for instance, Fink introduces two stages to treating neurosis with healthy transference. The first stage is called, 'dialectization,' in which the analyst should revamp the patient's interpretation of the desire of the significant Other. The second is "the stage of reconfiguration" where the patient moves from being the fixed object of the Other's desire to being the subject who 'desires' and then finally 'enjoys' in the realm of language (65). In the process, the speaker inevitably experiences the distancing herself from the fixed object of the Other's desire, leaving the fixed signified of the master signifier (S1) and finally achieving an independent position in the Symbolic, no longer suffering from a state of fixation. Fink calls the previous state, wherein the patient is painfully being subordinate to the absolute Other, an "isolation model," exemplified by Hamlet's neurotic state which made him indecisive about his action against Claudius. On the contrary, subjects in the stage of "separation model," he explains, are much healthier and more independent, since they can acknowledge their own desires in language. According to Fink, this alienation process is very painful, yet worthwhile, since the patient can be reborn as a 'desiring' or 'enjoying' subject in the realm of language. Lacan also thinks reconfiguration of thoughts in a subject's mind happens only through the invention of new connections between signifiers; Fink calls this process, *metaphorization*. He says that a "metaphor"

> brings about a new configuration of thoughts, establishing a new combination or permutation, a new order in the signifying chain, a shakedown of the old order. Connections between signifiers are "definitively" changed. That kind of

> modification cannot occur without subjective participation. Why not? Because it is not a question of "simple" metonymic displacement from one term to another, but rather of substitution. ("The Subject" 2)

Simply saying, *metaphorization* refers to how one signifier can be reconnected to another: if the new connection between the isolated signifier (S1) and another signifier (S2) is established, Fink explains, the status of the master signifier (S1) will be demoted and bring "the rectification of the subject's relation to the Other" (Fink, *Lacanian Subject* 151, 89). These multiple connections between two signifiers (S1 and S2) allow a patient to traverse his or her fundamental fantasy and bring its subjectivity into active movements (141). This is possible because "metaphor creates the subject [itself and] every metaphorical effect is then an effect of subjectivity (and vice versa)" (70).

For this aim, the analyst should perform different type of language by "highlight[ing] a slip, or underscor[ing] an ambiguity or 'unintended' double entendre" of a patient's words, so that he or she can reformulate her imagery according to the different arrangement of signifiers (Fink, *Understanding,* vol. 1 39). Fink also emphasizes how Lacan himself uses the 'metaleptic' language, lest a patient relapse into the former state of 'understanding.' Lacan's writings themselves are full of "extravagant, preposterous, and mixed metaphors, if not precisely to jolt one out of the easy reductionism inherent in the very process of understanding" (Fink, "The Subject" 3). While Lacan's concept of "understanding" always brings the subject back to the status quo of his or her imaginary identity, Fink explains that his notion of "true understanding" rather involves "an incursion of the symbolic into the real" or "draining off more of the real into the symbolic" (3).

Lacan's talking therapy thus heavily relies on how one's language evokes different 'desires' in the speaker's mind, or the pure 'desirousness' derived from the Other's gaze. It maximizes this ambiguous nature of the Other's desire that has no particular object of inquiry and therefore cannot be fully conjectured. This ambiguity also leads to the infinite process of inquiry into the ever-changing nature of the signifier. In seminar XX, Lacan thus remarks, "I ask you not to accept what I offer you (because that's not it!)" (Barnard and Fink 101). In seminar XIII, he also emphasizes the impossibility of fulfilling the Other's desire and says, "Just because people ask you for something doesn't mean that's what they really want you to give them" (qtd. in Fink, *A Clinical* 20). Only when this hypothesis is satisfied can the subject escape the oppression of the Other's demand and be an independent subject who 'desires' oneself in the realm of language. To this aim, the subject should first accept that the Other is likewise a split subject with a fundamental lack.

Fink's 'metaphorization' functions in a manner similar to Butler's "perlocutionary" speech. Butler's ambiguous speech act also indicates the "space in which patient can come to desire" from their fixed state of the Imaginary (*A Clinical* 224). Butler, of course, dismisses the existence of Lacan's concept of 'the Real,' a pure symptom or remainder of a meaning system that is left unsaid and repressed.[26] But in

[26] Butler does often reveal an ambivalent attitude towards Lacan, and the theoretical gap between her theories and his, are not negligible. For instances, she does not accept Lacan's formulaic distinction among the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. While he assigns the Symbolic generalized functions, such as social norms, and abstracts the Imaginary ego from the Symbolic, Butler combines the two realms and equates one's Imaginary ego with the symbolic field. Moreover, Butler does not accept the ontological status of 'the real' either, since to her the lack in language is always and already masked or fetishized by the subject's Imaginary process. Nevertheless, Lacan, like her, believes that an emergence of 'desire' in the symbolic field can bring the "effects [of] a certain

Antigone's Claim, she highly esteems Antigone's promiscuous and ambiguous speech act that both adheres to and challenges the demand of "illocutionary" language, and how the speech act generates different subject positions in language. Butler's notion of the female subject possessing a "lesbian phallus" also seems to mirror Fink's notions of "subjectification" or "metaphorization" process that can help the female subject overcome her neurotic state.

In this regards, Stein's poetic language can be also viewed as a 'therapeutic' language that transfers the subject's fixed symptom into pure functions of signifier and thereby reveals the diverse possibilities of the Other's 'desires.' From here, I will thus examine how Stein's syntactical experiments and phonetic plays in *Geography and Plays* constantly reconfigure the contents of her poetic language and bring diverse orders of factuality surrounding the words and challenge the idea of the 'objective ego' of her characters. Perloff also argues that Stein's linguistic experiments "enact the gradually changing present of human consciousness" (*The Poetics* 98). In "Introduction" to *Geography and Plays,* Cyrena N. Pondrom similarly points out that Stein's 'polyvocality,' the multiple registers of tones and styles in the characters' dialogues, weakens the author's ownership of the poetic 'I' and causes "a dissolution of [his] ego boundaries" (xlvii). She further argues that through these practices, "[a]ll the pre-existing or remembered construction of the self/other are put aside to realize the construction which occurs in the present of the text" (xxx). The polyvocal or polysemantic remainder engendered through the "multiplication of indications of structural divisions" in *GP*, in

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deconstruction of the imaginary object" (Boothby 165). Richard Boothby thus argues that in Lacanian theory "to speak of the imaginary function of the ego in isolation from the symbolic can be misleading" (105).

this way, not only precipitates the disintegration of the characters' identities but further simultaneously resituates identity as a provisional and ongoing linguistic effect (Jouve 106). For instances, in *GP*, the distinction among her characters' lines is often blurred and eliminated through the repetition of similar words or phrases and the frequent use of deictic modalities such as "you," "we," "there," "here," "this," etc. Moreover, Stein's frequent use of homonym, homophone, assonance and anagram also offers readers many points of entry into her text and creates "an open field of narrative possibility" in which "each reader can adopt to fit his own set of particulars" (Ashbery, qtd. in Perloff, *The Poetics* 252). Through this way, in poems such as "Susie Asado," "Sacred Emily," "A Sweet Tail," "Pink Melon Joy" and plays such as "Do Let Us Go Away. *A Play*," "What Happened. *A Play in Five Acts*," and "Every Afternoon. *A Dialogue*," Stein's diverse narrative techniques and sound games often break down her characters' fixed ego boundaries and reconstruct them in a way that defies "the Law of the Father" and confuses kinship-related norms.

For instance, Stein generously employs the technique of paronomasia, which produces situational reversals or represents ambiguous features of the characters in *GP*. Paronomasia consists of "wordplays based on like-sounding words," similar to Shakespeare's puns on "sun" and "son" or John Donne's puns on "done" and "Donne" (Greene 1004). Paronomasia thus often includes homonyms, homophones, and multilingual puns, as often seen in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Examples of homonym/homophone usage in *GP* can be found in Stein's use of the word "Willie" or "Willy" in "Sacred Emily" (180). Willie/Willy indicates a common boy's name, especially considering that it is followed by another boy's name in the next line, "Henry

Henry Henry." But "Willie" is also slang for penis. Furthermore, the word is juxtaposed with the similarly pronounced "Lily ice-cream"—a description often associated with female genitalia in Stein's poems.

> Lily ice-cream.
>
> Nevertheless.
>
> A hand is Willie.
>
> Henry Henry Henry.
>
> A hand is Henry.
>
> Henry Henry Henry.
>
> A hand is Willie.
>
> Henry Henry Henry.
>
> All the time.
>
> A wading chest.
>
> Do you mind.
>
> Lizzie do you mind.

In these accounts, we can say the sentence "A hand is Willie" evokes eroticism by implying that the hand is a "lesbian phallus," which overrides the conventional meaning system of the phallic world. Whereas patriarchal language attempts to suppress the difference between the signifier/signified through the logic of resemblance and show how a female is born with a fundamental lack, Stein's poetic language, through the use of homonymic puns, subverts the fixed order of "having" and "being" the Phallus, allowing female subjects to fetishize their body and fill the cognitive gap with other possible meanings. In this way, Stein constructs a unique (female) poetic subjectivity that is not

"killed into art" (qtd. in Pondrom, xlvi), but created by fetishizing language with the "lesbian phallus," so that women can also visualize and express their desire in the realm of language.

The use of homonyms/homophones is also common for the Lacanian clinical practice for neurotic patients. In *Against Understanding,* Fink exemplifies the analyst's code of conduct, including his emphasis of the patient's (especially, neurotic patient's) ambiguous phrasing, pronunciation and wordplay by using certain 'unrelated' pairs of paronymic word sets, such as erect/wreck or whether/weather (vol. 1 42-43). Fink also recommends that the analyst always end the session with ambiguity so that the analysand can "realize that what he says can be understood in different ways" (41).

Besides paronomasia, Stein often plays with assonance, consonance, alliteration and anagram. In "Sacred Emily," the phrase "symbol of beauty" (*GP* 186) is followed by "Thimble of everything" and "Cunning of thimble," both lines through which Stein dismantles the meaning of the word "symbol." The phrase "gold space of toes" (183) is also followed by similarly pronounced yet romantically transformed word sets of "Twos, two." Barber/bury, hurry/berry/very, "Sudden say separate" (182) and "Poor pour percent" (184) are other examples of assonance and alliteration in "Sacred Emily." According to *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* assonance is "the repetition of a vowel or diphthong in non-rhyming stressed syllables" as in the examples of 'back-cast,' 'rose-float' and 'fine-bride,' and often serves as the rhyme or formalized closure to lines, as in the couplets that end Shakespearean sonnets (Greene 94). Consonance parallels the repetition in assonance, but refers to the "repetition of the sound of a final consonant or consonant cluster in stressed, unrhymed syllables," as in Robert

Lowell's "Go*bb*ets of Blu*bb*er" or Rober Browning's "Rebu*ck*led the chee*k*-strap" (Greene 299). Alliteration is "the repetition of the sound of an initial consonant or consonant cluster in stressed" or sometimes unstressed syllables, as in Emily Dickinson's "The cricket sang / And set the sun" (Greene 40). Through all these sound games, Stein engenders the "very extra" (181) remainder of meanings and makes her language a tapestry where only "excellent excellent arrangements" (350) and rearrangements of words can tell the particular yet momentary/provisionary meaning of her story. In other words, this is "the space to see. / Neither things/ [nor] Persons / [but only the] transition" of meanings (184). In this way, Stein's phonetic plays harbor and approve different types of female desires and experiences that work against the "Law of the Father," or the Oedipal matrix that only allows people a certain type of gender/sexual identity. For instance, in "Sacred Emily," the line "So great so great Emily" (182)—which seems to refer to the domestic life of Emile Zola and his wife—is soon transformed into the similarly pronounced line "Sew grate sew grate Emily," which perhaps illustrates a peaceful and romantic scene out of Stein and Toklas' married life. Pondrom similarly explains that Stein's poems "proceed as an interplay of three extensive sets of reference—the sexual, the domestic and the aesthetic" (xlv). When applying this logic to Stein's poem, we see that the line "Sew grate sew grate Emily" ironically parodies "the self-satisfaction of patriarchal domesticity" illustrated in the previous line through the image of Stein's own happy marriage. Perloff also points out that "Sacred Emily" is likely an erotic love poem to Alice B. Toklas and that the lines "So great so great Emily. / Sew grate sew grate Emily" indicate an "occasion for the celebration of Stein's own

domestic happiness with Alice" ("A Cessation of Resemblances"), especially given they are further followed by Stein's signature phrase in the poem:

> Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.
>
> Loveliness extreme.
>
> Extra gaiters.
>
> Sweetest ice-cream.
>
> Page ages page ages page ages.

Pondrom regards this "rose" as "the iconic rose reinscribed as the domestic" object in the poem that reveals the new female identity that stands outside the male-centered symbolic order (xlvi). For the reason, the speaker in "Sacred Emily" cunningly calls Emily a "Cunning piler" who "pulls" the "preserved" meanings from words and takes a chance on something different and stunning (184).

"Pink Melon Joy" is a poetic comedy where Stein uses many near-anagrams, such as polite/pilot, rose/eros, and piano/panic, and repeats monosyllabic words with meanings differentiated by one phoneme such as meat/meant, left/leaf, wetter/weather/whether (*GP* 347–49). The play begins with a dialogue between two actresses presumed to be Theresa and Bessie, where one actress complains about the dirty, impolite, and ruffian-like men she met in a meeting: "He was a ruffian" (348). A group of men containing James Death, Jakins, and others, also appears. A woman, either Theresa, Bessie, Susan, or another, continues describing her distressing meeting and confesses she felt "closeted," "thin," and "aching" with those men (349). But readers still cannot gain any clear sense of what is going on in the scenes since "Pink Melon Joy" does not follow any linear plot, nor do the characters have any consistent features or actions. The only hint at a storyline comes

from the open and ambiguous sound plays made by the female characters. The Stein-like hostess figure, for instance, uses language that maximizes the uncertainty and mystery around the story and mentions that there is "hope," "hospitality," and "a salutary secretion" in these "mistakes" (356). This figure potentially encourages another anonymous woman "to leave him for ever and to live in another country" (353) and "not be held by the enemy" (355), although it is not clear who this "enemy" is. This figure also has a sarcastic attitude towards domestic female roles such as to "satisfy a man, be neat, leave off oxes, shine flies ... call it by little dotted voices and do be sweet, do be sweet" (356). Moreover, the conventional female value of being "polite" here soon transforms into its near-anagram, "pilot," which connotes both the role of an active male subject and a potential disruption of social convention (349).

Little reinforced Susan.

Actual.

Actual believe me.

I see it all.

Why shouldn't I.

Lizzie Make Us.

I believe it.

Why shall I polite it. Pilot it.

Eleven o'clock.

Pillow.

The term "pugilism"—which refers to the male-dominated sports of boxing—also takes on an erotic connotation with lines such as "I like to be excellently seized" or "I like to be

excellently searching" (358). From the dialogue between Bessie (or another female character) and the hostess figure, there are also implications of a secret love affair between the two, such as in mysterious allusions to "a wonderful salad" (350), "jewel," "pansies so stringy" (351), "heaps of resemblance," "loads of stationary" (357), "little keys trembling" (357), etc. Although each of these expressions seemingly refers to a domestic and feminine object, or in Frost's terms, the "masculine fetish object"—similar to Filippo Marinetti and Ezra Pound's sense of a "seminal" object (Frost 19)—Stein fetishizes them with different types of female desire. Frost thus argues that Stein "assert[s] the difference of lesbian sexuality through a redeemed and revised fetishism and at the same time, parodies the male versions of the same object love" through these seemingly conventional and domestic goods (20). "Pink Melon Joy," in this way, allows its speaking subject to mimic and parody conventional words to encode different sexual desires and pleasures. Although male characters such as James Death drool over the speaker's words and have "desires to eat and drink," Stein makes it "quite impossible for him to obtain anything" among her words because they are already "chewed" into unknown pieces (352). This is also observable from the transition of the word "weather"—which sexually connotes the hostess' secret love affair with Bessie (or another)—to "whether," as in "whether he was presented" (355).

Come in

Splashes splashes of jelly splashes of jelly.

Weather.

Whether he was presented.

I meant to stay.

Easy or blocks.

Do not be held by the enemy.

All the time.

. . . . . .

I can destroy *wetter wetter* soaps. I can destroy *wetter* soaps. (355-56, *emphasis mine*)

Considering that Stein's central metaphors such as "weather" and "clouds" often have sexual connotations, it becomes even more obvious that the transition of "weather" to "whether" and "wetter" both cunningly conceals the speaker's erotic relationship with another woman and "refuses to be the object of masculine desire ... express[ing] a nonphallic desire that can only be mimed in heterosexuality" (Frost 20).

Another example of phonetic play frequently used in *GP* is the juxtaposition of separate words, each synthesized and mimicking the sound of the other word. Stein often splits words into small fragments like "the powder that makes a top be in the middle and necessarily not indicate a kind of collection," and attempts to derive careless pleasure from playing with their meanings (67). In "Yet Dish," for instance, the alchemy of two consecutive words such as "sew" and "up" are further bound to the word "soap," as seen in the line "Cousin coarse in soap sew up. Soap" (*Writings 1903-1932* 363). The phrase "Neglect or" (366) is also a misheard reference to "neglector," as is "A be wade" to "bewail" and "care lease" to "careless." The word "eider" not only parallels "either," but also recalls other similarly pronounced words and phrases such as "aider," "aid her," or "Ada"—all of which contain the author's love and desire for another woman.

XVII

No people so sat.

Not an eider.

Not either. not either either. (365)

All these puns show that Stein distinguishes between a general or "regular" sense of knowledge and a "new" sense of knowledge, as evidenced by the sentence "nuisance / [which is] not a regular plate. / Are, not a regular plate" in "Yet Dish." Moreover, since the line is followed by "A jelly cake," one of her central metaphors with sexual implications, we can conjecture that this "new since" implies a different type of knowledge or desire that exists outside the male-centered symbolic order.

In "In the Grass," two juxtaposed words, such as "pale" and "cullas" from "a pale cullas" (76), are also linked to the subsequent adjective "peculiar" from the line "the mouth which is peculiar" (*GP* 77). The phrase "a pale cullas" initially seems to have a patriarchal connotation since "pale" has a hidden meaning of old, primitive, and conventional, while "cullas" is a gang member's bandanna that symbolizes group unity and spirit. This noun phrase is, however, further connected to the adjective "peculiar," a word whose informal meaning is the state of being indefinably unwell and dizzy. On the other hand, "a pale cullas" also recalls the image of "a white calla" [calla lily]—often associated with the image of the female vulva. Considering the phrase is followed by "the mouth which is peculiar and nervous . . . and whiled whiled with a tree" (77), it becomes more obvious that the phrase is meant as a subversion of the masculine association. In other words, "A pale cullas" cannot be a fully meaningful phrase until the synthesis of the two words forms the third episememe of the sentence.

Moreover, in “Sacred Emily” and “Susie Asado,” word series are synthesized to form a sound for yet another word, as in “Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea” (13) or “Push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea” (178). The two words “sweet tea” and “push sea” are connected to their misheard references to “sweety” and “pussy,” both of which are heavily loaded with sexual connotations and inscribe different types of female desire and experiences against the phallocentric facade of the words.

> I am not missing.
>
> Who is a permit.
>
> I love honor and obey I do love honor and obey I do.
>
> Melancholy do lip sing.
>
> How old is he.
>
> Murmur pet murmur pet murmur.
>
> Push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea push sea.
>
> Sweet and good and kind to all.

Especially, the line “Melancholy do lip sing” is reminiscent of Butler’s concept of how a conventional gender/sex role is played and “lip-synced” by the melancholic actor who identifies with the gender of the lost object. This way, Stein makes her words the “Extra gaiters” that “extricate” readers from the fixed meanings of the words and moves them toward unrecognizable or unconventional contexts.

Besides the phonetic sound games, Stein deploys many unique syntactical devices in her plays “Do Let Us Go Away. *A Play*,” “What Happened, *A Play in Five Acts*,” and “Every Afternoon. *A Dialogue*” in her attempts to deconstruct theatrical conventions.

Stein often uses dialogue with no clear indication of the speakers/addressees, puts a random or no period between sentences,[27] and frequently uses deictic words or demonstrative pronouns such as this, I, you, or they without identifying the context. The use of spatial deixis such as here and there usually refers to the locations of the speaker or addressee and indicates character movement toward or from the speaker. But as Emeline Jouve argues, Stein's geographical notations in these plays are not used in such a stable and fixed manner. Instead, they are used so that the spaces do not have any real or concrete referents or realities but exist only for what it represents 'momentarily,' "like dreamspaces where writers can take refuge before expatriating their being 'inside themselves'" (Jouve 107). In other words, Stein dramatizes her theatrical spaces of "there-s" into various abstractions or no concrete realities of "not there," and thereby "defies the very nature of theatre" itself (Jouve 110).

The unstable nature of Stein's geographical settings in *GP* is also implied by her definition of a play as "a landscape that made itself its own landscape" (*Lectures* 122). In "Plays," she defines an "excitable play" as the "landscape" that "make[s] itself its own landscape" and further explains that a play does not move itself but when "being always in relation, the trees to the hills the hills to the fields the trees to each other any piece of it to any sky and then any detail to any other detail" (125). Her theatrical stage is thus constantly shifting, becoming a primarily phenomenological space where the audience cannot be fully acquainted with the piece beforehand, nor predict the fixed nature of the

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[27] This exemplifies Stein's feminist thought. According to DuPlessis, Stein viewed punctuation marks such as commas and periods "as blocking characters in dramas of female agency" (*Purple* 37). In other words, Stein thought punctuation marks "control, cosset, and court" female speakers and thereby create "degrading," "enfeebling," and "servile" female subjects who "have no life of their own" (qtd. in DuPlessis, *Purple* 37).

characters or story. Stein further argues that the audience's emotions should be identified with or influenced by the power of the play's contingent meaning "in syncopated time."

> If a play was exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty with the emotion of a person looking upon the play, or being behind or ahead of the play, because the landscape does not have to make acquaintance. (*Lectures* 122)

To Stein, this immediacy of feeling that reduces the temporal gap between the audience and scenes is the essential quality to decide what is an "excitable" play. When one does not use memories or foreknowledge to assume what events are happening onstage, but instead 'looks at' the play as her/his own real life scene, only then can the subject harmonize their emotional time with that of the play and feel alive "in the actual present, that is the complete actual present, and to completely express that complete actual present" (105). To achieve this immediate temporality that makes "two things going on at one time" (114), the play first should constantly change its constitutive elements so that its narrative creates ever-shifting contexts and meanings. Stein's promiscuous and ambiguous dialogue in her plays in *GP*, including many spatial and temporal deixis and personal/demonstrative pronouns, serve to constantly transfer one geographical and environmental context to another. Since the geographical references in Stein's plays negate their very existence every time they are referred to, or exist only as the provisional and illusory realms, the act of naming a certain space "no longer equates with affirming its existence but rather questioning it" (Jouve 106). That is, spatial deixis such as here and there does not differentiate a former location from the latter, but serves only as a "hinge" that connects all the different places or the "seam in between [that] is fenceless"

(*GP* 192). In other words, spatial deixis in Stein's plays is "the allegory of places of transition" (Jouve 106).

L-E.

The seam in between in fenceless.

E-E.

The seam in most tight legs are looser and not secure politely.

K-Y.

The separation is a sight. (*GP* 192)

In "IIIIIIIIII," too, the speaker stresses the importance of being located in wide, loose and fenceless spaces that are in transition to somewhere else. The speaker also celebrates the potential of "emptied" or "sucked" places that do not have any specific referential elements, in order to imply that geographical references in *GP* are nothing more than empty signifiers.

The unstable geographical grounds in Stein's plays also construct the characters' identities as unstable and provisional. The actors thus constantly dislocate their identities, which further become the very means to create Stein's characters in *GP*. For instance, the main geographical setting in "Do Let Us Go Away. *A Play*" is the two unknown houses in Mallorca, Spain's largest island in the Mediterranean, where "several people come in" (215).[28] Besides these two houses, other unknown geographical spaces are depicted through abstract spatial deixis, such as "there," "here," "far" and "in the other," or by simple verb phrases that retain some deictic sense, such as "go" or "come," as evidenced

[28] Pondrom explains that this play was written in called "the Palma de Mallorca period" from 1915 to 1916. This was when Stein and Alice were retreated from Paris to the Mallorcan countryside (li).

by sentences like “we are not coming” (218), “anybody can come in” (216) and “they will go away” (217).

> A scene where there are two houses. One on either side and we are in the middle there is a great deal of talking in one of them. In the other they eat a late dinner. (217)

The deictic expressions usually mark the basic distinction of whether the person/object is near or far from the speaker. But Stein’s frequent use of personal and demonstrative pronouns, without specification, makes it almost impossible to distinguish who the speaker or addressee is, where they go and how they interact with each other. At the beginning of the lines of each character, Stein does disclose information like character names and jobs, though in an inconsistent and incomplete manner.

In the opening scene, for instance, several actors playing the tenants of the house such as Nicholas, Theodore, Jane and Helen, come onstage, and one of the men says he would like to see other people “come in” the house: “Anybody can come in. We are surprised to see musicians” (216). The next scene is followed by ambiguous narratives about “we,” the tenants of the house, “they,” the noisy tenants of another house and “he,” a potential allusion to the proprietor of the house. The audience, however, still cannot get any sense of who and where ‘we’ or ‘they’ are, except that ‘we’ don’t like ‘them’ and hope they will go away soon as “[t]hey are old [and] . . . have taken the house for the month of September” (217) and also “they are all singing” very loudly (218). This way, the referents of words constantly shift, confounding the audience by giving different and even contradictory indications of who and where they are. Moreover, a previous “they”

seems to be different from the "they" in the next scene who "ask for money for the sailors who were drowned" or even from the 'they' "who make gay music" (219).

Besides the anaphoric use of deictic words and sentences, "Do Let Us Go Away. *A Play*" is also marked by the use of simple verbs or verb phrases without an overt subject or object, that function only as a clause, as in "Coming together" (218), "Go on" (219) or "To be able to see stitches" (223). Stein's use of many relative pronoun phrases including when, who, that, and which, as in "When they say here is some one who refuses to give them something they are impertinent" (219) and the use of verbs in the present continuous tense as in "I am liking the new boat" (216), "They are willing" and "I am assisting" (220), also contributes to making the play an "open home" (219), an illusory space that expects different kinds of people,—such as unknown immigrants and refugees from the WWI war zone,—to come and "leave suddenly" (225). And by doing so, Stein assigns these individuals provisional and transitory identities that exist only 'here and now.'

In the next scene, a new dialogue occurs between the old tenants who "have gotten to see that it's dangerous to go to Marseilles" (220) and "the owner of the house" who demands the old tenants' keys from them to rent out their rooms to others. Since Stein randomly mixes the names of actors with their jobs and nicknames such as "The owner of the house," "The wife," "officials," "the sailors," "the King" or "the lawyer," etc., it becomes more confusing and ambiguous as to whether the lines of a character such as "The Wife," can be attributed to one of the previous tenants, the owner of the house, or someone else. Through this confusion, Stein hampers the characters' progressions as complete and unified egos.

The scene is then immediately replaced by the next scene with no fading out. A new dialogue continues between the owner of the house, the old tenants and the new tenants, among whom might be characters such as The older woman, William, Monica and Jane. However, when they begin to become acquainted with each other, it becomes even more difficult to differentiate between characters due to the geographical restlessness that keeps dislocating their identities and how the lines of the speakers are listed without any distinction as to who speaks. All we can assume from the last scene in "Do Let Us Go Away. *A Play*" is that people usually leave Mallorca by the middle of October mostly due to the weather as evidenced by the sentences, "they will go away" and "Not right away but they won't stay" (226). The elimination of the distinction of lines or the confusing and overlapping use of characters' names, jobs and nicknames not only dislocates the meaning of 'home' but also dislocates a character's identity as the place of (re-) adaptation (Jouve 108). In this regard, Jouve rightly points out that the geographical insecurity or restlessness in Stein's plays always accompanies the subjective restlessness, and further contributes to her construction of the American identity as a 'becoming' subject (109). In "The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans," for instance, Stein argues that her text is "a space that is filled with moving, a space time that is filled with moving," which further foreshadows the changes in the nature of American identity (*Writings* 1932-1946 286). In other words, this statement suggests that Stein's text is not a transparent lens that clearly shows what Americans have always had inside them but a lens that shows how their identities are always in transition to become another such as "cowboys, of movies of detective stories, of anybody who goes anywhere or stays at home" (286).

> I am always trying to tell this thing that a space of time is a natural thing for an American to always have inside them as something in which they are continuously moving. Think of anything, of cowboys, of movies, of detective stories, of anybody who goes anywhere or stays at home and is an American and you will realize that it is something strictly American to ceonceive a space that is filled with moving, a space of time that is filled always filled with moving and my first real effort to express this thing which is an American thing began in writing The Making of Americans.

In "Every Afternoon. *A Dialogue*," Stein continues to make it extremely difficult to follow who spoke which lines and from what context by listing dialogue with no indication of the speaker's name, or by inserting a random period at the end of sentences. In this way, she dislocates or mixes the characters' identities with others so that they cannot help but shift their psychoanalytic grounds over and over again. The structural frame of "Every Afternoon. *A Dialogue*," for instance, consists of short dialogues between two characters, A and B (and maybe others too), who seem to take turns speaking and listening to each other: after A speaks, B repeats or sometimes corrects A's statement with slight variations. Moreover, the lines of each character usually ends with a period so that readers get minimal hints as to who speaks what line.

> You mean you are taught early.
>
> That is exactly what I mean.
>
> And I feel the same.
>
> You feel it to be the same.
>
> Don't tempt him.

Do not tempt him (*GP* 255).

As seen above, the second speaker (B) reiterates what the previous one stated but with slight variations. Besides reiterating the previous sentences, B sometimes adds new information A has left out. When A informs B that "he was not the least interested" in being tempted, for instance, B adds that "Neither was she." (255). In the middle of the play, however, this dichotic relationship is suddenly reversed when Stein leaves out a period at the end of B's sentence, "You did" and begins a new line "Certainly."

I found it necessary.

You did

Certainly.

And when have you leisure.

Reading and Knitting.

Reading and Knitting.

Reading and Knitting.

Yes reading or knitting.

In the evening.

Actively first.

He was very settled.

Where was he settled. (255)

When we assume that both lines, "You did" and "Certainly." come from B, the dichotic roles A and B previously assumed is reversed so that it is A who repeats B's lines with some subservient tone as in "Yes reading or knitting." and "Where was he settled." (255). Towards the end, Stein leaves out another period as in "Yes / Coming." and "Well they

are different / I am not very careful." (256) and puts multiple sentences in one line, which further obscures the origin of a statement. When assuming the two lines, "Yes / Coming." are from A's mouth, it seems A soon recovers his active and assertive position, but when we consider the line, "Coming," to be from B, we can witness that B continues to hold a dominant position in relation to A. Through this ambiguity, Stein constantly changes the context of the story and the attributes of the characters to prevent the formation of any unified, fixed and coherent identity.

6. Conclusion

We have examined how Stein approaches to reality, literary realism and subjectivity have much in common with Butler and Lacan's language theory. In the subsections titled "Judith Butler's 'Performativity,' 'Lesbian Phallus'" and "What Constitutes the Realness of Stein's Reality," I have laid out a step-by-step process to analyze Butler's "performativity" theory and how it applies to the issues of gender and sexuality. I have further shown how Stein's poetic subject also parodies and mimics the patriarchal language in order to confound its very boundaries. Especially, by examining her carefree language in *Tender Buttons*, we witnessed how Stein's language also constructs her poetic subject not as a simple truth but as the ongoing effects of her grammars. The radical openness in Stein's poetic language and its subjectivity strongly resonates with Butler's "performative" subject who is also made by the effects of a promiscuous speech act and thereby both adheres to and challenges the social norms and conventions. That is to say, both Stein and Butler's female subjects are constructed by the intimate bond between one's speech and action and in that connection, different types of

female desires, pleasures and family relations in the heterosexual language system are legitimized and approved. I have also found that for both Butler and Stein, repetition is the most important technical method for forming one's life as a compositional effect of language, and ensuring that composition as a 'differential' site.

In the subsection titled "Stein's 'Healing' Words' in *Geography and Plays*," I have further engaged with Lacan's language theory and observed how his clinical language also possesses a constitutive power to implicate and transform one's imaginary ego. Fink explains that the radical openness of Lacan's clinical language not only helps the patient traverse his fundamental fantasy, but also makes him a new 'desiring' subject in the realm of signification. As with Stein and Butler's subjects, the agency of the Lacanian subject also exists as the momentary effect of the signifiers, and through the help of ambiguous and promiscuous language, the 'subversion of the subject' becomes possible. Along with Butler and Stein, Lacan underscores the potential of ambiguous language and its unintended effects, such as reconstructing or reformulating the patient's fixed Imaginary system. I further examined Stein's love poems and plays in *Geography and Plays* and argued that Stein's poetic language also performs the therapeutic function of transferring one's fixed symptom into the pure functions of the signifier and thereby "challenges the idea of an objective, natural ego or self somewhere 'out there' in the world" (Pondrom xxix). I especially investigated Stein's syntactical experiments and phonetic plays in *GP* and explored how they serve to change the present of human consciousness as Perloff also pointed out in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy* (98).

However, feminist critiques of Butler's speech act theory and Stein's language experiments still exist. Most of them are concerned that Butler's feminist theory, being

often engaged with language experiments, can destroy the clear boundaries of the meaning system and thereby weaken female political agency because of the lack of a coherent category of "woman." In opposition to Butler's argument, Susan Bordo, for instance, reasons that Butler's subversive act cannot be a realistic alternative for contemporary feminists since it is confined to the individual level and reduces the act of political resistance to a textual pleasure that disregards how political revolution or resistance is a long historical process (qtd. in Hekman 64): "Butler's world is one in which language swallows everything up, voraciously." Elizabeth Grosz also criticizes Butler's "performativity" theory for overemphasizing the performative nature of one's sexed body and, in doing so, disregarding how one's physical body "lives and eat; eat and sleep; feel pain and pleasure; endure illness and violence . . . [and thus] cannot be dismissed as mere construction" (Butler, *Body* xi).

But considering many of these feminist ideas are still grounded in the importance of biological female body and discursive dichotomy between man/woman, language/body, and culture/nature, Butler's "performativity" theory and Stein's literary aesthetic seem to have a more radical power, which can at any time tear down conventional ideas of gender and sexuality and reconstruct them as continuous yet constantly changing thoughts and ideas. For the similar reason, Salih argues that although Butler's "deconstructions of matter [or ontological grounds] might risk eliding pain and suffering" of human bodies, her focus on ambiguous speech act and language theory "may contain subversive possibilities for the *re*signification of sex and gender" (144). As discussed earlier, Butler's definition of "woman" is not a permanent and ahistorical entity but a temporary and strategic category that can be filled with different meanings,

especially when different historical and cultural conditions are repeated over time. Likewise, Stein's poetic language also seeks alternative ways of constructing one's gender/sexual identity differently from what current social norms prescribe. From this perspective, regardless of how Stein would define the terms "feminine writing," "female sexuality," or "women," we can still say that her language possesses strong feminist implications. As in Stein's emphasis on the ability to live "in the actual present, that is, the complete actual present, and to completely express that complete actual present" (*Lectures* 105), I believe that her poetic practices help us to arrive at "a series of discrete non-identical nows" (Reed, *Phenomenal* 76), which transcends, transforms, and imbues our identities with new and different meanings.

Chapter IV. Poetic Language as a Sounding Mo'um (Body): Reading Cathy Park Hong and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Poems

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed how an alternative subject is made possible via Stein's use of poetic language, with a specific emphasis on Butler's concepts of "performativity" and "perlocutionary" language. Butler takes a different approach to the notions of language and female subjectivity from French feminists such as Kristeva and Irigaray. To her, there is no such gender-specific language, since all language maintains the self-reflective distance in which women can also be the self-forming and value-positing subjects within the dominant discourse. So instead of using the masculine/female language dyad, Butler divides language usage into "dead" and "alive" language and explains that while dead or "illocutionary" language contributes to constructing the ideological subject, alive or "perlocutionary" language creates the non-ideological and alternative speaking subject.

I applied Butler's linguistic theory to Stein's poetic language by using the latter's three texts, *Three Lives*, *Tender Buttons*, and *Geography and Plays*. Stein's language gives us opportunities to constantly revise, recreate, and restage the signifiers in different contexts and, by maximizing its unpredictable and ambiguous nature, creates an infinitely altered poetic subject. Moreover, in order to demonstrate that signifiers do not necessarily designate systematically mandated points but are always open to the infinite process of transformation, Stein develops the container metaphors in *Tender Buttons*. Through this, Stein shows that one's reality is irrelevant to what is being represented in him or her but depends on how it is represented in the realm of signification, which, in many ways,

parallels Butler's "performative subject." That is to say, Stein's "reality," as she states, takes place inside the writing, and is perceived there, not elsewhere, outside the language. I further explored how this poetic language resembles that of Butler's "lesbian Phallus," the language that parodies male fetishism, as Frost mentioned. For instance, *Tender Buttons* and *Geography and Plays* are full of erotic objects that substitute for the lost mother's phallus and help male fetishizers maintain the illusion that they are not castrated beings. However, I emphasized that Stein's language and its meanings are differently registered, without involving a male phallus, and thereby subvert the male expectation of female sexuality through diverse syntactical techniques and sound plays.

In this chapter, I engage with the modern and contemporary Korean American poets Cathy Park Hong and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, each of whom bears a distinctive relationship to Korean language/culture through their formally and stylistically innovative verses. Especially, by using Deleuze's concepts of "minor literature" and "becoming,"[29] I examine the varied rhetorical and formal strategies through which they incorporate Korean language into their English verses and construct 'in-between' ethnic subjects in their works. For this, I will first explore how their poetic languages perform as a cognitive gap and eliminate the clear distinction between you/me or readers/the text, by using Deleuze's theory of embodied language and subjectivity. Their poetic languages often serve as anonymous markers that break with the coherent state of poetic 'I' and reconstruct it to a Deleuzian "becoming" subject. For this reason, Lisa Lowe argues,

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[29] For Deleuze and Guattari's definition of "becoming," see *A Thousand Plateaus* 237–309. Especially, in the chapter "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal," the authors explain that a "becoming" subject is produced only "by transversal communications between heterogeneous populations" and is thus always in transition to another, running its own line of flight, rather than being involved with concepts such as progression, evolution (by descent and filiation), classification, unity, and genealogy (239).

Cha's writing subject does not so much build a coherent national or cultural identity as create a fracture between past and present wherein to reinscribe its complex personal/historical relationships through her innovative language (qtd. in Yu 117). She further states that the most prominent influence of Cha's texts on Asian American literature is that they made her subject not merely as someone who is "determined by any single national, linguistic or racial identification" but "emerges in the 'confluences and disjunctions' of such identities, a process demonstrated by a text that 'repeatedly calls attention to the varied locations of its writing'" (117).

In order to argue this, I would like to briefly cover the historical background of Asian American poetry from which stem the works of Cha and Hong, who have become central figures for Asian American poets. In *Race and the Avant-Garde,* Timothy Yu traces the history of such poetry from an activist phase in the 1970s into more apolitical and assimilationist phases in the 80s and 90s. He explains that Asian American experimental poetry started as an offshoot of the American avant-garde. In the 70s, for instance, major poetry journals such as *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* flourished and contributed to a predominantly white avant-gardist literary movement, the prominent figures of which include Charles Bernstein and Ron Silliman. From the 80s, however, the scope of American avant-garde poetry began to widen to include Susan Howe and Michael Palmer, among others. Coming into the 90s, the term "avant-garde poetry" became virtually synonymous with "language poetry," and Asian American Poetry began to be incorporated into the mainstream (Yu 100–2). This is the era in which Cha became a central figure for Asian American poets. Especially, her *Dictée* leaped to stardom "as the central document in the Asian American canon," raising it from obscurity and

marking a significant shift in the representation of Asian American poetry (102). Yu thus further notes that *Dictée*'s "formal innovation" and its "transnational perspectives" started to unify the once-divided elements of "experimental" and "Asian American" content (103). That is, her formal experimentation in *Dictée* created a significant breakthrough in Asian American literature by both veering from the typical Asian American themes and challenging white mainstream avant-garde texts by questioning whether they have "a place for history and race that is no longer understood in terms of orientalism and otherness" (108).

Steven Yao's periodization of Asian American Poetry in *Foreign Accents* also offers us a useful understanding of how Asian American poetry evolved from the marginalized voice of Asian "race" to the poetics of "ethnic" experiences from the 50s through the 90s (95). According to Yao, it was in the 80s that poets such as Cathy Song and John Yau started to move beyond the theme of "racial protest as hegemonic mode of verse production" and open up to "new thematic and referential possibilities in accommodating a continuously expanding set of potential subjects" (100). In the 90s, along with the ascendency of a liberal multiculturalist ideology and atmosphere in American political discourse, Asian American poets expressed less an institutionally based and more an "individual subjectivity as well as the articulation of culturally specific markers of minority identity" (101). This decade was also when the poet's personal life experiences, different from others, started to be emphasized and equated with a new sense of "ethnicity" or "ethnic" experience (106).

Victoria Chang's *Asian American Poetry: the Next Generation* is involved more with the younger Asian American poets since the 90s. In this book she broadly divides

Asian American poetry into two generations. Her first generation includes poets such as Cathy Song, John Yau, Li-Young Lee, Marily Chin, and Garrett Hongo, whose works mostly appeared in the 80s and dealt with personal yet universal topics spanning the generations, such as the "parent–child relationship, rebellion . . . bewilderment and vulnerability in the face of the adult world," although some of them still treated political and historical topics (xviii–xix). The second generation consists of younger poets, born after the 60s, whose works have appeared in the 90s and onwards, such as Timothy Liu, Marisa Santos, Cathy Park Hong, C. Dale Young, and Mộng-Lan (xx). According to Chang, the second generation generally distanced themselves from their predecessors' ethnic and political themes and moved towards previously taboo subjects such as gender, queer experiences and life styles, voyeurism, and cultural differences, as well as how those experiences influenced their unique and "in-between" subjectivity. Another noticeable feature of these younger generations is their use of more innovative styles that experiment with their "language, the line and white space, the stanza, rhyme, form and syntax," although some maintain their predecessors' traditional narrative styles and voices (xxi). Especially, Chang notes that Cathy Park Hong, Jennifer Chang, Mộng-Lan, Brenda Shaughnessy, and Warren Liu exhibit more innovative and experimental language play, such as leaving out the verb form or punctuation marks and interrupting the lines with white and blank spaces (xxi–xxiii). Chang further emphasizes that Asian American poets and poetry in the millennium era can no longer be defined by the single ethnic term, because of the increasing numbers of multiethnic or multicultural poets, such as C. Dale Young who is "a quarter Asian (1/8 East Indian and 1/8 Chinese), half-Caucasian, and a quarter Latino" (xxvi), and this phenomenon accompanies increasing

diversity in subject matter and style in the works of contemporary Asian American poets. As Eunsong Kim and Don Mee Choi state in their manifesto "Refusal=Intervention," Asian Americanness in the contemporary era is no longer a manageable category, since it is comprised of rich and complex genealogies of diverse cultural and racial groups within itself. In this regard, the importance of reading contemporary Korean American women poets no longer lies in "their exploration of the complexities of 'Korean' or 'Korean-American' or 'Korean-American woman' as subject positions or as opportunities for constructing minority/oppositional voices . . . [but in] their poem's hostility to these questions" (McNeill 2).

Hong's works stem from this multi-cultural and ethnic background of the second generation of Asian American poets. Born in 1976 and raised in Los Angeles in the 80s, Hong self-consciously continued to write about her own and Asian American immigrants' life experiences in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's innovative lineage. After graduating from Oberlin College and receiving her MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she published a series of books entitled *Translating Mo'um* (2002), *Dance Dance Revolution* (2007), and *Engine Empire* (2012). Although writing later than Cha and having different influences, Hong, too, sought the most appropriate linguistic expressions of her characters' "in-between" or "becoming" ethnic identities. Her books of poems, for instance, mainly explore the lives of immigrants, their descendants, displaced people, and exiles who have lost touch with their roots in the home country and moved to the Western world to take on different jobs and languages, such as the lives of the Guide, who introduces herself as a "double migrant. Ceded from Koryo, ceded from 'Merikka, ceded y ceded'" (*DDR* 26), or the Historian's father, who also left Kwangju and "later

moved on to become a physician" in Sierra Leone in *Dance Dance Revolution*. Using English jargon and slang often mixed with Korean, Spanish, and even Russian, Hong avoids constructing homogeneous national and cultural identities. *Translating Mo'um* also deals with the unfamiliar relationship between Korean American speakers and their parents' mother tongue as well as their choice to use their native Korean language in corporeal ways, so as to reveal the failure of constructing their bodies as common objects of conventional desires in society.

Dance Dance Revolution elaborates Hong's central topics of "cultural zigzagging" or "misplaced cultural bartering" in the imagined city called "the Desert" (Kryah, "An Interview with Poet Cathy Park Hong"). The main plot revolves around a female protagonist called "the Guide," who went through the postwar political confusion in South Korea from the 60s to the 80s, later leaving the place where she was born and moving to the Desert to lead an itinerant life. In the book, Hong's speaker/The Guide often digresses from her main narrative and lapses into childhood memories, most of which are anecdotes of when she participated in Kwangju democratization movement as a political dissident in South Korea. But Korean history and its modernization process during the two decades—such as the Kwangju democratization movement in 1980 and independence from the U S-backed military governments—are somewhat satirized through the Guide's voice. Through her voice, Hong writes ironically about how artificially one's national or cultural identity is made through the government's ideological maneuvering and how much this process relies on its oppressive propaganda and injurious rhetoric, which further divides the Korean nation into binary oppositions

between You/Us, North/South, liberalists/socialists, or right-wing pro-American/left-wing pro-North Korean parties, etc.

The Korean government's nationalist policy that rigidly divides Koreans into "insider" and "outsider" was also the major target of Cha's critique in *Dictée*. In the book, Cha satirizes how the national identity and ideology of, patriotism, liberalism and communism are insecure and imperfectly mediated categories that do not well suit those "in-between" bodies like her, removed from their cultural/national origins. *Dictée* also deals with the lives of exiles, refugees and immigrants who left their homeland and whose languages and political realities span different cultural territories: "Refugees. Immigrants. Exiles. Father away from the land that is not your own. Not your own nay longer" (*Dictée* 45). Cha's bilingual or trilingual speakers thus often experience that their language keeps "stuttering, failing in its mimicking and being suppressed in its fragmentation" in different cultural realm (Minh-Ha, "White" 47). Not only in *Dictée,* but in many other works, such as *Passages/Paysages* (1978) and *Exilée* (1980), Cha continues to have different languages constantly clash and blend with each other, thereby obscuring the speaker's original cultural/national identity. In *Commentaire* (1980), too, Cha experiments with different languages such as English and French, whose fragmented parts "move away, slide, slip, stick, and sting, creating odd lapses" (Minh-Ha, "White" 34) and, by doing so, shows how this process continually unnames and renames the subject's identity.

In this paper, I will therefore explore how Hong and Cha construct their writing subject as at once differentiated from a homogeneous national/cultural identity but not entirely separated from the speaker's specific and personal political conditions and needs,

through their hybridized English, mixed with foreign elements and innovative techniques. To explain this dynamic, I turn to Deleuze and Guattari's notions of "minor literature" and "becoming subject." For instance, under the conditions of transnational or cultural mobility, their speakers' mimicking sounds of the mother tongue gradually de-territorialize its original meanings and become ahistorical gestures. These blank gestures, however, often alter their inter-subjective representational systems and redefine their traumatic past experiences such as post-liberation military dictatorships and independence movements on the Korean peninsula or migrants' living conditions in the US. In this regard, Hong and Cha's new writing subject closely relates to Deleuze's notions of embodied language and "becoming" subject, given they both reconnect their inner cognitive systems to the "outside" world through the medium of material or physical language. Unlike other language-centered avant-garde poets such as Stein, Hong and Cha thus focus less on using syntactic word play to produce multiple meanings and more on how language relates to the affective bodily senses and feelings brought on by an encounter with the "outside." As Yu notes, avant-garde or language poetry has commonly been understood as prioritizing sound play and syntactical experiments over the issues of subject and readers' emotions. But Hong and Cha do not presume that affective emotion and syntax are mutually exclusive, making their works affect-driven without disregarding the language issues. In other words, their affect-driven languages build a nest in the speaking subject's memories, sprout, and give birth to new meanings and historical visions, grafted with the speaker's feelings in the present tense.

According to Laurel Peacock, "affect" denotes a pure state of feeling that exists before donning any social and cultural form through which the subject later links it to "a

narrative and historical chain of cause and effect" (86).[30] Like Peacock's explanation of "affect," Hong's native Korean words or Cha's language as white/blank page prompt the subject to experience a pure sense of affect, which further keeps their ongoing identities in the present tense. In a similar vein, Trinh T. Minh-Ha argues that Cha's narrative voice in *Dictée* "remains attentive to the single sound of the world and to its physical impact," so that it serves as a "site for rich resonance and metamorphoses" ("White" 47). Hong also encourage readers toward direct confrontation with the native Korean language as purely material and physical *thing*, thereby provoking problems in the natural reduction process of signification. This confrontation further leads to the elimination of distinction between subject/object, readers/texts, and perceiver/ perceived, and evokes an unknown and unpredictable emotion. This emotion that arises not only questions the original sense of poetic subjectivity "I," but further orients the subject to the shifting relations with historical events and memories. But since this affective feeling cannot entirely decouple from readers' reconfigured meanings or its own position in their symbolic realm, we can say that this affective language also has "a political function as counterpoint" (Peacock 87). As Peacock states, this "political" function may include producing diverse alternative connections between perceiver and perceived, providing the means of dissent from dominant emotional formations that correspond to sets of social norms (94).

In this chapter, I therefore examine how Hong's innovative poetic language and Cha's reimagined words as white space or montage effect alter the speakers' inter-

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[30] Peacock in her dissertation, "The Poetics of Affect in Contemporary Feminist Poetry," defines affect as the feeling that inhabits territory "outside of established discourse, hovering at its boundary and remaining dissonant with established terms of the social or the political, yet able to generate new forms that can enter into discourse and change it" (86).

subjective representational systems and redefine their traumatic historical experiences. I would further argue that this new writing subject closely relates to Deleuze's embodied language and "becoming" subject, since they both encourage their speakers to reconnect their inner cognitive system to the "outside" world through the medium of experimental languages.

2. Hong's Hybridized English in *Dance Dance Revolution* and Deleuze's "Minor Literature"

In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, using his concept of "minor literature," Deleuze argues that every mother tongue inevitably becomes an anonymous and deviant space through the encounter with the languages of cultural minorities and in this way may be emancipated from its previous cultural context. In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature,* too, Deleuze emphasizes how the language of minorities within the dominant language system transforms a singular and homogeneous language system to "forces of creative deformation that various minorities utilize in fashioning their own speech within a dominant language—[like] Czech Jews in German, the Irish in British English, [and] African Americans in white American English" (Bogue 72).

Similarly, in Hong's *Dance Dance Revolution*, the speaker uses a hybrid and unorthodox language mixed with different elements from other languages and cultural contexts that represent local and personal identities. *Translating Mo'um* is another text of Hong's in which she mimics sounds from the mother tongue that leak into the dominant language system. These unique ways of using language share many features with Deleuze's concept of "minor literature," in that both destroy or challenge the dominant

representational system and invent another language within it. For example, Deleuze in *Kafka* defines "minor literature" as using the dominant language in ways more appropriate for the strange and minor uses of people (16–7). In this book, he further notes that literature or language, in this way, becomes a catalyst that goes through all possible transformations beyond the boundaries of nations, races, and cultural histories to create new meanings.

Likewise, Hong's *Dance Dance Revolution* shows how language can both de-territorialize the origins of a certain culture and deprive the speaker of this original identity. The main stage of the book is "the Desert," a globalized city where tourists, workers, and migrants from over 300 countries go in and out every day. The main protagonist is called "the Guide," who introduces herself as "Chun Sujin, lest name first, first name lest. Allatime known as Ballhead, Jangnim"[31] (22). Living in an English-speaking milieu while simultaneously excluded from the dominant cultural realm, the Guide invents her own hybrid, de-territorialized English, a mixture of "sum Han-kuk y Finnish, good bit o Latin y Spanish . . . sum toto Desert Creole" (25). Besides that, her English includes a wide range of different pronunciations, which are all regional, racial, and gender-specific,—instead of following standard pronunciations—as seen from expressions such as "supa-mahikets en de 'Asia' secsion" (95), and so creates a liminal zone, or what Deleuze calls "a line of continuous variations" (Bogue 71). In an interview with Joshua Kryah, Hong thus mentions that:

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[31] 장님 is a Korean word for "a blind person." This word also has a strong resonance with the blind poet metaphor in Homer's works. Homer himself was assumed to have been blind, mostly based on his blind poet figure Demodokos in *The Odyssey*. Lee Wilkins also argues that Homer contributed to the Greeks introducing the metaphor of blind poet into Western literature (*Images that Injure* 186).

> English is a busy traffic of dialects, accents, and slang words going in and out of fashion. Slang is especially fascinating. I love outdated slang dictionaries—these words are artifacts that tell you the mindset and squeamish taboos of a certain milieu during a certain time period. I wanted the English in the book to be a hyperbole of that everyday dynamism of spoken English. (Kryah 1)

From Deleuze's perspective, the Guide's hybrid and spoken English mixed with hundreds of different foreign languages and cultures exists as a pure intensity or energy rather than fixed conceptual units. That is, the Guide is "taken over by a creative utilization [of English] for the purposes of a new sobriety, a new expressivity, a new flexibility, a new intensity" (Deleuze, *Kafka* 23). In this way, her language induces the audience's diverse imaginations and interpretations through which its semantic originality constantly de-territorializes and re-territorializes. Before becoming referential, her English also becomes the vehicle that crosses different cultural groups and brings about diverse power relations among different gendered and racial groups. In this regard, her hybrid English can be understood as Deleuze's "minor literature," which is not a form of representation of external objects but an affective dimension.

Let us take a look at the scene in which the Guide talks about her childhood memories of South Korea:

> Assim fate flag X mark spot en me,
> chillins call me bbak-bbaggi, trow pebbles at mine ball head
> while ajamas tut tut, tut tut. Salutations
> hab falsetto o "lawdy mine gawd looky dat chile." (*DDR* 51)

Here, the Guide's narration is mixed with diverse English and Korean patois and vernaculars such as "Assim" (a mispronunciation of "I think"), "bbak-bbagi" (빡빡이, a Korean word for 'ball head') or "ajamas" (아줌마, a Korean word for 'a middle-aged woman'). To the ears of non-native Korean readers, however, these words serve only as pure and material sounds that are "capable of disorganizing [their] own forms and of disorganizing [their] forms of contents," instead of being a formal conceptualizing language (Deleuze, *Kafka* 28). Like Kafka, who writes in German while living in Prague, or Beckett, an Irishman writing and reading in English and French, in *Dance Dance Revolution* Hong brings together, in this way, different kinds of dialogues around the world and de-territorializes the dominant language. Although the trademarks of specific sentences and phrases such as "May I have this dance?" are daily auctioned off in the Desert (90), there are so many culturally diverse tourists and residents that "it is impossible to even speak without stumbling upon someone's trademark" and using it to the point of deforming its original meanings. The Guide thus explains that even these "auctioned" words, instead of fulfilling the privileges of the inventor, recklessly mutate or "morph so quickly that their accents betray who they talked to that day rather than their cultural roots" (19). In other words, her hybridized language, within a (multi-) ethnic or cultural atmosphere, functions as a pure "affect" that proliferates, contaminates, and promotes strange movements and further changes the ways in which people use and perceive its meanings.

As noted earlier, one of the unique features of the Guide's language is that words are easily decomposed and incorporated into a different syntax and pronunciation of another language, or new proper nouns are derived from different discursive regimes.

In this way, her "Konglish" slowly becomes an illegible code that does not have any clear referent inside. For instance, what "Merikkens" pronounce as "purdy" (pretty) or "purider" (prettier) is incorporated into the Guide's Korean mother tongue, "yeppeuda" (예쁘다, the Korean word for "pretty"), and transformed into the hybrid word "yep-puh" (25). "Microcosm," after being assimilated into Korean pronunciation, was turned into "McCosm" (25), "supermarket" into "supa-mahikets" (95), and "children" into "chillins" (27). "[C]hillins" is also African American vernacular. And, the phrase "season changed" turns into "Seasons chenji" (29) and "my fellow Gardener" to "Mifela Gardena".

Moreover, the tour guide often intentionally (or unintentionally) mixes Korean words into her English sentences, especially when making a reference to Asian/Korean cultures such as "Arirang"—a traditional Korean folk song that has been sung for more than 500 years—or the emotion of "Han"—the Korean word for collective resentment and repressed anger in response to political oppression and marginalization of the Korean people by foreign powers throughout history.[32]

> Aiiiree . . . Airreee . . .epic song lasting
>
> twotreefo day . . . sponge up de Han . . . ssulp'un yaegge . . .
>
> Ssarang-han nam'pyun . . . wit only a fan y jug to wet her troat. . . . (36)

Here, Hong maximizes the phonetic ambiguity by writing Korean words and phrases as they are pronounced, as in "ssulp'un yaegge" (슬픈 이야기, Korean for "a sad story") and "Ssarang-han nam'pyun" (사랑한 남편, Korean for "a husband that I loved"), and using many ellipses to further segmentalize and transform the words into unfamiliar strings of letters. "Aiiiree . . . Airreee" is also the mimicking sound of the lyrics of the

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[32] The definitions of *Han* and *Arirang* are from *Wikipedia*.

most famous Korean folk song. Especially, it comes from the beginning part of "Jindo Arirang"(진도 아리랑): "ari arirang suri surirang arariga natne" (아리 아리랑 스리 스리랑 아라리가 났네).

Besides anomalous syntax and pronunciation, English nouns and pronouns in *Dance Dance Revolution* are often used in different cultural contexts and produce an estranging and unexpected effect. Even when maintaining the same spellings and pronunciations of words, we witness that the Guide's English, in this way, often loses its subjects of cultural origin. For instance, the Guide talks about what happened in an Asian factory that used to produce canned carp. Many Japanese and Korean people like to eat canned fish such as sardine, mackerel, and tuna, often with steamed rice or stew. The Guide says, however, that the factory was on the brink of bankruptcy because canned carp was not selling in Asian groceries in the Desert. So the company secretly attempted to supply the canned fish to "service louts" and "jailbirds," but soon the inmates, who heard this news, rioted in the prison, causing the factory to close down forever (95-96). After that, the carp, which had been considered a food source in Asian context, were moved to more than twenty thousand hotel fountains in the Desert, where they received grooming service from a trainer from Osaka. In the section, "Strolling Through the Hotel," the Guide also explains to the Historian that she chose to work at the St. Petersburg Hotel because her Korean heritage is similar to a Russian one. She says that the Russians and Koreans "both love the combination of dried fish and very strong liquor" (28). Keep this in mind while reading lines such as "[the hotel serves] only best surgeon fish y beluga bedtime special. Deelicious" (27). English-speaking readers will probably be confused, lost among the intermixed cultural contexts and moods.

Moreover, proper English nouns such as "GIs heroes" (43) often take on negative connotations within different historical contexts, such as the democratic uprising in Kwangju, South Korea. Many Korean citizens who rebelled against the US-backed Chun Doo-Hwan military dictatorship in 1980 were defeated and killed. This Korean government is here called "Merrikken puppet plis boi patos" (56), and English words in Christmas cards, such as the phrase "*Have a Jolly Holiday*," became the "enemy's words . . . tittled with pox" (51). This is because American troops stationed in South Korea during those times were seen to the speaker only as "regula pirates, [who] search for booty y pillage" (43). The Guide also recalls from childhood how she and her comrades were unjustly called "Commie spy" "prole," or "populii" (45). Through this, Hong ironically satirizes and de-territorializes the meanings of true nationalism and liberalism attributed to "U.S. o A" into a product of blind ideological manipulation (56). The ideology of liberalism and the Communism of Korean revolutionaries are also both depicted as insecure and imperfectly mediated concepts like the words in "a sekrendry source o Marx translated / bine semi-illiterate Korean" (56). In this way, Hong shows how English written and read in different cultural and social backgrounds can take on different connotations.

3. Hong's Use of Korean Words and Body in *Translating Mo'um*

Next, I examine Hong's unique uses of the Korean language in *Translating Mo'um*. Hong's inclusion of Korean words cannot be counted as normal "words" but rather should be "regarded as a kind of object, an inert mark incapable of signification," because, as Joseph Jeon mentions, they carry a different temporal index and challenge the

speaker's homogeneous cultural and national identities (*Racial* 8). For this reason, they can be also compared to Deleuze's sense of "pure sonorous material," or "sonorous intrusion" that opens up the new rhizomatic connection with others and makes the speaker caught up in the state of "becoming," such as the deterritorialized violin sound in Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" (*Kafka* 5). In the poem titled "Translating Mo'um," Hong compares her Korean language to "the ventriloquist's voice" that cannot find its original source (*Translating* 72). Rae Armantrout similarly remarks, "Ventriloqui / is the mother tongue," implying that the mother tongue functions as a physical sound that stems from nowhere to "in-between" subjects (qtd. in Waldrop 234).

We see that these words, instead of becoming an "anti-cultural" or "apolitical" space, rather serve as the point of contact where the immanent aspect of the language meets the speaker's symbolic realm, or what M. C. Dillon calls "a conjunction of immanence and transcendence . . . necessary for consciousness to be conscious of something other than itself" (195). That is, to the speaker, Hong's mimicking sounds of the Korean language become the "in-between" space whose unpredictable meanings are further determined by the subject's bodily senses and experiences. When this physical sound of the migrant's tongue is brought to the English-speaking discourse, we witness that its previous meanings are easily erased because of the sounds' phonetic ambiguity, and alternative referents are attained through the speaker's bodily senses. In this way, *Translating Mo'um* questions how the use of language whose meanings are based on the speaker's corporeality affects the speaker's internal knowledge system and transfigures it into another. In the poems, for example, we see that the Korean American speakers who rarely understand the mother tongue often mimic "the immigrant's tongue." But Hong

prefers these words to remain as untranslated blank marks that are unregistered by the dominant cultural realm, comparing the sounds to "blathering" in the dream (13), a "sealed letter" (41), "a pocket of unsaid gas" (40), or the "wooden clack of a puppet's mouth" (65). The speaker also compares the physical voice of her mother tongue to animal sounds such as "the voice like the flash of bats" (13), an "apish libretto," and even the odor of her parents' "old third world smell". But whenever the speaker mimics Korean, these unfamiliar sounds of "[a]lveolar tt, sibilant ss, and glottal hh" or "Labial bs and palatal ts" often constitute a hermeneutic gap devoid of any semantic values in the subject's cognitive system (13). The word *Mo'um* in "Translating Mo'um," for instance, is also a phonetically ambiguous word. Although *Mo'um* can usually be translated either as "mind" (마음), "verb" (모음), or "body" (몸) in Korean, the speaker repeats the word in assorted contexts with diverse referents such as fever, spirit, mind energy, blushing, pain, and mom. She even uses *mo'um* with the general infinitive form as in "to forsake, to hide, to cleanse, to transcend," so the word fits virtually any context.

Moreover, *mo'um* is used in close relation to the speaker's bodily senses, such as her temperature or the tactile impressions of feeling a blanket, a thermostat, and a peeled apple against her skin. For this reason, the word is often used as synonymous with expressions such as "[t]he dull fat tongue," the "throb of bone hugging muscle," or "Sagawa moguh (Eat this apple)."

And it is fever that I first defined as mo'um,

the chills, heated energy—

oma ujiruh (Mother, I am dizzy)

fevers whose gift was a day off from school,

my blanket, a thermostat, hothouse avalanche,

sagawa moguh (Eat this apple)

to cool off the thick-lensed heat,

mother offered me peeled fruit, sliced in sweet geometry

I answered: *Mo'umi oppa oma*.

Fever is the pathology of blushing,

knotted heat, red shrouding sight,

the dull fat tongue, throb of bone hugging muscle. (69)

In the third section of "Translating Mo'um," the meaning of *mo'um* further relates to the feelings of the speaker's hands that touch, claw, wipe, powder, and clap (72). In other words, the writing subject reconstructs meanings of *mo'um* through her bodily senses so the word can occupy a pure and auto-figurative space in the speaker's mind. Borrowing from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, we can call this the space "where our brain and the universe meet," while the outside world is "register[ing] the sense of a profound dissonance and transformation in the relationship between humanity and Being" ("Eye and Mind" 103). This is possible because Hong's Korean words lack the essential link between sound and referent because of their phonetic ambiguity. They are thus words as sounding body, further evinced when the speaker draws the distinction between *mo'um* and *ma'hm* and compares them to her grandmother's two different fingerprints on the floor (*Translating* 70). These words as corporeal images or hieroglyphs suggest that *mo'um* is a word that bears the physicality of the subject's body such as "the weight of fist to breast."

Grandmother kneeled. Two whorls against the floor:

the difference between mo'um and ma'hm,

always the pain that we first associate with mo'um,

the weight of fist to breast. (70)

In "Gatherer," Hong also illustrates how the body becomes a tool to gather basic information about the world and words for the primal hunter woman who has not learned a language. The gatherer's language is also described as the language of the sounding body that lacks any "syntax of pathos" (68) or "glossary of character," and the speaker thus calls her hands "the phonetic of hands" (67). "Hottentot Venus" is another poem where the immemorial language is depicted as the pure sound that comes from "[her] throat, [her] organs, [her] bones," not from her always-existing inner perceptual categories (53).

In "All the Aphrodisiacs," Hong also uses Korean phrases and sentences such as *pae-go-p'a*(배고파, a Korean word for "I'm hungry"), *chi'I wa* (치워, a Korean word for "clean up"), and *kae sekki* (개새끼, a Korean word for "a son of a dog") and connects them to erotic phrases such as "turn you on" and "make you climax" (37). Here, both the speaker's Korean mother tongue and her "sibilant body" are compared to the palimpsest-like "strips of white cotton," that will be sullied and affected by her sweat and other secretions.

Strips of white cotton, the color of the commoner, the color of virtue,

the color that can be sullied—

my hand pressed against your diaphragm, corralling your pitch,

a pinch of rain caught between mouths,

analgesic, tea. poachers drawing blood—

strips of white cotton I use to bind your wrist to post, tight

enough to swell vein, allow sweat—

sweat to sully the white of your sibilant body,

the shrug of my tongue, the shrug of command, *sssshhht*. (38)

In this sense, Hong's "Strips of white cotton" no longer denote Koreans as a racially and culturally homogeneous people, although Koreans are traditionally called the "white-clad race."[33] Her usage of the Korean language, in this way, helps take on different cultural resonances intermingled with her bodily senses and experiences. Similarly, in "Rite of Passage," the Korean word *saekshi* (색시), originally meaning a respectable and marriageable young woman, is transformed into "sexy" by American GIs in the bar.

The way Hong's Korean American speakers reinvent the meanings of these untranslatable Korean words in *Translating Mo'um* based on their bodily senses strongly resonates with Merleau-Ponty's explanation on the symptoms of the "Amnesic–aphasia patient," who should consciously substitute imaginary contexts for the original meaning of words. Merleau-Ponty explains that "Amnesic–aphasia" patients use blank words without any semantic contents. They usually have trouble with the act of naming or interpreting words, due to the absence of conscious categorical intentionality in their

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[33] According to *Namuwiki*, the Korean people, from ancient times, were known for wearing white clothes. This custom earned them a nickname that can be described with a "white clothes people" or "white clad race" (백의 민족 in Korean). For instances, the Korean people in Goguryeo (BC 37-AD 668) used to wear white clothes mostly for religious reason. They performed ancestral rites to worship the Sun God and believed they are the chosen people of god. This tradition continued to the people in dynasties of Gorye (918-1392) and Joseon (1392-1897). Especially, in the Joseon Dynasty, people prefers wearing white clothes mostly due to tradition of Confucianism in which white means chastity, integrity and sublimity. In contrast, they believe that wearing a colored clothes that express one's emotion is indecent or goes against the common decency (*Namuwiki*).

brain system. So the patient often attempts to "compensate for its losses by the 'substantial behavior,'" since the possibility of meaning has not yet been sedimented in his spatial horizons (qtd. in Dillon 137). This "substantial behavior" is marked by the speaker's "conscious effort of substituting an imaginary and constructed context" for unfamiliar names (138). In other words, since his brain has erased the possible links between the "sense-giving intention" and its emotional concepts, he must infer the word's meaning based on his bodily senses. In this regard, the speaker's body in Hong's poems also can be said to perform this "primary operation [that] . . . makes what is expressed dwell in signs, not through some previous convention, but through the eloquence of their very arrangement and configuration" (Merleau-Ponty, *PW* 78).

Deleuze also observes the intimate link between language and the subject's body in *The Logic of Sense,* in which he regards the semantic meaning "as the incorporeal surface between bodies and words, [or] the 'expressed' of words whose 'expression' is the event" (qtd. in Bogue 65). To him, language is a system that is not composed of "ubiquitous structured codes, but of *hieroglyphic*, concealed differences enfolded in words and things" (65, *emphasis mine*). Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, also note an intimate association between signs and bodies and thereby compare language to their concept of "collective assemblage," which is always exposed to the nondiscursive realm and retains "pure speeds and intensities" (Bogue 66). This makes it clear that Deleuze does not see a language system as the always-already existing ontological presence but "truth as creation" (64). His notion of linguistic sign is, rather, a hieroglyphic that constantly attains new meaning when "the plane of immanence . . . [is] constructed region by region." Moreover, what dominates this process of "creation" of

meaning is the fortuitous encounter between the sign and one's body, which further transform the signs into a "non-discursive machinic assemblage" (66–8). In this regard, Hong's hybrid English mixed with diverse Korean patois and vernacular has much in common with the notions of Deleuze's "embodied" language or Merleau-Ponty's "ontology of flesh" discussed above. All three draw a close analogy between the body and the use of language, while emphasizing an "ideality that is not alien to the flesh, that gives it its axes, its depth, its dimensions" (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 152). In addition to Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze, Roland Barthes also compares writing with the process of destruction "of every point of origin . . . where all identity is lost, [and] start[s] with the very identity of the body writing" (277). As with an Amnesiac patient's pre-semantic words or Barthe's "body writing," we see that Hong's language of *Mo'um* (body) also serves as a palimpsest from which the semantic origin is scraped away to create a new space which is "ever to be reopened between the sign and the sign" through the speaker's body as an active sentient (Merleau-Ponty, *VI* 153). Most of all, in the interview with *Women's Review*, Hong identifies the meaning of the term *Mo'um* as "the body" (몸). She mentions that since she learned the Korean language at home, she was always "unfamiliar with the exact definition and [could not help] kn[owing] the words by association" (Hong, "Slipping" 15). I think her body was the most useful tool that supported the process of word association and further made it a set of alternative processes of de/reterritorialization.

So, one of Hong's central metaphor that shows the process of (re)creation of meanings in *Translating Mo'um* is the palimpsest body of a naked woman such as a simian woman's "Dark-eyed body" (71) in "Translating Mo'um," or that of "a dark-

skinned woman who spat / and sparred" (25) in "Melanin." The language of these primal women often embodies the inexhaustible potential to inscribe different meanings derived from their bodily senses such as sexual desire and motherly affection. Their bodies often appear to be darkened or coated with ash or dirt, as in expressions such as "the ash that rained / and darkened our skins," (70) "ash fell like feathers before coating one's skin" (71), or "soiled hands . . . [that] powdered my skin" (72). Through these images, Hong suggests that our bodies not only perform the "linking" function between the outer and inner world, but further make the conventional relationship between the perceiver and the perceived object broken then regenerated with different layers of meanings. Moreover, in this process, the speaker's body is removed from the cultural origin and replaced by contingent meanings that better suit her "in-between" cultural or ethnic position.

The images of palimpsest body, however, are continually contrasted with the images of molting or scrubbing off dead skin. In *Dance Dance Revolution*, there appear the exiled natives "who crave for time to stand still" and reinstate their cultural origins and purity in the Desert. They often lay landmines and explosives around the riverbeds and try to stop the influx of immigrants and tourists coming across the world. Their aspiration to counter the "becoming" process of the region is further expressed in their religious ritual, which is to "rub their mouths along a stone until chapped skin bursts to blood" (81). This image of rubbing or scratching the skin also appears in *Translating Mo'um* through the images of the old generation of Korean immigrants who are obsessed with "white" skin. They often seek to hold on to the traditional way of life and restore their lost cultural and national identities. These attempts are often depicted through the images of old women's naked bodies whose skins constantly granulate and cicatrize. In

"Zoo," for instance, the speaker's parents are obsessed "with hygiene" and try to "get rid of their old third world smell" (13). In "Ablution," artists' obsession with delivering the exact and transparent meanings of their art is further compared to the image of the Korean bathhouse in which old "women / with flaccid breasts scrubbing / their bodies like the casual chore / scrubbing laundry" (65).

Hong's poetic language as sounding body further undermines the pre-existing power relations between different genders and races inscribed in the dominant representational system. For instance, in "Androgynous Pronouns," she uses many Korean words/phrases written in their phonetic ambiguity such as *kunyun* (그년, a Korean phrase for "that bitch"), *ip damu* (입다물어, a deformed Korean phrase for "shut up"), and *mip'ta* (밉다, a Korean word for "I hate") (57). But these physical sounds only bring her a momentary unintelligibility and rejection of socially recognized differences among different genders. To say it more specifically, these Korean words in "Androgynous Pronouns" subvert the patriarchal gender division by overwriting sexist terms with sexually ambiguous, "androgynous," and "hermaphrodite" meanings as seen in expressions such as "a flat chested woman" or "The hirsute man twirled around, [who] became Bette Davis" (57). That is, the Korean mother tongue serves as a catalyst that precipitates a different signifying process where names signify differently from the meaning of heterosexual or patriarchal norms and thereby invent a new Eve's language.

In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze states that writing is inseparable from the process of "becoming," since in writing one always becomes "another": "one becomes-woman, one becomes animal, or vegetable, one becomes molecular to the point of becoming im-perceptible" (qtd. in Bogue 72). Likewise, Hong's Korean words as pure

images, this way, help reconstitute the subject's identity to another "I" that does not belong to either Korean or American cultural discourses, or even either gender, but more accurately reflects her "in-between" or "becoming" state. Hong thus compares the writing process to the image of the speaker's body becoming a palimpsest that continually de-territorializes and re-territorializes its meanings. In other words, the writing subject in Hong's poems actively combines language with the physical world and, by doing so, "synchronize[s] changes of [her own] existence, a transformation of [her] being," instead of positioning the subject as a mere spectator, separated from the situation (Merleau-Ponty, *PP* 184).[34] This way, Hong's hybrid and minoritized language becomes a new cultural lens through which her "in-between" subject, if temporarily, reinterprets herself and the world.

Applying Deleuze and Guattari's theory of embodied language to Hong's *Dance Dance Revolution* and *Translating Mo'um,* we have so far discussed how the speakers' mimicry of Korean words or use of hybridized language function as a cognitive rupture in the subjects' minds and further provide them with different modes of representation and

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[34] Merleau-Ponty also explains that the new and alternate subject emerges in the erasure of distinction between the act of perceiving and that of being perceived. It is only after this elimination that the new subject perceives the word again and gives the word a certain meaning, through which both the referent of the word and perceptual paradigm of 'inside' change. Especially in *The Visible and the Invisible* and *The Prose of the World* Merleau-Ponty argues that the act of perceiving always accompanies the differently perceived/reflected subjectivity. Whereas some structural linguists like Saussure focus on one-way traces from the brain to the body, Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze prioritize two-way traces between the brain and body where corporeal senses transform the structure of mind, and the transformed mind re-projects itself to the world: "Let us only say that the pure ideality is itself not without flesh nor freed from horizon structures; it lives of them, through they be another flesh and other horizons. It is as though the visibility that animates the sensible world were to emigrate, not outside of everybody, but into another less heavy, more transparent body, as though it were to change flesh, abandoning the flesh of the body for that of language" (*VI* 153).

identity. However, I also understand that Deleuze's "becoming" theory cannot fully explain Hong's poetic subject. Whereas Deleuze's "becoming" subject questions all identity formation, all identity politics, and even makes any critical approaches grounded in history problematic (Bogue 74), Hong does not cease inquiring into the ideological, cultural, and political conditions of Asian American people and the issue of inequality of power-relationships between different ethnic groups in America. In "Delusions of Whiteness in the Avant-Garde," for instance, Hong criticizes how mainstream avant-garde poets and scholars dismiss the works that deal with racial issues as "identity politic" by saying they are "sentimental, manufactured, feminine, niche-focused, woefully out of date" (2). She also blames them for intentionally paying attention to the works "where race—through subject and form—is incidental, preferably invisible or at the very least buried" (2) and by doing so, glossing over the social and political reality in America. Whereas these mainstream scholars emphasize slogans such as "against expression" and "post-identity," Hong's characters, are never entirely free from their "identities"—socially and politically given—because, as Hong says, "there is always subject—and beyond that, the specter of the author's visage—and that specter is never, no matter how vigorous the erasure, raceless" (1). For instance, Hong's Korean American speakers in her poems—mostly immigrants and exiles—never seem to be free from their deep-rooted grief and trauma, ranging from memories of the uprisings against the modern military government in South Korea and contemporary political experiences of exiles and immigrants in American society, especially of those who lost their original nationality and language. But Hong's criticism of "mainstream" manifestos and her emphasis on racialized characters should not be understood to simply mean that she espouses an

"identity politic" through her works. Rather, Hong explores how the experimental languages of avant-garde poets can also deal with urgent pragmatic issues such as prejudice and discrimination regarding one's gender, race, and ethnicity. Especially by making its own rupture inside her writings and creating "its own line of flight," she believes the "minor" language of these "minor" people can also approach subjects such as polyvocality, hybridity, collage, and appropriation without forgetting the palimpsested histories and social pressures.

4. THERESA HAK KYUNG CHA'S *DICTÉE*

Like Hong, in *Dictée*, Cha demonstrates the power of language, when it is not bound by cultural origin, through the techniques of montage, insertion of white spaces, and language that constantly breaks down and transposes to other foreign languages. Especially, she often highlights the moments that one language transposes onto another, becomings empty signs and consequently affecting the speaker's 'in-between' identity, through a comparison between the subject's hollowed body and language as a white/blank page. To explain this, I turn to Deleuze's notions of "language III" and "involutionary process" later in this section.

Cha's works flourished in the 60s and 70s, when, as Constance Lewallen observes, campaigns for the equal rights of women and diverse racial and gender groups started. Back then, she says, the San Francisco Bay Area, well known for American avant-garde movements such as conceptual art, was the main locale for Cha's art performances. Majoring in comparative literature at University of California, Berkeley, Cha absorbed the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé, and her unconventional typographic

design in *Chronology* was also influenced by Mallarmé's style (Lewallen 2). Cha was also interested in film theory, and most of her films consist of recurrent white images, as for example in *Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard* (1978). According to Lewallen, Cha was also influenced by Jean-Luc Godard's movies in which a female character must "relearn language to regain her individuality" (6), much like Cha's female characters in *Dictée*.

Besides Godard, Cha's performances in *Barren Cave Mute* (1974), *A Ble Wail* (1975), *From Vampyr* (1976), and *Reveille dans la Brume* (1977) were influenced by Terry Fox's performance style, especially his use of a translucent veil to isolate his performance and the "slow, ritualistic manner in which events unfolded" (Lewallen 7). Cha's performances are also known for her whispered or quiet speech and her bodily movements reminiscent of Korean traditional dance or Chinese tai chi. But the common theme permeating her art works is a performer or narrator's search for new meanings in her language, thereby remapping her body and identity through the physical materiality of language. According to Lewallen, Cha argues that her "video, film, and performance work . . . are explorations of language structures inherent in written and spoken material, photographic and filmic images—[and they all enable] the creation of new relationships and meanings in the simultaneity of those forms" (9). To emphasize the physical materiality of her language and other art medium, Cha often transforms the ambiguous Korean language to a pure image or meaningless icon through the techniques of "changing the syntax, isolation, removing [words] from [their] context, repetition, and reduction to minimal units" (qtd. in Rinder 20). For instances, in *Videoeme*, words are also broken into semantic units and then varied graphically, as in VIDÉ / VIDÉ O / O

ÉME, where Cha attempts to inscribe multiple meanings into her language (Rinder 22). Another example of fractured words can be found in *Commentaire*, in which Cha, like Stein, make all her words fragmented so that its definite meaning is impossible. For instance, the fracture of the words between *comment* + *taire* (*commentaire* means "commentary" or "comment" in English) produces a secondary meaning of "how" and "to conceal," and this way, Cha presents the impossibility of the definitiveness of "commentary" itself. To emphasize the physical materiality of her language and its immediate power in *Mouth to Mouth* (1975), Cha also overlaps the silent images of Korean words—eight Korean vowel graphemes—with soundtracks of "a babbling stream with occasional birdsongs [that] fades in and out with no apparent correlation to the video imagery" or "hypnotically gurgling water" (Rinder 18). As Minh-Ha remarks, by "engaging language as simultaneously seen and heard," Cha "plays up the arbitrary relation between the sound of a word, its visual spelling, its multiple referents" ("White" 35).

Dictée, Cha's best-known book of poems, is the next subject of our attention in this section. *Dictée* also explores how the mother tongue that once shaped one's unified historical memories and national identity veers from conventional meanings within different cultural realities and comes to enunciate alternative values that forge the means of the speaker's in-between identity. First, in the chapter "Clio," Cha ironizes the fact that terms such as "enemy, atrocities, conquest, betrayal, invasion, destruction" are artificial products of ideological maneuvers that evoke only monolithic and pre-coded historical meanings for Koreans (32). Jong-Im Lee in her dissertation also highlights that the post-colonial state of South Korea seen by Cha was "a seriously hierarchical society with

'division, strata, classification,' and each stratum deserves a different amount of power in accordance with its rank" (197). As Lee argues, the narrator in "Clio" debunks how national identities claimed by the Korean people such as "a single-race nation" or the "white-clad people," showing that they are actually ideological products based on "the existence of *oppressive others*" or the artificial "borderline dividing insiders and outsiders." The borders dividing Koreans into insider and outsider, after the colonial periods, may include those of Korean/Japanese, liberal/socialist, and right wing pro-American/left wing pro-North Korean parties during the Park Chung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan's eras. The South Korean government's nationalist policy that excludes foreigners such as Cha is another target of her critique. As discussed in the previous section, the repressed and paralyzed political situation after the Korean War (1950–53) was made worse by the military dictatorships that succeeded President Rhee Syngman in the 1960s. The dictators accused innocent citizens, labeling them "commies" or "pinkos," as seen in Hong's *Dance Dance Revolution,* and used military force to curb the power of citizens and protect their own political interests. For instance, the historical events in Cha's *Dictée* and Hong's *Dance Dance Revolution* both concern the Kwangju Democratization Movement in 1980. This was a popular uprising in which tens of thousands of students and citizens of Kwangju in South Korean took up arms against the Chun Doo-hwan military government. After Park Jung-hee's assassination in October 26, 1979, Chun, chief of the powerful Defense Security Command as well as a loyalist of Park, declared martial law and seized the reins of government. He branded thousands of street demonstrators who demanded the repeal of martial law as communist sympathizers, or "the Reds," and killed more than a thousand people (Cumings 382). Chun further "closed

the universities, dissolved the legislature, banned political activities and arrested thousands of political leaders and dissidents in the midnight hours of May 17–18" (381–82). Bruce Cumings also notes that American government at that time regarded the Korean military as "the only institution with effective power after Park's murder" and therefore did little to support the democratic movement in South Korean and eventually turned a cold shoulder to the citizens of Kwangju in 1980 (379–82).

In *Dictée*, however, Cha intentionally overlaps her childhood memories of the April Revolution in 1960 that her older brother was involved in—a huge demonstration led by labor and student groups against the corrupt dictatorship of Rhee Syngman[35]—with her more recent memories of the 5.18 Kwangju Democratic Movement in 1980, thereby satirizing how Koreans repeated the same ideological mistakes after twenty years. Moreover, she sarcastically remarks how the meanings of these historical events have been canonized and embalmed in the long memories of Koreans. Cha, who returned to Korea after eighteen years only to be treated as a foreigner, might have felt that these memories, originally meant to honor and remember the noble deaths, were too exclusive, violent, and manipulative for her to be to accepted as a member of this single-race nation. Cha's expression towards these historical moments therefore has somewhat negative connotations, since they preserve in people's minds only the homogeneous purpose and meaning, as seen in the sentences "[t]he eternity of one act. Is the completion of one existence. One martyrdom. For the history of one nation. Of one people" (*Dictée* 37). Thus the narrator makes clear that the aim of her recalling and naming these historical

[35] Cumings also describes how President Rhee had "continued to rule as an autocrat after the [Korean] war and was at his absolute worst in 1960" (345). It is also known that hundreds of labor and student demonstrators were killed and more than a thousand of people were injured when the police fired at their demonstrations.

memories is “not to repeat history in oblivion” but to extract from those words and memories “another image [and another] reply [so] that [they] will not repeat history in oblivion” (33).

In the chapter “Calliope,” the narrator continues to resent that she does not fit these exclusive and symbolic identities, since to her, the “national song[s] forbidden to be sung” during the colonial era such as “Bong-Sun flower” and the yin–yang symbol of the Korean national flag are all “[t]he mark of belonging. Mark of cause. Mark of retrieval,” which exclude her as a stranger (46). In the same chapter, the narrator also tells her mother’s story, tracing it back to when she was an exile in Manchuria during World War II. Even after escaping the Japanese in Korea, exiled Koreans were still forced to abandon their native language and change their names to Japanese when Manchuria was occupied. After graduating from a teacher’s college in 1940, her mother received her first teaching assignment from the government at a small village in Manchuria. The narrator explain that, as the first female teacher, who stayed there for six years alone, her mother longed for her hometown, where her parents lived. At the end of the chapter, the narrator further juxtaposes her own experiences as a polyglot and immigrant living in the U.S. with her mother’s life as a stranger in Manchuria. She does say, however, that her mother continued to write and speak in her mother tongue, secretly using the forbidden Korean language and often sending it out “By Sky and by water,” at night so that the seeds of the language could scatter to take root, sprout, and bud in conspiracy with “The wind. The dawn or dusk the clay earth and traveling birds south” (48). They were all messengers helping her mother reclaim herself and her body as a unified national subject. In contrast, we can also question the symbolic consistency of her mother’s illegitimate language and

compare it with the silent language waiting to be readopted as a potential site on which new meanings can be inscribed, like Hong's Korean words in *Translating Mo'um*.

But although in 1945 her mother eventually returned to Korea, now independent from Japan, "which [she thinks] is her identity, her presence" and reclaimed her national identity, the narrator instead experiences painful self-annihilation at the Korean airport when she revisits South Korea after eighteen years (49). Even when she tries to raise her voice, her broken mother tongue or others' fluent Korean to her ears becomes fragmented into "particle bits of sound" or "Speech morsels. Broken chips of stones" (56). In other words, she experienced that language, which should be transparent and quickly transmitted, became fragmented and image-based almost to the point of impenetrability. Moreover, the narrator's in-between Korean American identity was not fully recognized by those uniformed people, who kept demanding "to know who and what [she] is, who is represented" (57).

However, in the chapter "Urania," the narrator ceases attempting to materialize her body as a site for homogeneous meaning or signification. In other words, she starts to distance herself from any form of national and historical ideology that categorizes her into a singular or limited sense of gender, class, and race. Moreover, she starts transforming into an empty body that silently waits to be re-dimensioned within a totally different cultural context, strongly reminiscent of Hong's depiction of exiles and migrants' bodies in *Dance Dance Revolution* and *Engine Empire.* They are also depicted as having lost their original national and cultural identities and undergone the process of "becoming." The "Urania" chapter begins in the U. S. immigration office, where the narrator experienced her body becoming flattened and drained of blood and further deals

with this transformed body as a matter of translation. That is to say, Cha overlaps the image of the narrator's empty body with that of her deterritorialized mother tongue. This idea is further supported by Cha's description of ink and blood as becoming one in the chapter. Lee also regards this chapter as the one in which Cha first develops her central theme of "corporeality of language and memory," explaining that "Cha's notions of history and memory are connected through the corporeality of language" (182). Lee further claims that *Dictée*'s most prominent theme is the intimacy among the narrator's body, language, and the nation; and by intertwining this "triad" (183), Cha "undermine[s] the self-sufficient interiority of the body" that her former generation once equated with a homogeneous nation-state (203). Since Cha equates the narrator's body with the contingent meanings she imparts upon the language, when words transform into physical thingness, the subject also witnesses her own body become bleached and emptied as anonymous thingness. Lee also argues that the image of an empty body and blood of the speaker in the "Urania" and "Erato" chapters "metaphorize[s] corporeal language as well as historical writing" and this way, Cha demonstrates history as "embodied materiality" (182). In a similar vein, Jeon also emphasizes how the subject's "in-between" or "objective" state is precipitated or doubled by "the emerging materiality of the text itself" (*Racial* 31).

As Jeon and Lee both suggest, the narrator's emptied body in "Urania" immediately gives way to a more detailed process of linguistic purification in which her mother tongue loses its original meanings and becomes empty image-based signs, fragmented morsels of speech. These signs further become indistinguishable from ambient sounds such as the rain, streams, and exhaled breaths that the speaker heard on

her journey across the Korean peninsula and the Pacific Ocean (69). The speaker's words that became the fragmented pieces, removed from their historical and cultural origins, also begin to be associated with the feelings of her organs, such as the "[t]ongue inside the mouth inside / the throat inside / the lung organ alone / The only organ" (67). That is, through the self-annihilating experience, her former language that once occupied her core memories dissolves into a revelation of her corporeal senses, such as those of her "[t]ongue inside the mouth inside," to the point where she feels "there would be no more of organ" in her body but the sound of the "[c]ries," "The mute signs" which are "Never the same" (69), and the "images only. Alone. Images" (71). In other words, we see that Cha's "mute signs" are made through the practices of a non-native speaker's language such as stuttering and misspelling. Indeed, as Spahr argues, "*Dictée* is written in the stutters" and includes many disruptive moments when "Cha's non-standardized English or Korean mimics the stutters and misspellings of the second language speaker" ("Postmodernism" 4). Eun Kyung Min also points out that Cha's immigrant speaker inevitably experiences infantalization in her new language and undergoes "a sudden loss of the power of communication as well as the dramatic failure of the power of self-representation" (313).

In the chapter "Thalia," the narrator continues to undergo the process of bleaching her language white from "Synonyms, simile, metaphor, byword, byname, [to] ghostword, phantomnation" to release her from the pain of her past memories (140).[36]

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[36] It is further stated that this process of ablution occurs during the speaker's "extended journey, horizontal in form [and], in concept" (*Dictée* 140). This statement is strongly reminiscent of Deleuze's notion of "rhizomes," since the movement of the "rhizome" is also defined by its "horizontal, non-hierarchical, and trans-species connections" between different beings (MacKenzie et al. 375).

Besides *Dictée*, in many other works such as *EXILÉE* and *Commentaire*, Cha emphasizes the moments when one language transposes to another and becomes a pure image the meanings of which are determined "u tt e r ly by chance by luck by hazard otherwise" (*EXILÉE* 55). Min also argues that the central theme of *Dictée* revolves around how Cha's work "transform[s] the relation of languages to each other into an image of a language's self-relation" like "a cluster of hieroglyphs, mere pictorial signs" (314, 313).

These "mute signs" that are "[m]oved in towards Time. continued to disappear . . . in pieces . . [and] forgotten" (*EXILÉE* 57) have similar features and functions to Deleuze's notion of "language III." In *Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze demonstrates that there are three steps to exhaust one's mental faculties, by using language I, II, and III. The first step is to produce the meta-language called "language I," which is the collections of all chopped, disjunctive, and atomic language (156). Just as Stein's poetic language operates within diverse combinatorial relations, which produce multiple syntactic relations among themselves, "language I" produces multiple meanings and contexts, according to how those fragmented pieces are enumerated and combined. But Deleuze further acknowledges that although this meta-language is separated "from [its] usual networks of linguistic connotations" through different permutations of elements, it retains "one-to-one correspondence to the objects" and thereby narrates some possible stories of the world outside (Bogue 134). Therefore, Deleuze felt the need to create another meta-language called "language II," which exhausts the words themselves and functions more as a pure sound or "the voices" of the Other. This consists of signs speaking only about themselves and on their own, "and thus can bestow on them the only reality to which they can lay claim" without arriving at designated objects or meanings

(*CC* 157). But Deleuze states that there is still a possibility that one can reinvest personal memories and stories in the voices or express one's emotions such as sadness and pleasure in this flow of voice: "The voice had intentions and intonations, it evoked personal recollections" (*CC* 166).

Deleuze thus further claims that to entirely exhaust the subject's mental faculties, one needs to identify himself with "the Other" and become involved more with "something that comes from outside or elsewhere" (158). For this, one needs a language that no longer relates itself "to enumerable or combinable objects, nor transmitting voices, but to the immanent limits that are ceaselessly displaced—hiatuses, holes, or tears that we would never notice" (159, 158). Like Cha's "mute signs" that are not burdened with historical memories and stories, Deleuze's "language III" also refers to "a pure and unsullied image," entirely stripped of its personal or relational memories. He further explains that this "image" is defined not by its possible contents or referents but by its pure form and energy itself:

> The image is not defined by the sublimity of its content but by its form, that is, by its "internal tension," or by the force it mobilizes to create a void or to bore holes, to loosen the grip of words, to dry up the oozing of voices, so as to free itself from memory and reason: a small, alogical*, amnesiac, and almost aphasic image....*" (159, *emphasis mine*)

Moreover, Deleuze explains that this pure state of mind can be attained through the combinational relationship between the subject and object, in which the latter must be

transformed into "the plane of immanence"[37] and evoke the "involuntary" operation of meanings in the subject's mind. Of course, here "the subject" does not mean the fixed and permanent selfhood but a self existing "as its limit ... the exhausted one, the unnamable, me" (157). Deleuze's concept of "language III" well explains and highlights the underlying features of Cha's "mute" sign, which also "retains itself, white, / unsurpassing, absent of hue, [but remains] absolute, utmost / pure, unattainable pure" (*Dictée* 132).

> Ever since the whiteness.
>
> It retains itself, white,
>
> unsurpassing, absent of hue, absolute, utmost
>
> pure, unattainably pure.
>
> If within its white shadow-shroud, all stain should
>
> vanish, all past all memory of having been cast,
>
> left, through the absolution and power of
>
> these words.
>
> Covering. Draping. Clothing. Sheath. Shroud.
>
> Superimpose. Overlay. Screen.
>
> Conceal. Ambush
>
> Disguise. Cache. Mask. Veil.
>
> Obscure. Cloud. Shade. Eclipse. Covert.

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[37] In *Pure Immanence*, Deleuze's term "immanence" is defined as a pure and elementary state of oneself before the image of the world enters into the individual realm and lose its "singularity." In the book, "singularity" is also used synonymously with terms such as "event" or the language of "unpredictability."

Like Deleuze's "language III," the central theme of *Dictée* is how these "mute signs"—including the speaker's use of broken mother tongue, insertion of foreign languages, maps, and illegible handwriting—serve as pure images and allow those stains of the past to be washed away. It is the immaculate language that has already dissolved the "glue of calculation, signification, intention, personal memories and old habits" (Bogue 134). That is, instead of being involved in the Deleuzian sense of "voluntary operation of faculties" of the human mind, such as memory, association, reminiscence and imagination, these fragmented speech morsels have independent and autonomous relations to themselves in producing meanings and reflect their own self-presence.

Besides the disruptive moments of translation or clash of different cultures, Spahr's sense of "stuttering" also refers to the syntactical problems or agrammatical issues arising in *Dictée*. Spahr notes that the grammatical problems in *Dictée* also "serve as subtle, temporal shock that jolt the reader out of absorptive reading practices" ("Postmodernism" 30). This is the moment when the syntactical coherence of meanings is broken down: "Being broken. Speaking broken. Saying broken. Talk broken. Say broken. Broken speech. Pidgin tongue. Broken word. (*Dictée* 161). Not only Spahr but Deleuze also argues that the minor deterritorialization in literature proceeds via syntactic problems or its tendency towards "an 'asyntactic,' 'agrammatical' limit . . . that communicates with its proper outside" (*CC* lv). He calls this moment of semantic deterritorialization "a stuttering" or "a becoming-other" and explains that it arises from the moment of illegibility of words or the moment of maximum "striving of what are still words but hardly so . . . towards the images and sounds" (Lecercle 244-45). This is the moment that Jean-Jacques Lecercle also refers to as "when iconicity [of the sentence]

dominates meaning." Cha's poetic gesture towards the limit of her language, a pure "Image," is also synchronous with this force-generating process occurring in her agrammatical sentences or "divergent syntax" (Spahr, "Postmodernism" 30). In other words, Cha's opaque language in *Dictée* tends to disregard the importance of fixed metaphors and interpretation, prioritizing what Deleuze calls the "concept of style [which] is articulated with the concepts of force, of plane, . . . of metamorphosis and assemblage" (Lecercle 246).

For instance, many grammatical problems such as subject/verb inversion as in "The signs in the rain I listened" (71), fragmented or incomplete sentences such as "Abandons all protests to that which will appear to the sight. About to appear. Forecast. Break." (79), punctuation irregularities, and spaces between phrases are found in *Dictée*. Especially, the repetition of disjointed phrases or fragments of sentences with slight alteration is another characteristic of Cha's agrammaticality, as seen in the following paragraph:

> You see the color the hue the same you see the shape the form the same you see the unchangeable and the unchanged the same you smell filtered edited through progress and westernization the same you see the numerals and innumerable bonding overlaid the same, speech, the same. You see the will, you see the breath, you see the out of breath and out of will but you still see the will. (57)

Natalie Catasús similarly argues that the syntax in the "Calliope" chapter is full of disjointed fragments, which are repeated with slight difference and in a self-corrected manner "as though each sentence is a new beginning," as in the sentences such as "You

speak in the dark. In the secret," to "you speak in a whisper. In the dark, in secret" (3). She adds that this repetition of disjointed fragments further allows "the reader to see the progression of these ideas," which are not adamant but more fluidly constructed (6).

Especially, the series of modifying phrase—such as gerund or infinitive phrases—are often juxtaposed and repeated without being subordinated to the independent main clause in *Dictée*, as in "dark fires rising to battle for victory, the summoning the coaxing the irresistible draw replacing sleep dense with images condensing them without space in between" (50) or "the speaking no more than rain having become snow" (71). But, since Cha's gerund or infinitive phrases are repeated without being subordinated into the main clause, it is extremely difficult to decide which grammatical positions they stand for in the sentence.

Alternatively, the repetition of incomplete verb phrases without having any matching subject as seen in "[r]elinquishes even the vision to immobility" (79) or "[a]bandons all protests to that which will appear to the sight" also invests her sentences with a strong sense of "becoming" or "transition" and has a similar function to what Colebrook calls "free-indirect discourse" (110).

> Relinquish even the vision to immobility. Abandons all protests to that which will appear to the sight. About to appear. Forecast. Break. Break, by all means. (79)

To describe Deleuze's concept of "stuttering," Colebrook comes up with two examples of syntactical problems—the use of "free-indirect discourse" and "the infinitive"—explaining that they demonstrate the diverse ways of speaking that "do not originate in characters . . . [and] speaks without a subject altogether" (110). In this case, the syntax of

sentences is not restricted by any agent of subject/character and its act of doing and thereby can help the speaker avoid predicting its pre-determined meanings and encourage the state of "becoming" of the sentence and the speaking self (Colebrook 110). In this regards, Cha's incomplete sentences or fragmented phrases—that are not authored by the original speaker and thereby offer us diverse speaking positions in her text—strongly resonate with Deleuze's sense of "literature [that] discloses language as a 'collective assemblage'" (Colebrook 112). In these accounts, Cha's deviant language does not function as a representational tool to deliver a fixed meaning but "a passage from noise to word, from wound to sense" in whatever way the speaker sees fit (Colebrook 114).

Besides such agrammatical or deviant syntax, Cha's insertion of material images in *Dictée* such as maps, uncaptioned photographs and historical portraits also contributes to making her poetic subject ahistorical, asubjective, and "becoming." Most of all, the white spaces inserted around different narratives in *Dictée* help unlock the history from its ideological "closures" and allow it to speak for itself in the freedom from linguistic restraints. Although Cha's inclusion of the physical materials in the text can be "understood as a way to assert the authority of her own writing," Catasús argues that they rather have an equal function as Cha's other "arbitrary and insufficient signifiers" (7). In *Dictée* and *Markings,* for instance, Cha repeatedly uses the images of white envelope or screen as central metaphors—on which words such as "bruise" are written so faintly that they are barely legible—which further evoke the momentary unintelligibility of words and the speaker's identity. Moreover, the white mourning clothes that Cha often wore in her performances, such as in *Aveugle Voix* (*Blind Voice*, 1975), also signify the moment when she takes leave of her former self and celebrates the emergence of her new self

from inside. In *Aveugle voix*, Cha, her eyes blindfolded by a white banner and her body wrapped in white clothes, invites readers to interpret the words inscribed on her white clothes such as GESTE, AVEUGLE, VOIX, MOT, SANS, ME and redefine the meaning of her body and herself. In this regard, it can be said that Cha's white spaces function as inducing anonymous and multiple others and have them inscribe multiple and unpredictable meanings of her body and the self in an encounter with the "outside."

In the "Erato" chapter, too, the white/blank spaces are randomly inserted among the different narratives—the narratives of the romantic life of an anonymous middle-class woman, the life of a traditional Korean women who submits herself to the patriarchal order and obeys her husband, the story of Sister Therese Martin who is planning her spiritual marriage to God, and lastly, a story of a mother figure who breast-feeds both her baby and husband—and give way to a more chaotic interweaving of stories and their fragmentations. Min notes that this montage technique "forestalls the sense of continuous movement or narrative, accentuates the differences of its individual components, and thereby counteracts the passivity of the audience" or their assimilation into the ideological identity (321). Besides montage effects, Hee-Jung Joo Serenity and Christina Lux also acknowledges that "cinematic language" such as "shots," "zooming out," and "cuts" inserted in the chapter creates and serves as a pure "Image" and questions the unity of her poetic subject and its location, since her language is both "descriptive (of what is happening) and prescriptive (of what is to come)" (17).

The primary effect of Cha's material language is therefore the constitution of a new poetic subject who escapes from the process of passive assimilation into an ideological identity and re-appropriates the historical memories to new meanings and

visions, through isolation from the chronological order of time and endurance. In other words, Cha's language gives birth to an ahistorical and asubjective poetic self in *Dictée* who "Wait[s] and see[s], . . . [who] would have to wait to see, Wait and see. If. For a second time. For another time" (*Dictée* 99). For instance, we witness that the external temporality that used to control the four narratives in the "Erato" chapter becomes increasingly blurred and ambiguous at the end of the chapter, through the increasing insertion of white spaces:

> One morning. The next morning. It does not matter. So many mornings have passed this way. But this one. Especially. The white mist rising everywhere, constant gathering and dispersing. This is how it fills the screen. (112)

Cha's experiment with this different temporality through the use of white imagery continues in the "Elitere" chapter. Its first page presents a black and white photo of women wearing white Korean traditional dresses and begins with the words "Dead time" (123). Then the speaker allows herself to be possessed by the unknown spirit and evokes the "the dead time," resistant to the smooth connection with memories by saying, "Let the sound enter from without." This different temporality the subject now inhabits also implies that one's historical memories are all erased and have disappeared. Moreover, the speaker continually conjures up a voice that is invisible and imperceptible, coming from nowhere, and induces a state of "becoming" in herself. Here, the image of a shaman-like speaker overlaps with the images of Demeter "sit[ting] upon the stone nine days and nine nights" (130), waiting for Persephone to come back from the underworld, or female figures waiting to communicate with the dead in a séance. But instead of postulating any particular temporal/historical unit to describe this "dead time," Cha describes it only with

the image of "the wall of Tartarus," the lake with a bottomless pit under hell. In the "RETOUR" section, the speaker further depicts this time as "brief unaccountable minutes in its clouding, in its erasing of the present" (131). In other words, the speaker expects a contingent voice to come from beyond the white screen, a voice from nowhere, "[u]naccountable is [whose] distance, [and] time to transport from this present minutes" (132). This is what Min calls a poetic subject "as the inscription of loss and distance from places of origins" (314). No one can predict how, from where, and in what ways the past is recalled and reimagined within the present self, since Cha's white space serves only as a dimension of unpredictability and generates transformed cohesion among the past, present, and future self through a non-temporal unit, the *temps morts* (dead time).

It is, however, this moment of oblivion or self-erasure that Cha's sense of "truth," "Annunciation. A second coming" initiates (150). As Minh-Ha mentions, Cha's word as a white page "not only [means] the whites of erasure and departure, but also the whites of beginnings" ("White" 41). This process through which new meanings/memories emerge from "Dead words. Dead tongue." (*Dictée* 133) and are superimposed upon the language also has a strong parallel with Deleuze's sense of "involuntary process" that links the speaker's "non-knowledge and knowledge," or the Unconscious and Conscious realm, to retrieve different connections between the past and present (*DR* 206). According to Deleuze, an "involuntary process" means an inversion of a normal signification process. In the normal representational process, meanings are usually derived from the subject's empirical realm to the symbolic realm with the help of her/his mental faculties such as association, assimilation, opposition, or abstraction. But, unlike the normal social and cultural phenomena, the "involuntary process" of learning lets the sign of sensibility

remain as a pure image that does not have any presumed meaning inside and constitutes "a critical image of thought." "A critical image of thought" signifies a language as a pure image, generated not by the speaker's repeated empirical ideas but by the creation of the plane of "pure difference." Deleuze's objective in *Difference and Repetition* is thus to learn how to "paint a critical image [of thought]" in the realm of language, without presuming the same causal relationship between the world and the word (Hughes 71). For this aim, the speaking subject first needs to stop using his previous memory and intelligence, and evoke the contingent impressions of the object. When the subject can entirely dissolve into the pure intensity of the object and feel its pure difference, she can finally flesh out new paths from the sensible singularity of object to the symbolic realm. And the rule governing this embodiment process here is not a rule of probability or categorization but a "pure contingency." Likewise, the meaning of Cha's language as white/blank space also "[g]rows, without accumulation. Augments, without increase. Abundance, Plentitude, Without gain" (*Dictée* 157).

In the chapter "Terpisichore," Cha further demonstrates how her poetic subject redeems herself through the ritual of ablution and emerges as a new poetic self "without designated time, even before its own realization of the act, no premonition not preparation" (156). By submitting herself "to the timelessness created in her body," she continuously redeems herself as a pure "effect induced in her, [to be] fulfilled in the losing of herself" (150). Thus another important factor to promote her newly synthesized ego is the bodily senses. Like her female character with low intelligence who keeps touching her hands, lips, and bare breasts and thereby challenges her present self in the "Thalia" chapter, the corporeal senses here serve to bridge their present selves and non-

temporal units and consequently reformate their previous memories and selfhoods in the realm of language. This strongly mirrors the image of Hong's naked primal women in *Translating Mo'um* who also speak and read through their bodies. In this regard, their illegible words, such as the mad woman's "moan[ing] inutterable language" (*Dictée* 143), as Minh-Ha says, can be understood as the numberless threads unraveled from their bodies that constantly repeat the process of "reveal[ing]/ re-veil[ing] the hues of many other whites" ("White" 38).

At this point, however, it is worth questioning whether Cha has entirely forgotten and left behind political issues such as history, race, and gender in favor of creating a "becoming" or "in-between" subject in *Dictée*. Simply put, my answer is "no." Cha may agree with Hong's point that "there is [nevertheless] always subject—and beyond that, the specter of the author's visage—and that specter is never, no matter how vigorous the erasure, raceless." Hong's poetic language has never been free from issues such as harsh living conditions and the identities of many exiles and immigrant people in America. By making its own rupture and creating "its own line of flight," Hong's experimental language, rather, attempts to re-approach pragmatic and urgent issues such as prejudice and discrimination regarding one's gender, race, and ethnicity. Likewise, Cha's process of removing oneself from memories subjectively, through innovative techniques and imageries, does not mean that the past has entirely ceased to have pragmatic effects and consequences. Like the fundamental aim of Deleuze's "a critical image of thought," Cha's stylistic experiments still weigh more on how her language as a pure image can bring about new relationships between the world and words, thereby reestablish one's identity in the dominant social/cultural discourse.

This point becomes even clearer in "Elitere." The "ALLER/RETOUR" section begins with the image of an empty silent room covered with the veil of darkness after everyone has left. The shadow of the night had dyed the sky with lavender, light purple, and whiteness, and the silent murmur in the air prevents people from returning to the room. This utter silence seems to be connected to the speaker's oblivion of memory. However hard the speaker tries to trace a memory back, this utter silence causes her to cease what has already ceased, and to vanish the very fact that it has already vanished. After the memory has gone, the physical sound hidden beneath the murmurings makes the speaker speechless and senseless: "voce velata veiled voice under breath murmuration / render mute strike dumb voiceless tongueless" (127).

In the "ALLER" section, whiteness continues to suggest the erasure of chronological time. Here, however, the speaker encourages us to recolor the white/blank language with the meaning of the present moment and "resurrect it all over again" (129). This way, her language as a white space slowly undergoes a purification process and is reborn as a "germ . . . [or the] sprouting hair of a room" (130). This way, the speaker could restore the memories and implodes with signs differently from the simple replication of a fixed historical event. As Patti Duncan argues, Cha's white spaces are both "strategic silences as a means to resist the replication of hegemonic voices" and a literary device for a "retelling or revisioning of her own subject position, experiences, and memories within the U. S. culture" (qtd. in Mix 140). And, as Minh-Ha states, the process of leaving and returning, coming and going, is repeated "until no reality can be proven real and no dream is only a dream" ("White" 34). In a similar vein, Song compares the way contemporary Asian American writers reactivate traumatic historic

memories through language to Deleuze's "involution process" in which the old relationship between the world and the word is erased and regenerated (210). For instance, the Japanese American novelist Julia Otsuka, Song states, despite the "weights of the injunction to remember and bear witness" to traumatic historical events such as Japanese internment camps,[38] focuses more on short-term memories of the rhizome that always and requisitely "includes forgetting as a process" (216).

> This is, as the introduction explained, a rhizomatic movement that does not so much replicate the logic of trees as offer different ways of relating to the particular historical event of the internment (210).

In the chapter "Terpischore," too, there appears a female figure who undergoes a radical transformation process: she experiences her body dissolving into white mist that blurs the border of land and sky and then vanishes into the earth (158–59). Cha, however, describes the moment of her vanishing as "Imminent crossing, face to face, [like the] moon before the sun pronounces" (157). This moment of encounter between the moon and a sun that is about "[t]o pronounce without prescrib[ing] nothing" —or the moment when the speaker's new consciousness is about to emerge from underneath—is analogous to the moment when Braidotti's notion of "collective subjectivity" is created. The "collective subjectivity" refers to the embodied state of fusion between the subject and object in which one's self is totally broken from the past. By the "past," Braidotti means:

> [A] sedimentation of habits, the institutionalized accumulation of experience whose authority is sealed by memory and the identity it engenders. Becoming

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[38] This means the internment of Japanese Americans in the United States. During WWII, it is known that more than 110,000 Japanese Americans who lived on the pacific coast are forced to relocate to government camps (*Wikipedia*).

> imperceptible plunges us into the impossible, the unheard-of: an affirmative present. This is what Deleuze calls "an event"— or the eruption of the actualization of a sustainable future. (*Transposition* 260)

In this self-annihilating moment, we further witness that Cha's new "identity of a duration . . . [that] stays [with] all chronology lost, indecipherable" finally but not lastly emerges (*Dictée* 161).

Another recurring image in this chapter is the subject's body that repeatedly dissolves and is reconstituted for inhabitation by a new spirit. For instance, the main female character continually entreats God to impart new meanings to her pure voice at the cost of her body and sight. The second half of *Dictée* mainly deals with the rare sense of communion between inside and out, human and God, and the living and the dead, as in a séance. Joo and Lux also argues that Cha's inclusion of actual catechism at the beginning "can be read as the Pentecost, speaking in tongues inspired by God" which may further recall "a 'kut' (굿): a shamanist ritual" in Korea (6). The meaning of "dictée" is also intimately associated with this process of "inhabitation" implanted from the "outside" or "the other body, the larger body" (161). In *Dictée*, Cha actually uses many synonyms for "dictée" such as "diseuse" and "fortuneteller" and even borrows a shaman image from the Korean myth called "Baridaegi" (Princess Bari) to emphasize how her "identity of a duration" is created through the act of traversing "inside" and "outside" (161). "Baridaegi" is the story of the first *mudang* (무당, a Korean word for "shaman") in Korea, who is also apotheosized as a goddess of the underworld in Korean shamanism. In one of many versions of Barideagi, Bari's parents abandon her because she is born a girl. But an old couple saves her and raises her as their daughter. Later, when she overhears

that her real father is gravely ill and that only magical mineral water can save him, she sets out to find the life-giving water. She roams the underworld, marries the King of Hades, and gives him three sons to save her father's life.

Like Bari's traversal of the worlds of living and dead, Cha's concept of "dictée" or "diseuse" also refers to one who "allows others [to come]. In place of her" (3) and further makes herself "caught in their threading, anonymously in their thick motion in the weight of their utterance" (4), like the mimicking sounds of "Bared noise, groan, bits torn from words" (3). These mimicking gestures much resemble Hong's Korean American speakers' repeating the unfamiliar sounds of the immigrant tongue such as "[a]lveolar tt, sibilant ss, and glottal hh" or "Labial bs and palatal ts," devoid of any semantic values (*Translating* 13). But, as Mix notes, the way these "outside" words are translated or implanted into the host's body does not occur in the same way to conform to past memories or to accept their everlasting influence on the subject. Like a Mobius strip that twists back onto itself, it is used in a way to proliferate its pure "differences" or "contingency" and further create its own hybrid meanings inside (Mix 143).

This process by which Cha's writing/reading subject reconfigures itself as the anonymous other through self-annihilation closely resembles Deleuze's "becoming subject" or Rosi Bridotti's subject of "sustainability" or "endurance." Similar to Cha's shaman-like speaker in *Dictée*, Deleuze's "becoming" subject also participates in experiencing and interpreting those anonymous and chaotic sensory data coming from the "outside" realm. But this new subject is born only under the precondition that it undergo the "larval state" of a "multiplicity of perceptions and contemplations not yet organized into a self" (Colebrook 74). For the reason, Deleuze not only separates this "larval

subject" from the Cartesian *cogito*, a substantial and conscious subject, but also assigns it the attributes of "extreme movement" (*DR* 156). This is because the larval subject emerges only from "loss, disappearance and disruption of the self" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 252). This moment when Deleuze's self fully dissolves into the imperceptible and "enfleshed entities" (Braidotti "The Ethics" 153) in many ways overlaps with Cha's "moment" when her female figure surrenders to the dissolution of her ego in "Terpischore." When the fusion between the self and her habitats is replaced by the "multiple interconnections that empower not the self, but the collective; not identity but affirmative subjectivity" (Braidotti "The Ethics" 155), Cha's poetic subject is finally able to transform into a state of "radical immanence." Braidotti further acknowledges that "the paradoxical price to pay for this [process] is the death of Ego" (155).

But this process of dissolution or becoming-imperceptible is inevitably followed by its "fabulative function" which is to invent or reinstitute the identity of minor people "within the regime of sings" (Bogue 74). For the similar reason, Braidotti maintains that the strength of Deleuzian "becoming subject" lies in its "pragmatic and labile engagement with the present in order to collectively construct [social] conditions" and subjectivities of hope (*Nomadic Theory* 290). This political agency of Deleuze's "becoming" subject—that constructs alternative models of subjectivities—thus can be applied to Cha's 'inter-subjective' self in *Dictée*.

So far, we have discussed how Cha's white space and language as a pure image allow her poetic subjects to submerge into the affective flow, erase their former identities, and reconstruct themselves as "becoming" beings. Now, I will further discuss whether

this new writing subject has any political impact or influence. Many contemporary poetry critics have limited the ethical value of Cha's formal experimentation to that of questioning the ideological or reductive process of signification in filmic apparatus and other artistic medium. Sue J. Kim, for example, charges that Cha so overemphasized formal interventions or narrative experiments—like blank or white spaces or flickering incomplete letters without any specific referents—that she left little room for political issues such as what should be represented in works of art. Kim says this is even more problematic considering that one of the social responsibilities of filmmakers is to concern themselves with the historical contexts or social referents represented in their work.

But, as discussed earlier, Cha's language as a palimpsest does more than just awaken readers from their passive positions or dull desires to remain in their falsified illusion of reality. It allows them to have an affective experience, eliminating the distinction between themselves and the text, from which the new provisional subjectivity emerges. It is thus incorrect to devalue Cha's "in-between" subject as apolitical or impractical. In a similar vein, Mix thinks highly of Cha's language as a political tool, arguing that it saves lives by making in-between subjects' nationalities and ethnicities visible and more liveable in any circumstances. To support her argument, she cites the following passage from Cha's *Dictée:*

> She says to herself if she were able to write she could continue to live. Says to herself if she would write without ceasing. To herself if by writing she could abolish real time. She would live. If she could display it before her and become its voyeur. (141)

This suggests that Cha's language is an alternative political space where the in-between subject like Cha can breathe and feel comfortable, even if only temporarily (Mix 144). Mix also notes that this space has the dual functions of "offering the comfort place [for the hybrid subject] to rest if only temporarily and unsettl[ing] the potentially stultifying power of a comfort zone" (144). Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming subject" also has this political duality or complexity, which turns us into the subject of "becoming imperceptible" and simultaneously gives the subject momentary visibility. Ironic as it might sound, through this complex process of both "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization," it provides us with at least a starting place for our journey to the unknown. Therefore, it would be hasty to conclude that Cha's "becoming" subjectivity and innovative techniques give way to the entire abandonment of one's coherent voice or that they secure no sovereignty or rights for the becoming subject. Moreover, we have witnessed that this temporary yet alternative political space, or the subjective position in the process of "becoming" emerges whenever one uses language as a "minor literature" (Colebrook 118). In the first half of this chapter, we analyzed the way in which Hong uses native Korean words in her English verses like Deleuze's concept of "minor literature." Deleuze argues that, ironically, one of the major features of "minor literature" is its being political and collective. Bogue also highlighted that a "minor language" plays an important role as "a kind of fabulation," whose major function is to invent a people, especially the minor people and consequently help invent the voices of those who are "seized in a becoming-revolutionary" (74).

In a similar vein, Spahr argues that abandoning the speaking voice's sovereignty "makes little sense in the light of works like Cha's *Dictée* which make attempts to

encourage the cross-cultural communication without drowning out the culturally specific voices that demand sovereignty and separatism as forms of survival" (*Everybody's* 148). She adds that this combination of universal and particular subject is created only when the text takes account of the diverse and particular connections between the readers and the text or the speaker and readers. Yu also emphasizes that the boundary between the personal and the historical/political realm is ambiguous in *Dictée*, since the "personal and historical relationships [in the book] become . . . the linguistic ones [, and] persons become understood as positions within language" (106). According to Yu, Cha rather gives her writing an active and real agency to locate the new sense of "home" and subject "I" so as to leave the paralysis or stasis of historical memories and finally abstract personal and historical relationships within the language (107). In other words, rather than distancing herself from gestures of historical/national identification and ownership, Cha actively incorporates the ideas of nationality, history, and identity, all central preoccupations in Asian American literature in the 70s and 80s, into her innovative linguistic experimentation (Yu 115–6). We cannot therefore devalue Cha's stylistic innovations or her writing subject as apolitical. Although new meanings that emerged from Cha's white space might appear to be personal and not shared or attributed to any kind of communal behaviors with others, it may still provide political meanings to the culturally and ethnically hybridized subjects. The power of "becoming" means the power to create a new identity without dependence on prior social/cultural contexts. In this regards, Cha's pure language and white imagery can be said to help these in-between subjects express themselves as recognizable and visible human beings without belonging to any culturally homogeneous categories. In this way, Cha questions whether it is

possible for us to fit perfectly any of these ideological names and thereby clearly articulate ourselves within the dominant signifying system; also what is the true meaning of history in an era in which historical memories are daily dislocated and shift from their original cultural contexts.

Like the Desert in *Dance Dance Revolution*, we live in a world in which different cultures, histories, and languages daily intermix and flow over their boundaries into each other. We therefore often experience that our national/cultural identities are influenced by other cultural norms and factors, dislocated and recollected to form different cultural compositions. In that sense, Hong and Cha's poetic languages—which have been much exposed to this trans-cultural and national atmosphere—can thus deliver us an important message of what it means to live in this fast-changing multicultural and multilingual society as an "in-between" subject. For this, I have so far demonstrated why Hong and Cha reach for an escape from social and political realities and how they could manage an in-between flight and the emergence of a new subjectivity via a Deleuzian moment of deterritorialization and reterritorialization between different territories and cultures. We have also discussed that language has a power when it becomes "minoritized" in different cultural contexts. To testify to this, I have demonstrated how Hong's unique ways of using the Korean language and cultures and Cha's innovative techniques and languages have transformative power to construct their poetic subjects differently from their conventional national/historical identities. Especially, we have looked at how their affect-driven languages create a cognitive rupture between their past and present selves and re-inscribes complex personal/individual relationships inside (Lowe, qtd. in Yu 117). For instance, we saw that Hong and Cha's female characters repeatedly submerge themselves

in the depth of a timeless zone, continue their horizontal journeys, and transform memories to another by using their "ghostword, phantomnation" (*Dictée* 140). This way they could further produce a signifying process in which names signify differently from the generalized meanings in the heterosexual or patriarchal discourse, rejecting the conventionally recognized differences among different gendered, racial, and cultural groups and their conventional power relations. Hong and Cha's affect-driven languages, that is to say, generate confusion in the pre-established gendered and racial codes and open up a new representational system that empowers oppressed or marginalized groups of people. For this reason, this chapter is closely related with the overall theme of my dissertation, which is to connect different voices of feminist avant-garde poets in the twentieth century in America and testify that their creative works, which often enact transgression in their languages, have strong feminist implications.

Chapter V. Conclusion: The Female Exiles in Language

In chapter 4, I explored how Hong and Cha's Asian American female subjects successfully escape their conventional cultural and national subjectivities and manage to use their deterriorialized language as an effective political tool to create culturally more diverse and "in-between" identities and thereby "necessitate that [these] women be in the conversation" in the dominant social and cultural realm (Weheliye 39). For those women of color who have suffered from double marginalization and for exiles—from their mother land "where she has been injured as woman" and the dominant American culture where "she remains the perennial 'alien'" because of race—Minh-Ha thus offers a solution, which is to "be a crossroads," a passage, and thereby continue their horizontal journey "in constant metamorphosis" (*elsewhere* 55). As Don Mee Choi's states, Asian American female is not a fixed or manageable ethnic term but should be seen more as a new conceptual potential or possibility that instigate new lines of flight at any time the women want and that facilitates them reconstructing themselves as new identities of "becoming." To this end, they should first be given a new representational potential through which they can actively break away from existing social hierarchies among different genders and ethnicities.

But it is not only women wanderers who have lost their cultural origins and adopted foreign cultures like Hong and Cha's female characters: all female speaking subjects living according to a homogeneous gender category are ipso facto exiles from the language they use. Our history has long been a "His" story, in which female subjects have been "written over, written out, edited, selected, controlled, censored, cut up, packaged" (Ives 36). Female subjects such as H. D. and Gertrude Stein, however, turned

their backs on the Father's language and refused to live within a homogenized and naturalized category of gender and sexuality. They were all female exilées in Cha's term, uprooted and estranged from the commonsensical meanings of heterosexual language. And all such exiles have long "remain[ed] representatively singular . . . despite the very visible power of generalization implied in the capitals M and W" (Minh-Ha, *elsewhere* 33). Kristeva indeed argues that our contemporary era is "one of exiles," and in this era we women inevitably remain "a stranger to one's own country, language, sex and identity" (qtd. in Minh-Ha, *elsewhere* 31). Especially, the American feminist language-oriented poets in the twentieth century, in a similar vein, attempted a poetic movement that was "transcultural, class- and gender-specific" in order to escape from language's totalistic power (33).

In this regard, the avant-garde poets I have analyzed in this dissertation, H. D., Stein, Hong, and Cha, can be also called female exiles or precarious female wanderers whose beings were estranged by the generalized meanings of the dominant language system and its totalistic power, but also promiscuously attempted to cross the borders between different gender and cultural territories that the hegemonic language system designated. As Minh-Ha says, in order to escape from the grip of the totalistic power of heterosexual language or the homogeneous effects of the mother tongue, their grammars and vocabularies held their linguistic ground tightly—however fragile and insecure they may be—shifted their semantic ground, and made them thrive and "bloom widely," all differently (*elsewhere* 36).

Using the same hegemonic language always leads us to the same process in which we have to experience and respond to the same types of oppression/hatred and thereby

repeat the same stories over and over again, although the original intention of using the language was to subvert its hegemonic order. But H. D., Stein, Hong, and Cha invent new narrative techniques and vocabularies—especially the vocabularies of "difference"— to stop relapsing into the same cycle and start recognizing the new "difference" among the borders of different gendered, racial, and cultural groups, by imposing more personal, emotional, and affective memories in the same language.

Of course, the definition of "difference" in my dissertation covered a wide theoretical spectrum from Irigaray's "sexual difference," Cixous' "another bisexuality," and Butler's "historical differences and contextual specificities" that challenge the conventional meaning of language and the material conditions of our lives to Deleuze and Guattari's purer sense of "difference" freed from binary opposition in the conventional representational system. In chapter 2, for instance, by drawing upon the concepts of Irigaray's "sexual differences," or "different mode of the syntactic," I argued that H. D.'s hieroglyphic language breaks through the male logic of symmetry and envisions a new female subjectivity as multiplicity and fluidity. As seen in the 'amoeba-like' twin sisters Hermione/Fane, H. D's female characters were often fused with other beings and transformed into the 'crossroads' where all paths meet. In chapter 3, by highlighting the close interrelationship between Butler's concepts of "performativity" and Stein's literary aesthetic on language and reality, I demonstrated that, contrary to the functions of "illocutionary" or ideological language, Stein's poetic language continually re-signifies speech in all different contexts and challenges the idea of objective and natural female subjectivity. In chapter 4, I applied Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of "minor literature" and "becoming subject" to the languages of the contemporary Asian American poets

Hong and Cha, who emphasize the notions of cultural hybridity, inauthenticity, and in-betweeness. I further argued that their innovative sign systems and rhetorical techniques undermine and destabilize the pure sense of cultural/national supremacy as well as its ideological subjects and further provide some political ground to these culturally and ethnically hybridized subjects.

Although these twentieth century feminist avant-garde poets' definitions of what feminine writings and subjectivities should be vary, my comparative readings of these poets demonstrated that it is necessary to reconsider and reformulate the female subject beyond the constraints of the heterosexual and hegemonic paradigms, through the generation of new language of "difference." All these women poets doubted the natural sense of the language that we use in our daily lives and explored how the dominant language has been used as an authoritative tool to oppress social minorities and others. As a solution, they inserted into their languages more personal, microscopic and trans-cultural/national experiences of "difference." Instead of approaching the issues of gender and race as matters of power relationship by using the same hegemonic language, these poets opted to use the language of "difference" and refused to reproduce the same desires that hold us in thrall to patriarchy.

For these reasons, Minh-Ha's question in *elsewhere, within here* had a strong resonance for me. In the book, she asks where, if not in their mother tongues and cultures, can these female avant-garde poets find their true notions of "home" and "identity"? And she answers that the true "home" for these women wanderers—exiles who turned their back on the refuges of their Father's languages, cultures, and family—"is to be found, not in houses, but in [their] writing itself" (34).

> Writers who, in writing, open to research the space of language rather than reduce language to a mere instrument in the service of reason or feelings are bound like the migrant to wander from country to country. They are said to be always lost to themselves, to belong to the foreign, and to be deprived of a true abode since, by their own passionate engagement with the tools that define their activities, they disturb the classical economy of language and representation, and can never be content with any stability of presence. Nothing remains unmoved; everything safe and sound is bound to sink somewhere in the process. (34)

Like turtles who always carry their homes on their backs (34), wherever they go, these female poets' notions of true "homes" and "identity" can be found in their new vocabularies, styles, and representational apparatuses through which they constantly dislocate and rewrite the nature of their bodies and their identities differently from the fixed notions of gender, race, and nationality, from ground level up. Mix also pointedly notes that to the postmodern writers and readers, the approach of "home" should be derived from the celebration of "the absence of home as liberatory as it frees the subject from limiting conformity to monolithic or original identity" and allows for more heterogeneous and hybrid creation of identity (145). Especially, to those who have been sexually and racially marginalized and remained representatively "singular" in dominant linguistic realm, inventing a new language, and thereby possessing a linguistic agency to speak, resist, and transform, is essential. To the female exiles who never cease their horizontal journey, the new language is a survival kit. This is because, borrowing Mix's words, it "offers the hybrid subject comfort, a place to rest if only temporarily, and unsettles the potentially stultifying power of a comfort zone" (144). As Cha says, these

female poets could “continue to live . . . by writing, she could abolish real time. She would live.”

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