國立台灣大學外國語文學系

博士論文

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

National Taiwan University

PhD. Dissertation

現代詩中的食物詩學：史蒂文斯、威廉斯、李立揚

Food Poetics in Modern Poetry: Stevens, Williams, and Lee

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中華民國一百零三年十一月

November 2014

Food Poetics in Modern Poetry: Stevens, Williams, and Lee

A PhD. Dissertation

presented to

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

National Taiwan University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Alvin Dahn

November 2014

國立臺灣大學博士學位論文
口試委員會審定書

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本論文係陳建龍君（D99122003）在國立臺灣大學外國語文學系完成之博士學位論文，於民國 103 年 11 月 21 日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明

口試委員：

（指導教授）

Chien-chi Lin

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Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife Debbie and my daughter Stella, who have been offering me indispensable comfort and company. Without their support, I could not have finished this Ph.D. dissertation of mine. My special thanks go to Professor Lloyd Haft, who graces the completion of this dissertation with close reading and numerous conducive suggestions; I own a debt of gratitude to him for rendering my dissertation presentable and for his constant presence and assistance in difficult times of my life. I would also like to thank all my professors at my Defense: Professor Chien-Chi Liu (劉建基老師), Tsu-Chung Su (蘇子中老師), Hsiu-Chih Tsai (蔡秀枝老師), and Chi-She Li (李紀舍老師). Most of all, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Hsien-Hao Liao (廖咸浩老師), who first acquainted me with Deleuze and inspired me otherwise afterwards. He makes my academic pursuits possible.

中文摘要

本論文旨在對現代詩提出一個以食物作為詮釋焦點的理論系統，其中又特別以三位詩人的作品作為研究的重點對象：華勒斯・史蒂文斯（Wallace Stevens）、威廉・卡洛斯・威廉斯（William Carlos Williams）、李立揚（Li-Young Lee）。論文中所運用以詮釋詩歌的理論系統，發展衍生自德勒茲（Gilles Deleuze）的概念，將食物視為詩文的構成元素，而由食物中詮釋出現代詩中表達的現代人類經驗。透過上述在詩文詮釋中理論實踐，本論文以建立一個嶄新的食物詩學作為研究目標。

論文正文共分六部分，除引介與文獻回顧之外，共計五章。文獻回顧又分為食物與詩學兩部分，因以食物詩學之建立為旨，故食物之文化研究與相關論述、詩學之古典傳統與歷代沿革，二者皆不可或缺。論文的第一章與第二章，是研究的理論主體，前者主張轉移人本精神作為認識物體的一切觀點，改以物體對人的影響出發；後者開始建立詮釋系統，說明如何以德勒茲的觀點，了解食物作為有施為能力的影響源，也影響著對詩的詮釋。第三章、第四章，以及第五章則是分別將此系統運用於三位詩人的作品之中，呈現詮釋各類詩歌的過程與成果。依據詩作中的食物寫作，分為三類：食物意象繁多且關聯隱晦（以史蒂文斯為代表）、食物意象鮮少但一致連貫（以威廉斯為代表）、食物意象多有族裔意涵或節慶典故（以李立揚為代表）。

期盼此研究所發展的詮釋系統，在創立食物詩學、提供抽象晦澀的現代詩些許詮釋之餘，能裨益吾人更進一步了解食物與人類二者關係的不同面向，認識食物對人的主動影響與人在物體世界中的被動角色。使詩歌的詮釋、哲學的思考、認識世界的嶄新向度，三者融合而相互豐富。

關鍵詞：食物詩學、飲食論述、強度（intensity）、英美現代詩

English Abstract

This dissertation aims to provide a theoretical reading of food in modern poetry, particularly in poetic works by Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Li-Young Lee. The distancing-channeling theory applied to the reading of poetry is based mostly on Gilles Deleuze's concept of intensity and is employed specifically to realize how food objects as poetic devices interpret human experience in modern poetry. Through the aforementioned theory and its application, this dissertation seeks to establish a food poetics.

This dissertation is composed of six major sections, with each section forming a chapter, expect for the first section of Review of Key Literatures, which consists of two subsections. The first section begins with the Introduction which leads to the two-part Review of Key Literatures: Food and Poetics. The emphasis of the literature reviews and their length reflects the challenges and complications of founding a new poetics. The first two chapters: "Chapter One: The Given Food against the Constituted Subject" and "Chapter Two: Distancing and Channeling" are the theoretical backbone of this research. While the former asserts an object-oriented critical point of view instead of an anthropocentric one, the latter establishes a system of poetic reading from this point of view supported by this dissertation and the Deleuzean thoughts that influences it. Chapter Three, Four, and Five are the demonstration of how the system of poetic reading facilitates interpretation of disparate and surreal food objects in poetry (with a focus on Stevens), scarce but succinct food objects in poetry (with a focus on Williams), and ethic or exotic food object in poetry (with a focus on Lee).

The interpretive system of this research should, as its set purpose, facilitate the understanding of the relations between food and human beings in a world where objects are more powerful than their human recipients.

Keyword: food poetics, food discourse, intensity, modern poetry

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Introduction

Food is surely one of the most basic human needs, while poetry just as surely is one of the highest forms of human art. The basic or "low" need and the "high" art, converging on humanity, together help communicate diverse aspects of cultural and aesthetic experiences.

The theoretical elucidation of this synergistic convergence in aesthetic coordinates is best referred to as *food poetics*. In understanding food as an aspect of humanity, one gains an organic and comprehensive gist of human culture. In pinpointing food as a poetic symbol, one recruits secular needs into the reshaping of aesthetics.

In full conviction of the multiplex nature of humanity and the possibilities of reshaping poetics, an effort will here be made to establish a new poetics that facilitates interpretations of culture and poetry via close examination of the basics of human life, i.e., by accentuating the significance of the materiality of humanity. This dissertation, an account of this effort as focused in a concrete academic context, aims at the establishment and substantiation of food poetics.

The purpose of food poetics is to devise an innovative system of poetic interpretation with a particular interest in materiality in poems, especially that of food objects. The word "innovative" here refers to a non-anthropocentric system that recognizes the limitations of human consciousness and the influence of seemingly inanimate objects. Innovative in its methodology, food poetics is a system dealing with food agency instead of human subjectivity. Within this interpretive system, the food object is deemed the center of the poetic space, while human contact with the food object is understood as an affective encounter between the food, which functions as an agent of affect, and the person who serves as a human recipient of affect.

In this perspective, food poetics draws heavily on Deleuze, whose corresponding

object-oriented perspective emphasizes material agency and considers the perceived world as a product of materialized consciousness. In his *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Deleuze advocates materiality-centered theories through his bold recapitulation of David Hume. In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze proves applicable his analytic approach through his categorization of four signs which explains how objects work their affect and register human emotions. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze completes his design of the three syntheses of time which help to explain not only the spatial but also the temporal relationships between objects and humans as established by the aforementioned four signs. All these Deleuzean thoughts, in various degrees, together constitute an object-oriented philosophy from which food poetics originates.

Deleuze as a Materialist

The philosophical system of Deleuze is both complicated in depth and encyclopedic in range, and it comes as a corollary that a multitude of interpretations are available for us to either explain his thoughts or further complicate them in all conceivable directions – and, more often than not, in opposite directions. This explains why some argue against the common belief that Deleuze is a Materialist philosopher:

> [P]hilosophy need to be liberated from the systems or those moments that restrain it: the one, the truth, the good, the object, the subject, God, or man. Deleuze's philosophy is always situated in the sphere of free and unbound thinking that is released from the burden of representation…(Leen De Bolle 7)

This opinion of De Bolle, among others, stands opposed to materialist interpretations or applications. Scholars of this stripe form the opposition party when the association between Deleuzean thoughts and material study appears in various discourses. Words like "materialist" and "representation" seem taboo to them wherever Deleuze is

mentioned.

Many other scholars, unlike De Bolle and the like, consider or even take it for granted that Deleuze stands as a genuine materialist philosopher. "Following Bergson's materialist ontology," says John Marks in the passage devoted to Deleuze and representation in Adrian Parr's *The Deleuze Dictionary*, "according to which our body is merely an image among images, Deleuze opens the self to the outside" (229). In this view, materialism (as ideas and thoughts dealing with "body," "images," and the physicality of "the outside" in various forms) lays the foundation for Deleuzean philosophy in that Deleuze applies himself diligently to interpretations and further developments of Bergson's materialist system.

Rather than tracing Deleuzean ideas back to origins and influences from Bergson, some critics perceive his major source as Spinoza:

> Deleuze is generally regarded as a materialist, but what type of materialism does his thought express? Many believe that its definitive philosophical position stems from his work on Spinoza…In fact, this image of Deleuze has in part motivated the application of his ideas in terms of…materialisms of cybernetics, artificial intelligence, and body-centered sociology, among others. (Mullarkey 59)

Whether the true lineage is from Bergson or Spinoza, contemporary studies allying Deleuzean thought to material studies are ubiquitous in many fields even extending to the recent cybernetics.

Aside from supposed origins or formatting influences from previous philosophers, the belief or the inclination of a materialist can also be found in Deleuze himself. When "Deleuze refers to nomad science" for his approach, he acquires "an approach that is empiricist…materialist" (Lenco 3).

In speaking of Deleuze's materialist approach, critics may seek reasons for his disbelief in human will, as explained in *Deleuze and World Politics*: "Because

Deleuze is a materialist, he must downplay autonomous human will almost to irrelevance. Indeed, it would be impossible to be a materialist and believe in such human volition" (Lenco 144). This break from the human will and human mind is well known as his break from psychoanalysis, yet it is noticeable that this very same break leads on to his sophisticated attention to materialist thinking itself. As Pierre Macherey puts it in *In a Materialist Way*, Deleuze "practises philosophy in a materialist way" (14).

There are also scholars who, from their research of Deleuze's idea of immanence, argue that Deleuze contributes to contemporary materialism. According to Patrice Hayne, "the idea of immanent transcendence enables Deleuze…to articulate a non-reductive materialism whereby matter is always more than just matter" (*Immanent Transcendence* 151), and hence matter deserves its own discourse, its own academic claim, and a philosophical scope where matter is taken as it is and as the point of departure for critical thinking. John Marks, on the other hand, looks into Deleuze's research interest, i.e., the philosophy of cinema, and argues that "the idea that cinema can come into contact with thought itself is extremely important" because it is a proof "telling us much about Deleuze's materialist approach" (*Gilles Deleuze: Vitalism and Multiplicity* 144).

While most critics focus on Deleuze alone to gain a materialist insight, some claim that even during his collaboration with Guattari, there were traces worth attention. While dealing with the issue of socio-political desire, Deleuze and Guattari placed such desire in a materialist context, because their "conception of desire which produces social relations can only be understood in materialist terms" (John K. Noyes 45). Further emphasizing Deleuze's materialist influence on contemporary thought, Noyes refers to Simone Bignall: "As Simone Bignall has pointed out, this materialist conception of desire has important consequences for a strategic political philosophy in

the context of postcolonialism" (ibid). What is demonstrated here is, aside from proofs or assertions that Deleuze is himself a materialist, how Deleuze, on the premise that he is undoubtedly recognized as a materialist philosopher, contributes to and communicates with the world of philosophy.

One thing to be reiterated is that, among critics who see Deleuze as a materialist philosopher, Spinoza seems to be the center of discussion. Accordingly, the triangular or trilateral relation of Spinoza, materialism, and Deleuze is widely prevalent. In one of the preceding paragraphs, we have already discussed this relation, but Spinoza is once again mentioned here as a necessity to Deleuze's philosophy rather than as a source. "Deleuze finds it necessary," Michael Hardt points out, "to combat an idealist account of being…in order to valorize the material world…to preserve the coherence of the ontological perspective" (74). It is in this regard that Deleuze needs to "maintain a strictly materialist interpretation of Spinoza's ontology" (ibid). Even in the field of anthropology, similar conclusions are often drawn: "He [Deleuze] thus embraced a form of materialist philosophy" (Brian Morris 709). Materialism as the core of Deleuzean philosophy anchors its position in contemporary philosophy and critical attention in an age when physicality and materiality no longer easily give way to the abstract and the spiritual.

Still other critics claim Deleuze is a materialist thinker because he is "both a materialist and a Marxist" (Simon Choat 153). Their reasoning is that where contemporary philosophy is concerned, "Marx points to the way to a genuinely materialist position, where philosophy is about practical intervention rather than theoretical application," and Deleuze seems to these critics a philosopher who intends "practical intervention" in the world. This materialist position "does not offer a list of principles or criteria by which to measure and judge the present state of things, but actively engages with and emerges out of existing struggles" (Simon Choat 174).

From its sources, its traces, its approaches, and its foundations, we see that Deleuze's philosophy can legitimately claim its place in materialist philosophy whose contemporary schools already depend heavily on Deleuzean ideas. Objects, as part of materialist concerns in contemporary philosophy as well as contemporary critical studies, are accordingly taken into Deleuzean account by the critical minds of our times: James Williams (*Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*, esp. 111), Sara Guyer ("Buccality," esp. 87), Eugene B. Young (*The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary*, esp. 230), to name only a few.

It is for this reason and on this premise that food poetics as well as other discourses concerning other objects can legitimately be carried out in a Deleuzean context.

Three Challenging Poets, Three Different Approaches

To prove the applicability of my food poetics to poetic interpretation, I apply this new poetics to the reading of three particular poets: Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Li-Young Lee, whom I sometimes respectively refer to as the esoteric poet, the sporadic poet, and the diasporic poet. For the practical purpose of testing the system, these three poets have been chosen as especially challenging to interpret.

Each presenting a different type of interpretative challenge, the three poets necessitate three different approaches which, however, are all derived from the same object-oriented precept. The three approaches are: (1) the distancing-channeling approach, (2) the four-sign approach, and (3) the three-time approach. The distancing-channeling approach deals with food as a thing of agency. The four-sign approach deals with food as a sign. The three-time approach deals with food as a time, or, to be precise, as a time-dependent object which belongs in a particular synthesis of time. Food is therefore regarded as (1) a source and conveyer of affect (in the

distancing-channeling approach), as (2) one of the four signs (worldly sign, sign of love, sensuous sign, and sign of art in the four-sign approach) – these assume diverse meanings and significances reflecting their sign types – or as (3) one of the three syntheses of time (the living present, the pure past, and the New in the three-time approach).

The three approaches have been substantiated through observations and researches widely conducted outside the current project, but in this dissertation, the intended presentation is the reading of each poet in one particular approach that best serves him. Thus Stevens is read in the distancing-channeling approach. Then Williams is read in the food-as-sign approach. Finally, Lee is read in the food-as-time approach. Note that these approaches are based on the same Hume-Deleuzean precept and may be overlapping or interchangeable under certain circumstances, but the degrees of their applicability to each poet's works surely differ.

As the title of this dissertation suggests, the three poets are chosen and referred to as modern poets. It is contingent but partly correct to address all three as modern. When "modern" is to define an era, only two out of the three—Stevens and Williams—are widely reckoned exemplars of modern poets, while Lee is technically a contemporary poet. However, if "modern" is not to define an ear but to define an attitude, the title of the modern poet may suit Lee pertinently well. When "modern" defines such belief that there is a meaning behind the miserable human condition and poetic gaudiness can somehow ease a world that is in tatters and in pain, all three may be entitled modern poets. Most importantly, all three are indispensable to food poetics for their significant interpretative challenges. This distinctive importance of their works, rather than their life and times, will be considered in detail.

While the three poets respectively pose difficulties of interpretation, each of them is conveniently associated with an adjective sobriquet for his attribute: the

esoteric, the sporadic, and the diasporic. Wallace Stevens is the esoteric poet among them. The difficulty of Stevens' poetry lies in his oftentimes innumerable objects in one single poem and all the possible relationships between and self-reflexive possibilities of the objects. Yet, while all the juxtaposed or intertwined objects seem corresponding to each other, they may sometimes appear unrelated and independently at work. The latter impression of objects in Stevens' works mostly comes from another difficulty in reading Stevens—his abrupt choice of objects. Examples like "The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream" ("The Emperor of Ice Cream") and "Life is a bitter aspic" ("*Esthetique du Mal*") reflect such abruptness in his poetic diction.

William Carlos Williams is the sporadic poet among the three. His sobriquet "sporadic" refers to the scarcity of referable objects for interpretation in his poems. The difficulty of an object-oriented reading of Williams' poetic works therefore lies in his sporadic objects, few even in a long poetic passage. In addition, there are times when he focuses on only one object and reduces anything else into obscure background. While Stevens provides the reader with too much distraction, Williams proffers too little information to refer to in hope of a better understanding of the featured object. His deployment of food objects is thus meager, sporadic, and often without suggested references in the context. Unlike most poets, Williams for some reason hardly mentions food objects in his poems. A concordance to his collected poems over 30 years' time shows no use of words like "beef" and "steak" although he did use words like "dinner" and "cheese" – each one time – in the same 30 years. This bears witness to his sporadic use of food objects in his poems. A sound system of food poetics should be able to deal with feasting and famine, abundance in food and absence in food. While Stevens is included for his poetic feasts of abundant food, Williams is indispensable for his verbal famine of food.

Li-Young Lee is the diasporic poet among the three. Lee is associated in this research with diaspora because of his ethnicity and his frequent identification with his Chinese culture. Diaspora here refers neither to the pain of exile nor to forlornness over the loss of homeland. According to John Peter, exile and diaspora are two distinct experiences: exile is solitary while diaspora is collective (20). Diaspora, as Lee demonstrates in his poems, refers to his choice of identity, his involvement in certain communities, and his affection for ethnic food. This research does not attempt a diasporic discourse on Lee apart from the intended track of food poetics, but Lee has almost always been discussed in a context of Asian-American diaspora and traumatic experience. In food poetics, Lee can be observed and understood otherwise.

Interpretation of Lee's poems is challenging in its own way. The interpretative challenge does not lie in too much distraction or too few references. In Lee's poems, food objects usually come with an evident reference or an embedded meaning, because most of the food objects in his works appear to be ethnic or festival foods. The ethnicity and festivity upon which a food object reflects readily offer a contextual denotation of the food, if not a symbolic connotation. In fact, the difficulty of interpreting food objects in Lee's poems lies in the mobility of his food objects. From place to place and from one time to another, food objects in Lee's poems travel as signs. Although denotations or connotations are available to the reader, meanings of the food objects vary along their journeys. His famous poem "Persimmons" is one of many examples. In this poem, the persimmon first appears as a subject in the classroom, an object with an entailed function therefore a worldly sign, before it travels outside the classroom. Outside the class, the persimmon becomes a metaphor of sex, hence a sensuous sign. Finally, the persimmon becomes a sign which travels through time and helps the poet visualize his late father. The persimmon in the end forms a transtemporal sign of love and achieves the status of art. To sum up, it is not

difficult to read Lee's food objects for meanings. It is difficult to trace the changes of meanings that go into making the significance of his food objects.

A Note to Key Literatures

Before further discussions are contributed to the details and elements of the three approaches, a note should be made to justify the discrepancy between key literatures in this research and key literatures in general. Up till the writing of this dissertation, the phrase "food poetics" still has not been adopted to designate any well-known field of study. As later pointed out in the Review of Key Literatures, this research, this dissertation, is an attempt at an adventurous task. That is to say, there are no works of research dedicated to food poetics. Key literatures in this research, as a result, come mostly from various sources related to food history, food culture, food philosophy etc., rather than from the previously established scholarship on which most other researches heavily rely. Daring as it may seem, this research nevertheless claims a rich review of key literatures due to the depths of related fields reach and the spectrum they cover.

Prior to this research, there had always been cultural studies and anthropological studies concerning food-related issues. There are fields like food cultures, food discourse, and a few publications on food philosophy.[1] These published works are mostly the results of studies derived from anthropology. Anthropology, in fact, is one of the first academic fields which try to realize the overwhelming and unwitting influences of objects over human beings. The concept of material agency and the development of object studies might not have been shaped and established as they are

[1] Four celebrated examples are *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (1999) by Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Food for Thought: Philosophy and Food* (2002) by Elizabeth Telfer, *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think, and Be Merry* (2007) edited by Fritz Allhoff and Dave Monroe, *The Philosophy of Food* (2012) edited by David Kaplan.

today but for anthropology and cultural studies. It is to these pioneering studies that this research owes homage.

Since the Review of Key Literatures is devoted to the aforementioned groundwork that supports this research, efforts have been made to ensure it is as exhaustive as possible. There are particularly two reasons that call for an exhaustive review of literatures: (1) food has yet received insufficient academic attention; and (2) food has always assumed multiple significances. First, in the field of object studies, food objects seem to be taken comparatively lightly, in comparison to objects of antiquity and the like. A comprehensive review, besides alerting attention, may be conducive to potential future projects. Secondly, food, starting out as a daily need, has since radiated into various fields of concepts and concerns: food as nourishment, food as festivity, food as identity, food justice, food politics, food and health…, to name only a few. All aspects of food and all fields with involvement of food may directly or indirectly help enhance our understanding of food in new perspectives and enrich our interpretation of food within a poetic work and without.

For these two reasons, the Review of Key Literatures is to be exhaustive and inclusive of the following studies: studies of the senses and related medical science, the sense of taste and Carolyn Korsmeyer's system, food philosophy and food anthropology in viewpoints of Immanuel Kant, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Mikhail Bakhtin, and foodways under discussions by Jacqueline Thursby and B. W. Higman. Key literatures related to Deleuzean thoughts which, far from merely paving the road for the research, substantially lay down the very foundation for the establishment of food poetics, will be seperately elaborated upon in commensurate length and detail in Chapter One and Chapter Two. Key texts by Deleuze that help establish food poetics include *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, *Difference and Repetition*, *Pure Immanence: Essay on A Life*, *Proust and Signs*, and

The Logic of Sense.

Under Studies of the Senses, two categories are subsumed: the sense of smell and the sense of taste. The Sense of Smell section introduces the concepts of odorphobia (fear of certain smells), toposmia (or, smellscape, i.e., topology of smell), *flaireur* (modeled on *flâneur*; the smelling subject), foodscape (the cultural landscape constructed by food), and scentuality (smell-based or smell-related sexaulity). The Sense of Taste section mainly introduces Korsmeyer's discourse of the hierarchy of the senses. (Other literatures in this field, not even remotely related to literary or anthropological studies, are all in all heavily based on medical science.). Korsmeyer's concept of the hierarchy of the senses aims to elucidate why the visual sense and the auditory sense, in most cultures, are almost always preferred, whereas the sense of smell is almost always deterred. In addition, Korsmeyer in her discourse also singles out a curious fact that the sense of smell has always been elusive and indescribable in human language and how thinkers' attitudes differ in response to this fact.

Philosophy of food traces back to *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* by Kant. Two major Kantian views in this work are: (1) the consumption of food serves a social purpose; (2) delicious dining is defined by delightful company. Anthropology of food leads us to Lévi-Strauss and focuses on his masterpieces: *The Origin of Table Manners* and *The Raw and the Cooked*, among other works. Based on his focus on the culinary mediation, Lévi-Strauss establishes a convoluted and comprehensive troika system of culinary evolution: roasting, boiling, and smoking. The rudimentary rationale is that the invention and employment of mediation is a reliable and significant indicator of watersheds in civilization. Roasting, a direct heating method, stands for the primitive stage of civilization, most akin to nature. Boiling, on the other hand, starting to show signs of indirect heating and vessel-manufacturing techniques, stands for an advanced stage of civilization, labeled

as culture. Smoking, resorting to the most challenging air mediation to communicate the heat, assimilates human language which likewise depends on air for communication. The thinker coming between Kant the philosopher and Lévi-Strauss the anthropologist is Mikhail Bakhtin, who emphasizes two characteristics of food: (1) food functions as power which equates all classes in a carnivalesque pleasure; (2) food functions as language which communicates images and behaviors. The fourth thinker with an opposite view to Bakhtin's is Ronald Barthes, who avers that food is power which shortens a distinction between two social classes.

In the field of foodways, Jacqueline Thursby embarks on a geographical tour to examine how food is valued in different countries. China values the balance between humans and nature, the consumer and the consumed. Greece focuses on human adaptation to the environment. Rome attempts to make the most of its environment for food production. B. W. Higman backtracks to the very beginning of human history, suggesting that the demand for food harvest and food distribution catalyzes the invention of language, the development of agrarian technology, and finally threats to ecology. Two other notions common in the field of foodways are "crop determinism" and "national identity." The former contends that a nation's decision on a specific crop for its staple food will determine this country's perspectives, concerns, interests, and almost everything else, while the latter contends that food choice can indicate, beyond personal preference, one's identity and sense of belonging. The last point of view is exactly what facilitates our reading of Li-Young Lee's poems.

Chapter One and Chapter Two purport to illustrate the establishment and workings of food poetics in several steps and aspects. The first section of Chapter One is to demonstrate how Hume-Deleuzean thoughts lay down the foundation of food poetics – namely, how food poetics takes its root in Hume's concepts, subversive to the belief in human subjectivity, and how it takes shape from Deleuze's augmentation

and arguments, based on Hume's concepts, that the human perception of this world is a constituted world of the human subject. The given, i.e., the external world perceived by the human subject, is not what the real world is but how human beings think it is. The human subject can never realize the world as it really is; hence any discourse starting out from conventional anthropocentric points of view can only lead to further mistaken observations.

The significance of such a subversive perspective is that it introduces an awareness to help avoid or correct anthropocentric chauvinism. It is essential to point out again that the emphasis here shall be placed upon the word "awareness," for it is impossible for us human beings to act or think completely otherwise than as human beings. Likewise, total detachment from human identity is beyond possibility and practicability in food poetics. In order to acquire an objective critiquing point of departure, food poetics follows the object-oriented perspective for interpretation of food objects. Note that objects are placed in focus and given their due, but the word "food" always entails human involvement. Without human involvement or feeding intention, objects remain objects instead of food. An overemphasized object-oriented view which aims to deny all human criteria may sabotage food poetics or any food discourse because food is, from the very beginning, judged and defined by human criteria. As a result, radical object-oriented theories which exhaustively exclude human perspectives cannot be applied to food poetics.

With the awareness that the external world is constituted by limited human consciousness, this research seeks to understand objects and the space claimed by objects through food agency instead of human subjectivity. Accordingly, ideas conventionally associated with food—that food is for human consumption or that food serves as a reminder of a certain memory—are to be re-examined and replaced. These human-centered ideas are mentioned under Food as Function, in order to offer a

recapitulation of conventional viewpoints of food prior to the introduction of food poetics.

In Chapter One, the introduction of food poetics begins with Food as a Thing. The overall object-oriented perspective of food develops into a tripartite system, which describes and prescribes three separate approaches for poetic interpretation. The tripartite system of food poetics consists in the following troika: food as a thing, food as a sign, and food as a certain point or period of time. In addition to the essential troika upon which food poetics is based, Chapter One also aims to offer explanations of and explorations into some of the key words concerning Food as a Thing: agency, affect, involuntary memory, intensity, and key concepts of reference values like new materialism and extended cognition.

The section Food as a Thing emphasizes the material agency of food objects. A food object of course possesses object agency as any other object does, but there are some special qualities available only to food, and these qualities equip food objects with even more powers and influences than other objects. Food interacts with the human body in its unique way: food objects become part of the human system and can affect people from within; food objects possess intake agency unavailable to other objects. Food objects are closely associated with involuntary memory because involuntary memory is commonly known to be triggered by food objects. In other words, food objects actively "trigger" memory instead of serving passively as peripheral to or as a reminder of certain memory. In the mechanism of involuntary memory, human beings are passive, as opposed to food.

The second issue tackled in the section Food as a Thing is affect. Affect is the very starting point of the distancing process as shown in fig. 1 in Chapter Two. Affect, in the context of food poetics, should be understood as a force, as the way it is understood in Deleuze's *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Affect is a force in that the

human being is the recipient of the force during an affective encounter between an object and a human. Food affect forms relations between objects and humans through a physical contact or a materialized medium.

In the following section on "involuntary memory," a second approach is introduced—Food as a Sign. Deleuze explains the mechanism of involuntary memory in the following order: joy → quality → virtuality. Later, in *Proust and Signs*, this will coincide with the meaning production of sensuous signs. The idea is that a prodigious joy can cause an impact similar to an imprint effect. The imprint effect is so strong that one may later recognize an identity of quality while sensing the same quality in something else. When the quality of object A is sensed in object B, this is then considered the production of meaning. Virtuality refers to the revealed relations between object A and object B (as a person sees the face of his love in the face of the moon). The mechanism of memory is slightly modified under the discussion of the food-as-sign approach (later modified into joy → obligation → meaning).

After affect, the second major element of food poetics is intensity. To understand it in an accessible metaphor, if affect is the hit, intensity is the persisting heat of the hit. Intensity is the fuel which empowers and propels the entire process of memory production and meaning production. It is an amorphous quality that travels along the production process in various forms. According to Deleuze, the three characteristics of intensity are: (1) Intensity is unequal in itself. (2) Intensity affirms difference. (3) Intensity is an "embryonised quantity". Following his observations, I have modified these into the three characteristics of food intensity: indivisibility and expandability, transformability, and transportability. By these three characteristics, food intensity travels through the process of memory production.

There is a footnote in Chapter One dedicated to two newfangled but noticeable schools—new materialism and extended cognition. The former is represented by

scholars like Quentin Meillassoux and Diana Coole; the latter is represented by scholars like David Chalmers and Andy Clark. The key word for the former is "contingent," while the key word for the latter is "external." Meillassoux with his speculative materialism supports two main ideas: (1) The world and all things in it are contingent rather than predestined or guided by any meaning. (2) Nothing can be thought as a fact, because everything is not what it appears to human consciousness or perception (this is called the idea of "factiality.").

The school of extended cognition believes that the cognition process does not initiate from or remain within the human body. Memory is not completely stored in the human mind or body. Instead, memory remains oftentimes registered in things external to the human body. A patient of the Alzheimer's disease relies on his notepad the way a non-patient relies on a smartphone. In neither case is human cognition extended to exteriority. The two schools which hold revolutionary thoughts toward objects demonstrate how object studies can develop in a well advanced manner. Although not directly related to this research, they may help inspire some related ways of thinking and are therefore mentioned for reference. The concept of extended cognition or the extended mind does fit the Deleuzean perspective of memory production from without (Proust and his madeleines, for example).

Chapter Two features the first main approach composed of the distancing process and the channeling process—the distancing-channeling approach. In this research, "**distancing**" shall be defined as follows: "**Distancing** refers to the act and phenomenon that intensity, in various forms, creates distances, materializes distances, and resolves differences in the distances." In other words, distancing is the process when a certain quality affects a human being and the human being senses it projected into a new space in one or various materialized forms. In this section, Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz" is cited to explain the workings of distancing. In this poem, because the

boy first senses the company of his father through the whiskey on his breath, from then on, any slight whiff of whiskey he senses elsewhere enables him to feel the presence of his father.

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To better explain the process of distancing and the intensity that powers the process, the idea of *Heimat* is ushered in. *Heimat* is a German term originally meaning "homeland" or the "homely, familiar space." The introduction of this term aims to explain how the distancing process takes place. *Heimat* in recent scholarship focuses on the human need for locality, the sense of belonging, attachment to material or virtual places shaped by individual or collective memory. Consequently, it may serve the purpose of realizing distancing as the first act of intensity and as part of memory production. After the spatiality-based concept of *Heimat*, a follow-up section is devoted to the literary functions of space: space as a literary device to reflect the character's state of mind, space as a trigger of nostalgia, and space as the construction of identity.

The second process of the first main approach is the **channeling** process. In this research, the idea is that channeling attracts the human recipient of intensity so as to approach the original affective encounter in memory; channeling seeks the presence of what is absent in the process of distancing. In other words, while the distancing process expands intensity into a new space, the channeling process contracts it and locks on an object in this new space for the recognition of intensity. Channeling functions with two elements: a corresponding point and an index label. While the corresponding point is a recognized object, the index label is the guiding principle for

recognition. For a convenient though slightly over-simplified explanation, we may turn to Proust and his work. In the case of Proust, the corresponding point of the madeleine is Combray while the index label that yokes them together is called childhood.

The last phase of the distancing-channeling approach is called essence. This is Deleuze's wording, meaning a constituted sense of virtuality. That is to say, whatever meaning or memory is produced by the two processes of distancing and channeling, the human recipient of influence obtains a somehow similar replica or replacement instead of the genuine object. Essence, according to Deleuze, is the produced meaning. It is the recognition of one object and its influence in another object.

The second and third approaches are comparatively straightforward. Unlike the distancing-channeling system I establish from the ground up, the two approaches of food-as-sign and food-as-time systems are supporting approaches modeled on Deleuzean thoughts in *Proust and Signs* and *Difference and Repetition*. The food-as-sign approach is a direct application of the four categories of signs, while the food-as-time approach is a synthesized procedure based on Deleuze's sign system and time system.

The food-as-sign approach divides food objects according to their contexts and functions into four categories: a food object as (1) a worldly sign usually in the form of a ritual or routine, as (2) a sign of love which stands for efforts and confusion, as (3) a sensuous sign that promises a meaning, and finally as (4) a sign of art when food is dematerialized as a conveyer of concepts and attains to poetics. In the convoluted case of a poem by Lee, we may have to pay attention to the route and traces by which a food object travels across categories and assumes varying meanings. The food-as-sign approach and the search for a corresponding point in the channeling process are the two most applicable approaches that facilitate reading a food object as a poetic sign in

a Deleuzean perspective.

The food-as-time approach functions as a time monitor in order to assist the food-as-sign approach. For poetic elements that travel through time (again, like Lee's food objects), this approach helps to locate or relocate the temporal dimension of a sign. The first synthesis of Habitus is where a worldly sign belongs or is situated, for a worldly sign is all about habits, routines, and rituals. The second synthesis of Eros-Mnemosyne is where a sign of love belongs, for a sign of love is all about effort and confusion. The second synthesis of Eros-Mnemosyne is also where a sensuous sign belongs, for the sensuous sign, after the effort of love, is bound to produce meaning in this order: joy → obligation → meaning. The third synthesis of the New is where a sign of art belongs, for the time is new and free from any dependence upon materiality and the sign of art is dematerialized—they are the ultimate signs in the ultimate time of art. In this dissertation this complicated synthesized approach is used mostly on Li-Young Lee.

Chapter Three introduces the reading of Wallace Stevens. In addition to interpreting his poetic works with food poetics, this chapter also dedicates a few passages to conventional interpretation based on personal correspondence and biographical facts, which I consider a hindrance to the viable development of poetic possibilities. Among the food objects in his poems which I feature in food poetics are: bread (*le pain*), aspic (a pudding-like dish made of salty meat or fish), ice cream, tea, cheese, pineapple, and chocolate,

The bread in "*Esthétique du Mal*" is an ambivalent object of pain and nourishment. It stands for an intellect's attitude toward the apocalyptic world during wartime. Good and the Evil, pain and food, seem what human beings rely on for survival. As food is necessary for an active life, pain is necessary for keen consciousness. The aspic in the same poem informs us of the fragility of human life

and the bitterness of the human condition.

The ice cream in "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" is taken on three different levels: ice cream as impertinent sensuousness at a funeral, rigid ice and comforting cream as showing the self-contradiction of human nature, and "I scream!" as a hidden homophone that shouts in anger at the ridiculousness of the human condition.

Tea and more bread appear in "A Fading of the Sun." The poet first places blame on the food and later pins hope on it. In his opinion, the way the world treats us, represented by bad tea and bad bread in the world, allows death among us. The poet looks forward to a hopeful future when good tea, good bread, wine and meat are served and people are happy about their food. I relate this to a common literary practice among fairy tales—the magic potion that suggests intake of food can change one's fate. Yet this is almost absent among other poets.

The chocolate in "Sea Surface Full of Clouds" always appears in juxtaposition with the umbrella and the green. In my reading based on food poetics, the three recurrent elements of the poem state the relationships between the world and human beings. The chocolate refers to the bittersweet taste of the world. It is the inner sensation of the world in human consciousness. The solid, nameless, yet ubiquitous green (i.e., the sea) refers to the unexplainable exteriority out there, while the umbrella refers to the reflection of human perception of the constituted given that serves as a shield or shadow (umbra).

The result of applying the distancing-channeling approach to Stevens is fruitful. More aspects of his food objects are understood, and such understanding leads to various interpretations that were not formerly available to his readers.

Chapter Four starts the reading of William Carlos Williams. Among his few food options, plums, potatoes, breakfast and the orange are chosen. I find that Stevens' food objects are usually personal and inscrutable, Williams' food objects are

usually social and political, and Lee's food objects are usually familial and nostalgic. By "political" I mean that Williams' food objects are often instilled with his awareness of social injustice and they often serve the purpose of attacking a society or culture in decay.

The plums in "This Is Just to Say" are exceptionally personal and sensuous. The plums are a sensuous sign that shows "identity of quality" in the poet's lover. The eating of the plums becomes the wishful fulfillment of consummation with her. The plums in "To A Poor Woman" become "social" or "political" with awareness of life on the street. The promise of food and the joy of such a promise is conveyed through the old woman as a human recipient of material joy.

The rotten potato in "The Mind's Games" is symbolic of a rotting world. Its feeding function fails; its skin hides its decay. The potato skin is a surprising metaphor which ridicules the Romantic Beauty that ignores human suffering. Another use of the potato can be found in "Death," in which the potato is the first object related to death. Other food objects include the grapefruit, coffee, and toast in "A Goodnight" for a breakfast that is likely to calm the mind with routines, if not to numb. The last food object to be studied in Williams is the orange that appears in five different poems for five different associations as shown in tab. 1.

Because of the political nature and social awareness of Williams' food objects, Chapter Four includes a brief discussion of food as consciousness of social class. In the discussion, Mary Douglas quotes both Peirre Bourdieu and Marshall Sahlins to share her point of view that helps us better understand the long-standing intellectual debate on the food-status relationship. This is the first time we resort to traditional studies related to food as listed in my review of key literatures, and they prove convincingly helpful.

Another non-interpretative section in Chapter Four is devoted to drawing a

distinction between Wallace Stevens' poetics, "not ideas about the thing but the thing itself," and William Carlos Williams' poetics, "no ideas but in things." Their ideas are different by nature, but their similar wordings call for a terse explanatory discussion. The approach I suggest for reading Williams is the food-as-sign system

From Chapter Three to Chapter Five, in each chapter there are one or two non-interpretative sections on the poetics or characteristics of the poet featured in that chapter. I see necessity in this minor deviation from interpretation of the poet's food objects in poems. A poet's art and idiosyncrasy shows in and influences all his works. A related understanding, even if not helping immediately, may secure a comprehensive interpretation.

Chapter Five is about the reading of Li-Young Lee. Lee's food objects are highly ethnic. His food poems, like his food subjects, revolve around his parents and family. Food objects chosen include persimmons, the Winter Vegetable, and rice. The poem "The Cleaving" is also under discussion, not for particular food objects, but for the two themes of food as ethnicity and endocannibalism articulated by the food object "duck brains," and the statement, "I eat my man."

The persimmons from "Persimmons" are a typical Lee sign—a traveling sign which first seems certain of meaning until a change of meaning takes place with its change of time setting. Its meaning varies from schooling, eating, lovemaking, all the way to bereavement. This is the difficulty of reading Lee's food objects. We set out struggling for a meaning for a specific sign or object, but the meaning of the object changes throughout the poem. Lee's language also makes it difficult to notice the transition from one meaning to another. His word economy and plain narrative allow moods and events to run by unnoticed. His ethnicity certainly does not help either. The changes of meaning, plainness of language, and often distracting cultural diversity make Lee an enjoyable read and also an elusive poet for analysis.

Lee's characteristics are found also in the Winter Vegetable in "Early in the Morning." From the responsibility of a mother into the sensuality of a wife, from the warmth for the child in the family into the warmth between the husband and wife in bed, the change of meaning in the Winter Vegetable never stops. In reading Lee, it is more important to pay attention to the change of meaning than to pin down a sign with a fixed meaning.

The rice in both "Eating Alone" and "Eating Together" is more than an object of food. It is an embodiment of the plainness of Lee's language. I call it the language of silence. The rice, white in color and plain in taste, claims its presence in both poems to mellow down bitter feeling and painful loss. The plain food seems to work well with Lee's plain language. Both help to carve a place in time and freeze a scene the persona wish to go back to. To all poems by Lee, except for "The Cleaving," I apply the synthesized system (composed of the sign system, time system, and Lee's language of silence that freezes time), reading his food objects as various signs traveling through time.

"The Cleaving" is analyzed for its ethnicity and symbolic endocannibalism rather than for is food signs. The duck brains in the poem become a delicacy fraught with identity. The foodway of a nation can turn an aversion into a preference. The word endocannibalism designates the practice of cannibalism within a family, a tribe, or a race, usually conducted as a solemn ritual, in hope of sympathizing the dead, preserving the body, and relieving the grief of the living. The line in "The Cleaving"—"I eat my man."—is used in a context where a little boy watches his people suffer and die, day in day out, away from the homeland. For "The Cleaving," I again resort to anthropology and cultural studies to better understand the two themes as cultural issues. When a food object is charged with culture and history, a system of poetics alone is not enough. It is acceptable sometimes to have anthropology for

interpretation and to have poetics for reference.

In order to prove food poetics a functional system, I intentionally choose three poets who present different challenges of poetic interpretation. Stevens offers his food objects in great number out of mostly personal experience. Williams offers his food objects out of class consciousness in a meager amount. Lee offers his food objects as ethnic identity in traces of time. Hopefully, if these do not cover all interpretative difficulties, they still include most. I intend to establish an applicable food poetics that offers substantial help with poetic interpretation. I intend the design, the approaches, and the analyses to be no-nonsense. Each procedure of the design is set and explained as a procedure of almost mathematical proof of statement. I offer painstaking details for each procedure and every minor conclusion is bold-faced before I move on to the next. All efforts are devoted to the young field of studies—food poetics—in search of a reliable system that makes better sense of food in poems and hopefully more.

Review of Key Literatures: Food

The idea of food poetics is adventurous. It is unprecedented,[2] but not ungrounded. Although "food poetics" has never before been adopted as a specific academic field of study, quite some studies in the humanities have contributed to paving the road for it. This literature review will point out the grounds whereon food poetics claims its foothold.

In this section, key literatures that draw attention from interdisciplinary scholarship to food discourse are reviewed in the following order: studies of senses, anthropology and philosophy of food, and foodways. The studies of senses related to food discourse focus on the sense of smell and the sense of taste. "Anthropology and philosophy" is actually a contingent category to include the three major thinkers preceding contemporary food studies: Immanuel Kant, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Mikhail Bakhtin, "Foodways" refers to the humanistic tradition of food discourse dealing with various food histories, food cultures, food impacts, etc., mostly from viewpoints of cultural and sociological studies.

Such a reviewing order reflects the effort to trace food studies from the contemporary fields (generalized as food and human nature, food as identity, food politics, food industry, food regulation, food and the environment, food justice, etc. See Coveney), to the early modern thought, and all the way back to diverse facts and folklores in ancient cultures. It is a retrospective discursive journey.

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[2] Among published works, *Eating Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Food*, which entitles its Part Two "Edible Fictions: The Poetics of Food," bears possibly the only literal similarity to food poetics, while its "poetics of food" refers to writing and reasoning on ethnic issues, food justice, and the body politics. See Döring 107-206. Up until the day of the completion of this thesis, the most closely related research to food poetics is Michel Delville's *Food, Poetry, and the Aesthetics of Consumption*, while his efforts are mostly dedicated to the relations between aesthetics and the sense of taste. See Delville 1-9.

Studies of the Senses

The Sense of Smell

According to Jim Drobnick's categorizing system for studies related to the sense of smell, almost all related literatures can be divided in the following groups: the fear of smell, the place of smell, the smelling subject, the idea of fragrance, sexuality in smell, transience of smell, and the smell as the sublime (1-9). In his words these are: "Odorphobia," "Toposmia," "*Flairerus*," "Perfume," "Scentsuality," "Volatile Art," and "Sublime Essences."

Drobnick's categorizing system may serve the purpose of food discourse, but not without modification. For example, the main concern about repellent perception in the category of "Odorphobia" is less likely to be the focus of edible food (with the exception of cheese, stinky tofu, etc. of course). Likewise, categories subsuming perfume issues ("Perfume") or theology and mortality ("Sublime Essences") will be less applicable for food discourse.

Under Toposmia, or the topology of smell, a number of scholars and thoughts are pertinent, starting with J. Douglas Porteous and his idea of "smellscape" (91). Porteous first draws a distinction between the visual sense and the olfactory sense by asserting that the former serves a cognition function in the present and the latter serves a tracking function to the past. Porteous accordingly develops a person-time-space triad for his framework of olfactory study. In light of the much expected smell-and-memory literary discussion, Porteous' smellscape has in itself a very strong literary scent.

Eleanor Margolie is more of a socialist observer than a systematic theorist. Her project of mapping out the City by way of various smells (110) can lend itself to a better understanding of urban poetics in modern times. Outstanding regional studies conducted in principles of Toposmia include Erik Cohen's study of a "cycle of smell"

(118) in Tai culture, Lucienne A. Roubin's study of fragrance and festivity in Eurasian culture (129-134), and Peter and Kate Damian's study of the "scent plans" (151) in Japan. Although none of these three are exclusively related to food, the association of smell and locale may serve for reference.

Under *Flaireurs* (often associated with *flâneur*), or the smelling subject, significant scholars and thoughts are as follows. Alan R. Hirsch uses solid statistics from sociological surveys to elucidate the relation between odors and childhood and also odor and society (187-188). Rachel S. Herz, from a medical scientist's point of view, asserts that human responses are more learned than innate, and attempts to explain some very particular and unlikely preferences of smell (198-199). Rick Dolphijn, through his discussion of "foodscape" (7-10; the cultural landscape constructed by political and economic powers centering on food), seeks a Deleuzian approach to deal with ethical issues of consumption. Although relying on one single philosopher can hardly facilitate a comprehensive and multifaceted food discourse, and can encourage strained interpretation of literary texts, his idea of Proust's madeleines can help keep the renowned literary anecdote from missing its place in our discussion.

Under "Scentsuality," or sexuality in smell, several scholars and thoughts deserve mention. Richard H. Stamelman's idea of sex and death in the smell—"Eros and Thanatos of scents" (262), mainly dealing with perfume from both literary and commercial points of view, can help us understand how smell simultaneously calls for sex and reminds of death and, furthermore, how fruit imagery achieves sexual arousal. Carol Mavor attempts a psychoanalytic approach to assert that the sense of smell offers and promises more than the gaze does. As a feminist psychoanalyst, she maintains that "*odor di femina*" (283; *lit*. the scent of the woman; referring to perception of the invisible or the obscure; a modified version of her own, not

completely identical with Lacan's use of the phrase in the Don Giovanni allusion) is the way out of the situation where the gaze always annihilates the seeing individual. Her discussion of the smellable obsure, or "*odor di femina*," helps with the understanding of literary femininity and obscurity depicted through the sense of smell.

To counterbalance Mavor, Mark Graham is indispensable. Both make significant contributions to the links between smell and same-sex sexuality (306-7; 309-12). Mark Graham, too, alongside non-queer theorists (Classen, Howes, and Synnott; 203-5), announces that the sense of smell is a sense that "confuses categories and challenges boundaries" (305) and is therefore "the sense of the postmodern" (306; as opposed to sight which is, in their observations, the sense of the modern). This announcement certainly encourages poetic reading in the sense of smell and ushers in more interpretative possibilities. Lastly, sexuality in food images, olfactory or otherwise, is almost always limited to the category of fruit (with the exception of milky images, mostly ice cream and whipped cream), and related food discourse will be limited accordingly. (In our discussion, sexuality will not include the raw humor based on shape similarities between food and genitalia).

Under "Volatile Art," or transience of the smell, significant scholars and thoughts are as follows. Jim Drobnick argues that the experience of eating/food is a synesthetic one—that of taste and smell, for the transient smell lends itself to the lingering taste and the unidentifiable taste relies first on the inviting smell (342). He later furthers his argument on three levels: physiology (molecular chemicals), philosophy (animalistic subjectivity), and aesthetics (limited recognition and enjoyment, compared to vision and hearing) (ibid). Mark W. D. Paterson speaks to the core of the cyber world by reasoning on the possibility of computer-generated smells (363-366). He explores why visual and auditory virtualizations have been prevailing without encouraging human technology to keep in stride by applying technology to olfactory and gustatory

virtualizations (emphasis is on the difference between the possibility of incorporating non-textural elements and the impossibility of incorporating textural elements; not speaking of artificial flavorings in food). Paterson's observation is conducive in foregrounding the indispensible nature of the sense of smell and the sense of taste.

Another noticeable research under the volatile art of food is conducted by Aileen Gatten on *The Tale of Genji* in Japanese literature. Gatten focuses on incense and the art of blending incense, offering interpretations of plant ingredients as poetic metaphors (331-341). This research is helpful in the food discourse on spices in poetry.

The Sense of Taste

Following Carolyn Korsmeyer's categorizing system, study of the sense of taste is based on a prerequisite understanding of the hierarchy of the senses (11-37). It should be conducted by examining three aspects of taste and should be implemented by an additional discussion of "visual appetite," the artistic representation of taste (146-184). She also emphasizes the importance of discussion on the subject of food writing or narrative of eating.

The hierarchy of the senses refers not to superiority but to an order of perceptibility as well as cultural preference or bias. The sense of taste, preceded by the visual sense and the auditory sense, is almost always given a lower place in this hierarchy, if not the lowest.[3] The three aspects wherein the sense of taste is examined

[3] The hierarchy of the senses here specifically refers to that established by Kant in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. His premise is that aesthetic observation demands objective perception and universal criteria, and yet "the senses of taste and smell are both more subjective than objective" (44). He hence continues that "we may divide the sensation of the external sense into those of mechanical and those of chemical operation. To the mechanical belong the three higher senses [touch, hearing, sight], to the chemical the two lower senses [taste and smell]" (44-5). Here the mechanical operation is Kant's category of perceptions open to judgmental standards commonly shared; the

are: the philosophy of taste (38-67), the science of taste (68-102), and the meaning of taste (103-145). Korsmeyer's major contribution to the study of taste focuses on these three aspects, while the sensuous hierarchy section aims to refute the Kantian tradition of preference for the visual sense and auditory sense, showing the gustatory subtleties and possibilities that promise rich interpretations (by reviewing how the visual sense and the auditory sense were highly valued and how the sense of taste, among others, was lowly ranked for obscure reasons). "Visual appetite" deals almost solely with paintings of food, and may therefore be less conducive to forming food poetics. Likewise, the large body of food writing or narrative of eating may be less relevant to establishing food poetics for such writing and narrative are exclusively devoted to food reviews and gourmet journals.

Under the philosophy of taste, significant thinkers and thoughts are as follows. Early 18th century gastronomy is an obligatory beginning for any thorough discussion of taste. Abbé Jean-Baptiste Dubo and Voltaire are representative of the early 18th French attitude that taste seeks qualities that give rise to aesthetic enjoyment, and that taste needs to be trained and refined (Korsmeyer 43-4). Mark Johnson observes that cognitive science proves that metaphor is a human way to tackle empirical experience rather than a mere rhetorical device: "metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but more fundamentally, a conceptual and experiential process that structures our world" (157). In Johnson, we see food and metaphor meet on a philosophical node. Luc Ferry believes that the aesthetic taste, fast followed by the sense of taste, of an individual is the essence of subjectivity, the most subjective within the subject: "With the concept of taste the beautiful is placed in a relation to human subjectivity so intimate that it may even be defined by the pleasure it provides, by the sensations or

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chemical operation, his category of visceral perceptions, denied the possibility of a shared sensation.

sentiments it provokes in us" (19). Agreed among the aforementioned thinkers is the idea that taste is fundamentally visceral and can only be expressed through metaphor—the language of food coincides with the language of poetry which speaks of visceral feelings. Two thinkers, Terry Eagleton and Pierre Bourdieu, deviate from this observation. Eagleton believes that taste is formed and perceived by components of the historical development of certain class interests (23, 25). Bourdieu believes that claiming aesthetic taste and being particular about the sense of taste can be an effort to achieve class distinction (6). The conceptions of taste proposed respectively by Eagleton and Bourdieu are centered around socialist concerns.

Under the science of taste, the significant ideas are mostly medical discoveries or assumptions, and the significant contributors are medical doctors. Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, in *The Physiology of Taste*, expresses an 18th century notion that the sense of taste is meant for human survival and for possible pleasure outside the need of survival (25). The discovery of taste buds in 1867 (Korsmeyer 72) helps develop the idea of taste as an act of receiving (as particles entering into a recipient), but then the idea of transition of chemicals (as modern medicine understands taste) starts to loom though checked by the lack of a comprehensive history of this chemical sense—a setback that frustrates medical scientists like Edwin G. Boring (438). While modern medical science has a better understanding of gustatory perception as a process of chemicals conveyed through the nervous system (*The Sense of Taste* by Susan McLaughlin, *The Psychology of Eating and Drinking* by A. W. Logue, and *The Human Senses* by Frank Arthur Geldard, to name only a few), it then takes a philosophical turn—in the medical textbook *Olfaction, Taste, and Cognition*, the author of Chapter 25, Robyn Hudson and Hans Distel share a common observation in their field of study that serves as the premise of their further research: there is a distinction between odors and odorants—odorants are physically existing molecules,

but all odors are constructs (408). Although medical in nature, this aspect of taste is no less conducive to our understanding of the sense of taste.

Under the meaning of taste, significant thinkers and thoughts, in concert as well as in conflict, are as follows. David Prall, in *Aesthetic Judgment*, denies a possible association of taste and aesthetics (61 in particular), mostly by his observation that the word "beautiful" never comes to praise a delicacy. The noted food writer M.F.K. Fisher, as Korsmeyer observes (106), actually practices such praises oftentimes. In fact, in another two Germanic languages, Dutch and German, the distinction between the delicious (*lekker*/*lecker*) and the beautiful (again, *lekker*/*lecker*) is colloquially absent. Agreeing with Prall on the idea that responses to food can be only sometimes aesthetic is Elizabeth Telfer, who asserts that good food invites aesthetic eating, with rewarding attention and discernment involved (57). What is most particular about Telfer's meaning of food is that food cannot have meanings: the representational arts, as painting and literature, depict the world and ourselves in it; we see the world and ourselves through the way we and our world are depicted. These two functions of representational arts are the premises of meaning production. Food, unlike painting and literature, has neither function, and food cannot have meanings (59). This is by no means a stance taken by this dissertation, but it is a very important misconception to note.

Philosophy and Anthropology of Food

In philosophical, anthropological, and literary perspective, food makes sense to three leading thinkers in separate and yet somewhat similar ways. Kant thinks food is mostly about judgment on and within a society. Lévi-Strauss observes that food history takes on a culture structure. Bakhtin writes that food often functions as a metaphor of power.

Kant

Following Kant's reasoning, food, eating, and especially taste, are mostly concerned with a "social judgment" (*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* 143). The enjoyment of food is joined by a basic human need and is furthered into a social behavior that offers a sense of satisfaction and yet encourages etiquette. The act of eating then must become a conscious act of aesthetic judgment.

Kant seems to emphasize, in his last work *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, the social purpose of the act of eating, in the case of dinner parties especially. According to the philosopher, the consumption of food serves a social purpose, and the definition of decent dining is often associated with good company (186).

The dinner party functions as a bridging device which shortens the distance between two individuals or helps one get his mind across to the other. The need of food and the act of eating are the most basic human demands and therefore the most commonly shared experiences. The love of food and therefore, the table, is the thing that draws people closer despite even major differences.[4]

In his *Anthropology*, Kant reveals his idea of gastronomy, or good eating. To him, gastronomy as an aesthetic experience is a combination of social occasion, good company, etiquette, and beyond (ibid). From his assertion in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* ("Everyone has his own taste"; 97, 214, 215) to *Anthropology* ("The good living which still seems to harmonize best with virtue is a good meal in good company"), we see that Kant's focus on the subjective perception of taste has shifted to ties of company and family. In Kant's philosophical view of food, the act of eating or the art of food initiates in society and then eventually rests upon affect.

[4] For a detailed discussion on this subject, see "A 'Friendship of Taste': The Aesthetics of Eating Well in Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View." By Peter Melville.

Lévi-Strauss

Lévi-Strauss sees food through the history of food preparation. To him, food, culture, and language are of similar structure or function. The way human beings prepare their food is the way human beings develop their culture, and the way human beings prepare their food is the way human beings structure their language.

Lévi-Strauss starts from the ground up: “In ancient times, men roasted everything” (*The Origin of Table Manners* 480). For him, the act of roasting food makes use of direct exposure to fire, with no mediation whatsoever, and is thus a primitive way of preparation. Hence roasting is primal and on the side of nature (“The Culinary Triangle” 37).

In contrast, the act of boiling food makes use of indirect exposure to the heating source, with proper “double mediation (water and a solid container),” and is thus an evolved way of preparation. Hence boiling is advanced and on the side of culture (ibid).

In such a dichotomy, the development of cuisine answers the human need through invention of mediation that facilitates human adaption to the world. Lévi-Strauss believes there is no direct way for human beings to understand and tackle the world around them. Human culture is thus developed, as a buffer—i.e. mediation—to shield off awes and shocks and to explain the world in a way that human beings will, or would like to, understand (*The Raw and the Cooked* 64).

A third idea after roasting and boiling is later called into play: the act of smoking. While roasting handles raw food material without mediation and boiling prevents food from being rotted (rotten, but in Lévi-Strauss’s own wording: the raw, the rotten, and the cooked) with a cultured, twofold mediation that demands certain technology (e.g. pottery), smoking too makes use of a mediation, the mediation of air (“The

Culinary Triangle" 40-1).

Lévi-Strauss considers this theory viable in explaining human language. With air or with water, the employment of a mediation for communicating the heat between the source and the food assimilates the employment of a mediation for communication between the world and human beings, or even between human beings themselves (43).

Pottery is man-made, and so is language. With them, nature is mediated and re-made to meet human needs. With pottery between heat and materials, we have food, and with signs and sounds between the observer and the observed, we have our view, no matter how limited, of the world. Both inventions contribute to the entire invention of human culture. In Lévi-Strauss' view, food is language. (This is very different from the idea of "food=language" asserted by numerous contemporary scholars; Lévi-Strauss focuses on a structuralist point of view, while contemporary scholars focuses on a functionalist point of view).

Bakhtin

Bakhtin focuses on the phenomenon of how food or the culinary sign serves as a metaphor of power, especially in literature. He particularly draws our interest to Rabelais's depictions of exuberant scenes of carnivalesque pleasure. The trope of appetite and show of excess speaks for human basic desire in literary as well as in historical contexts (Korsmeyer 188).

Food, as a metaphor of power, makes its twofold sense: a power to equate classes and a power to distinguish one class from another. For Bakhtin, the carnival is an event that encompasses and equates all walks of life (7-8). It is possibly the only occasion where subversion of social classes is allowed (10). Through food satisfaction and wine intoxication, all humans are equal: first equally hungry and then equally fed

and satisfied. The basic need of food and its satisfaction know no class difference. Food is possibly the only powerful metaphor that claims all human beings from one community.

It is hard to talk about Bakhtin without mentioning Barthes. In his "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption," Barthes shares Baktin's view of how food functions as a power, a power to distinguish one class or group from another. While food in the previous instance takes on a metaphor of power to form a sense of community, in the second instance (or as Barthes puts it, after the most basic need is met), food helps to communicate dissimilarity instead of similarity (30).

As in Bakhtin's recurrent scenes of the excessive food consumption (281) which is believed by most contemporary scholars to be an extreme medieval luxury and affordable only by the noble among some chosen few, food can serve as a language to communicate social class and discrimination. In the carnival, the poor may dine with the rich (10), while in everyday life only the rich can afford a whimsical carnival-like occasion whenever they desire it. (This also suggests the control of food by one class over another.)

The fact that social classes can be demarcated by food indicates that class differences are constructed from the ground up. Food is the most basic demand of human needs, and if class difference can be found in food, class difference can be found anywhere. From the very beginning, a class is born, fed, wed, and empowered differently from another class. The dietary difference is more a demonstration of economic and political power than a gastronomic choice. Food, on its dark side, can be a language that communicates power and control.

It is noteworthy that Bakhtin's semi-genealogical work of tracing food back to medieval times helps our understanding of taste and luxury food (e.g., coffee, tea, and chocolate were extremely expensive and only affordable by the noble, so that it is due

to class nostalgia, not need, that these foods remain popular and are associated with connoisseurship.) Both Bakhtin's and Barthes' view of food contributed to the later academic assertion that food is language (Both of them assert that food is a means of communication and it speaks a twofold language—as a body of images and as a protocol of food usages and dining behavior, etc.).

Foodway

The concept of foodway is a discursive approach through an anthropological point of view on how food enables chains of events, how food sends out series of messages, and most of all, how food feeds a nation and forms its culture. The prerequisite understanding of foodway is to realize the cultural elements related to food are subject to change and these food-related cultural elements are by no means encompassed in a closed system. Although any foodway may maintain its unique characteristics to some extent, in the modern globalized world it is usually of fairly limited extent.

The "way" in foodway suggests such an interactive influence and interrelationship between food and other aspects of culture. Within a foodway system, food goes from farms to kitchens, from recipes to literature, from nature to culture. In the modern world, such interrelation between food and culture can even go beyond boundaries of geographical and ethnographical groups. In short, foodway designates the way food feeds people and forms culture. It is especially helpful in our understanding of food production, preparation, consumption, and their social connotations in culture.

In *Foodways and Folklore*, Thursby outlines a geographical scope of the foodway. In her point of view, important geographical scopes include those of ancient China, classical Greece, and imperial Rome.

In ancient China, foodway is paved with philosophical thinking and practice. The school of Taoists and subsequent thinkers focuses on how one should render food, the gift of nature, to its perfection and enjoy it as it is meant to serve the basic need. The school of Confucian thinkers make their efforts to pinpoint standards and etiquette related to food and dining. While the former school focuses on the relationship between nature and humans, the latter focuses on interpersonal relationships and social classes. The latter is said to laid the foundation of a class-distinct gifting system (125).

Unlike ancient China, classical Greece focuses on human adaption to the environment. Sugar was rare and therefore refrained from. Delicacy was soul-weakening and therefore banned in Sparta. *Maza*, the most popular baked bread, was the one and only available staple food, which therefore knew no difference between the rich and the poor and fed both. *Garum*, a fish sauce, was often used instead of the more expensive pure salt (127-8).

Imperial Rome, too, follows in the footsteps of classical Greece and leaves us many recipes which inform us of various uses of herbs and spices. Some scholars contend that advanced cuisine is a result of abundance, while some protest that it is a result of scarcity that inspires additional techniques to enrich limited food materials (128-30). Whatever the reason might be, in both Grecian and Roman scopes, foodway is the way human beings adapt themselves to and make the most of their environment.

Foodway also finds its way into literature. Chinese literature and Greek mythology both yield examples. In Chinese literature, certain foods are almost always associated with some social or cultural significance. The peach is a symbol of longevity (156), in *Monkey King* as well as at a birthday party for the elderly. The fish is a symbol of wealth, in Song-dynasty folklore or at the table on the Chinese New Year's Eve.

In Greek mythology, Demeter's sorrow hinders the growth of crops as a frustrated mother and promises the prosperity of plantation as the loving Mother Nature. The ambivalent human feelings toward nature are reflected and resolved in a story of a mother who lost her mind for her loss of a daughter. Dionysus' vine and wine also claim indispensable influence as symbols of human madness and creativity.

In Higman's *How Food Made History*, foodway starts from the very invention of language. Higman believes it is for communication related to food that language comes into being (30). Food is always believed to be the most basic thing for human beings and therefore for almost every behavior following the first behavior of feeding (which other human behavior often comes back to). Foodway is in this sense the way of all ways.

To continue the historical development of foodway, the second most important phase is when human beings successfully settle down through their technology of growing food. Agrarian technology is the proof that human beings find a way to manipulate nature and avoid its threat of seasonal changes (30). Following the invention of agrarian technology, a sustainable development of it and a lifestyle that fits it lead to the need for government (31). To most socialists, once such a need looms, all disasters ensue.

Looking outward to nature instead of inward to human institutions, one may gain the observation that human pursuit of food, with agrarian technology, has impacts on ecology, in land and in biodiversity. Foodway was first paved with the good intention to feed; it now leads on to other species' annihilation (53).

Among discussions of foodway, "crop determinism" (77) and "national identity" (44) are two most noteworthy issues. The former maintains that once a culture decides on a single or a limited number of plants as staple food, its entire civilization develops around such a choice. This includes technology, lifestyle, language, etc. The Bard

therefore chants of barley, just as Tao Yuan-ming shoulders his hoe. A generic term like “clam” never comes into the Taiwanese language, because we are regular and consumers of various types of clams and for us distinctions have to be drawn between claims’ kinds and sizes by difference names instead of a generic term.

The issue of foodway and “national identity” is up till now under heated discussion and dispute: the common notion is that national cuisines of course exist, while another voice says, there are “never foods of a country, but foods of a place” (Mintz 96). Advocates of such a statement point out that the establishment of a state is sheer politics, but the choice of food materials is nature’s offer. To encompass nature in a political cause is completely misleading. When such a viewpoint is taken into consideration, we can surely understand why neighboring countries share similar recipes or sometimes completely identical preparations.

In foodway discourse, there are times when the way of food meets a dead end. It is the discourse of food taboo. Almost all scholars agree that the origins of most food taboos are non-traceable, while some contemporary scholars attempt economic and scientific approaches to seek explanations.[5] Two things are sure about food taboos: food taboos are always introduced by major religions or philosophies, and it is easier to add more to the taboo list than to take one out (Higman 55).

Foodway of course inscribes the footprint of food into human religions and folk belief. In an ancient culture like that among Chinese communities, almost every traditional festival has a corresponding food: the Zong-zu for the Dragon Boat Festival; the moon cake for the Moon Festival; the Tang-yuan for winter solstice, to name only a few. It is of course not ridiculous at all to make our friends gifts of some

[5] One of the most noted examples: Jewish people avoid pork for the pig is non-ruminant and omnivorous and may therefore deprive humans of food. They decide on ruminants which feed on grass indigestible to human beings. The pig must be labeled as filthy. See Harris 71-5.

of these seasonal or festival foods as a reminder of traditions shared among us. Foodway, under such circumstances, is a practice of social customs and community codes.

In the field of the sense of taste, Jim Drobnick's categorization, along with compilations of olfactory researches, helps introduce this comparatively new and interdisciplinary study to food discourse. In the field of the sense of smell, Carolyn Korsmeyer provides us with a three-aspect research system of philosophy, science, and meaning, to examine the history and the development of the study of taste.

Food discourse traces itself to the classical food discourse of the 18th-century French writer and gastronome, Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, and goes on to the class-conscious Terry Eagleton and Pierre Bourdieu for socialist criticisms. Among major thinkers, Immanuel Kant analyzes the sociology of food while Claude Lévi-Strauss explores the anthropology of food. Mikhail Bakhtin, with his assertion that the carnival is a means to communicate classes, and Roland Barthes, with his contention that food is a means to demonstrate power, both seek to tease out the semiotics of food. Finally, the foodway approaches of scholars like Jacqueline S. Thursby map out the spatiality of food discourse across countries and cultures, while the foodway approaches of scholars like B. W. Higman time the journey of culinary evolution and show us how food made history.

Review of Key Literatures: Poetics

My second part of Review of Literature, centering upon major works on poetics, is mostly in chronological order and aims: (1) to demonstrate the functions of poetics through different phases in the history of literature, especially its function of poetic interpretation, which in my view is "poetics" proper by contrast with poetic form, meter, rhythm, or the like, and to focus on the treatment of objects in poetry by these major works of poetics; and (2) to make clear that while in the past many versions of poetics, constrained by the distinction between the human subject and the external object, shared a subject-oriented viewpoint in their more or less similar paradigms, a Deleuzean reading of objects in poetry makes untenable this distinction between the subject and the object, thereby facilitating an in-depth understanding of multiplicity or difference at work. This point will be demonstrated in detail in Chapters One and Two.

Neither of the two founding texts on poetics, Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*, deals directly with food objects in poetry, even though their focus on mimesis has consistently inspired classical poetry and poetic interpretation as directly or indirectly related to various objects. Both these texts emphasize mimesis, or imitation-oriented poetics, claiming in effect that imitation is the main principle of poetic composition as well as analysis. Some even assert that the purpose of *Ars Poetica* is to make clear Horace's "obscure and subtle imitation" (Golden 395). Such concentration on or limitation to imitation in versification is also central to Aristotle's *Poetics*, as is pointed out by Richard Janko: "In *Poet*. [*Poetics*] A. [Aristotle] restricts the discussion to poetry definable by both criteria, mimesis and verse" (124). Poetics of food objects as well as poetics of objects in general should be examined for its relations as well as differences with the early poetics of imitation, for objects often lend themselves to artistic imitation.

Classical Poetics: Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus

Aristotle's idea of imitation does not imply the production of sheer replicas. "The essence of imitation," as emphasized by James M. Redfield, "is reduction" (54), and this leads us on to the idea that imitation implies focusing on an object for a certain quality to serve a certain artistic purpose. Redfield reaffirms this by pointing out that the imitation "is qualitatively simpler than the original; thereby it can be more coherent…more pleasant" (ibid). The act of reduction, however, must not attenuate the artistic integrity of the imitated object; on the contrary, it should accentuate the artistic universality of the object. Paul Woodruff, among other scholars, holds such an opinion, suggesting that perhaps "mimesis starts with a particular object, and then calls our attention to the universal that is exemplified by that particular. At best, mimesis reproduces only selected features of its object" (87).

Such imitation of objects, according to Aristotle, does not aim to produce verisimilitude but to achieve recognition. Such an aim justifies Aristotle's three approaches to imitating things: "things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be" (Butcher 59). Two of the three approaches encourage a poetics that depicts the ideal of things instead of things. Or, as Redfield claims, "imitation is the discovery of form in things" (54). This "form," this ideal or aspect of things as Aristotle's poetics intends, is what the poet recognizes in things, and such recognition is considered inextricably linked with memory.

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle pronounces that "even inanimate things of the most trivial kind may in a sense be objects of recognition…the recognition of persons" (Butcher 43). This is a recapitulation of what he points out earlier in the same book: "the objects of imitation are men in action" (Butcher 34). This statement of artistic creation explicitly expresses the anthropocentrism which is characteristic of Aristotelean poetics. In addition to such a belief that objects lead to recognition of

persons, Aristotle maintains that "imitation comes naturally to human beings from childhood" (Heath 66) and that "everyone takes pleasure in imitation" (ibid). This observation by Malcolm Health on *Poetics* 4 reminds us that Aristotle does not propose mimesis as his own invention of an aesthetic criterion, but rather as his observation of human nature. He is convinced that the art of poetry comes naturally to human beings by virtue of the human inclination to imitation. Heath summarizes this argument of Aristotle's in pointing out that to Aristotle, "poetry is a natural human behaviour" (66).

Aristotle's mimesis-based or imitation-oriented poetics at work may be best summarized by Paul Woodruff:

> Generally, mimesis can present us with images that reveal the form that is common to a certain species…In such cases, mimesis carries the mind of its audience from the particular image to a universal truth which is instantiated by it, and does so partly by disabling the emotional response we would normally have to the object. (*Essays on Aristotle's Poetics* 87)

The Aristotelean poetics of mimesis is anthropocentric at least in three aspects: the poet's focused description of objects, the poem's intended recognition in objects, and the poetics' origination from human nature. The artistic *imitation* of objects is a product of the poet's selected features of objects and therefore such imitation can successfully convey the intended *recognition* by the poet. This point is well brought out in Woodruff's example of lions (87) and Radfield's example of cows (54), in which the lions are rid of their leonine menace and the cows of their bovine clumsiness, so that both can be admired for their poetic qualities by the poet and the reader. In doing so, both the poet and the reader are simply reflecting their human nature which is inclined to take pleasures in imitation.

What Aristotle's poetics achieves is the active participation of poetic interpretation of objects by the poet and the conveyance of such interpretation from the poet to the reader; the possibility of successful conveyance relies on the universality of human nature, i.e., the human inclination toward imitation and the shared pleasure of doing it. It seems fair to conclude that Aristotle's poetics is anthropocentric.

Horace, with his critical work with a title similar to Aristotle's *Poetics—Ars Poetica*, is often considered a follower of Aristotle's mimesis, if not universally at least arguably. Among scholars who do not agree that Horace is a faithful follower of Aristotle's poetics of mimesis, John O. Hayden is certainly one of the first scholars to claim that "Horace does not hold to a mimetic view of literature" (*Polestar of the Ancients* 73). In addition, Hayden emphasizes that even if Horace deals with imitation, "Horace himself deals specifically with imitation of models…in the *Ars* [*Ars Poetica*]" (72). The emphasis of the described object has been shifted to the search for a decent form or pattern—an idea that Hayden believed to have emerged long ago: "Imitation had by Horace's time even taken on another meaning—the imitation of past models" (ibid). Hayden further argues that Horace sees imitation—"as re-creation" out of imitated models instead of "a narrow sense of copying" (ibid). Likewise, C. O. Brink notices the emphasis intended by Horace, contending that "H. [Horace] is dealing with unity of design, which contains the aspects of subject-matter, arrangement, and execution [versification]" (*Horace on Poetry* 92).

Horace, as a literary critic, has demonstrated a very firm stance in his idea of imitation which has to do with the poet's search for a suitable form, pattern, or a sense of decorum in his creation. "Ye who write, make choice of a subject suitable to your abilities" (Smart & Blakeney 65) – thus Horace begins by striking a balance between the writer and the written, and he continues: "A comic subject will not be handled in

tragic verse…You, that write, either follow tradition, or invent such fables as are congruous to themselves" (Smart & Blakeney 66-7). Bruce T. Moran makes a terse observation on the principles of Horace's poetics: "Horace advised that the theme of a particular speech should be appropriate to ability and the style of subject matter. A speaker's language ought also to suit his emotion…" (*Paracelsus* 145). For some critics with more radical views, Horace's demand on the poet's faithfulness to his ability and subject matter and on the congruity and decorum in his creation has come to the point where truth and correction are involved and at work in art. Horace, Ross Stuart Kilpatrick expounds, "lays down two important aesthetic principles, the 'Canon of Truth' and the 'Canon of Correctness,' according to which a work must be natural and whole and faithful to real life" (*The Poetry of Criticism* xii).

In fact, this idea of being "faithful to real life" is crucial to Horace's poetics. In his *Ars Poetica*, Horace proclaims that "Poets wish either to profit or delight; or to deliver at once both the pleasures and the necessaries of life" (Smart & Blakeney 71). In other words, the main purpose of poetry is to serve the purpose of life—to profit, to delight, and to reflect life, and this is exactly why Horace believes that "I [Horace] should direct the learned imitator [the poet] to have a regard to the mode of nature and manners, and thence draw his expressions to life" (ibid). Horace's pragmatic view of poetics establishes close ties between artistic creation and human society: the poet's respect for tradition, faithful imitation of models, and the poetic "effects on other people" (Rudd 232).

What is perceptible here is the shift from Aristotelean poetics to Horatian poetics as a shift from a personal aesthetic concern to a social aesthetic concern, or from the poet to the society the poet is conscious of. Although both have their poetics based on the concept of imitation, with diverse interpretation from time to time, Aristotle focuses on the poet's individual aesthetic judgment that leads to a sole depiction of a

specific trait of an object and unawareness of the rest (Radfield 54), while Horace concerns himself with the effect of the poet's work by comparing him to a painter whose artistic contribution should be dedicated according to his "various sources of pleasure" (Louvel 33). The former is indeed an assertion of the poet's aesthetic reflection inspired by the object, while the latter is a consideration of common benefits and social norms.

The Horatian characteristic of social concern, as regards the aforementioned common benefits and social norms, is evident in *Ars Poetica* mostly under the categories of decorum and service to life. In the aspect of norm or decorum, Horace insists upon details like "a comic subject will not be handled in tragic verse" (Smart & Blakeney 66), while in principle he persists in his belief that "You, that write, either follow tradition, or invent such fables as are congruous to themselves" (Smart & Blakeney 67). A character as created in the poem should "be preserved to the last such as it set out at the beginning, and be consistent with itself" (ibid). Conformity to form, a tradition to follow, congruity and consistency to abide by – these aspects devoted to decorum are evidence that the Horatian poetics yields itself to social concerns, with society referring to a literary community, a literary tradition, and the recognition of such a community and tradition.

The second aspect of the social concern of Horatian poetics is service to life, or how poetry can serve to fulfill or enrich human life. The social function of poetry, as we have already seen, is "to profit or to delight" (Smart & Blakeney 71), which is itself a statement by Horace that the poet should address "the necessaries of life" (ibid) as his duty. Horace comes to the conclusion that poetry aims to serve the purpose of life, finalizing his statement thus: "I should direct the learned imitator to have a regard to the mode of nature and manners, and thence draw his expressions to life" (ibid). The term "life" here saliently means a common life, a social life, shared among

humankind for the necessaries. The nature, manners, expressions mentioned here all suggest a certain universality instead of disparate individuality. What the Horatian poetics contributes to the art of poetry is a social or ethical view that encourages pragmatic concerns of poetry and an appropriate distance maintained between aesthetic creativity in art and beneficial functionality in life.

Longinus, following Aristotle and Horace, mentions the concept of imitation in his poetics with striking similarity to that of Horace. According to Longinus, mimesis or imitation refers to "the imitation and emulation of previous great poets and writers" (Roberts 93), and this is an aim for later poets and writers (ibid). This of course echoes Horace's idea of mimesis as obedience to tradition or "imitation of models" (Hayden 72), and such echoing leads to the observation that Longinus' idea of mimesis "bypasses the usual mimetic process" (Refini 49). In addition, Longinus mentions the functions of poetry in a way that again likens his poetics to the Horatian.

Poetry, however, is able to make visible through words what we might often refuse in actuality. Figurative arts, to be appreciated and accepted, have to deal with the imitation of real things, and the pleasure we gain is proportional to the degree of resemblance the artist achieves. (Refini 49)

To reveal the unseen and to please the senses, the two functions of poetry in Longinus' point of view as observed by Eugenio Refini, remind us of Horace's idea of the function of poetry—"to profit and to delight." In the Longinian poetics, the function of "to profit" or to gain and to learn what was previously unknown is substituted for "to make visible what we might often refuse in actuality" or to show what our senses fail to perceive. Both the pleasure poetry offers and the revelation of the unseen poetry enables originate from Longinus' belief in figures and figurations, which are one of the five sources of the sublime which makes the Longinian poetics stand out from other schools.

Since Longinian poetics is almost always associated with the sublime, it is adequate to speak of the idea of the sublime in Longinus' understanding of poetics. According to Longinus, the five sources of the sublime are: 1. "a boldness and grandeur in the Thoughts," 2. "the Pathetic [i.e., *pathos*], or the power of raising the passion to a violent and even enthusiastic degree," 3. "a skillful application of the Figures," 4. "a noble and graceful manner of Expression," 5. "the Structure or composition…in all possible dignity and grandeur" (William Smith's 1819 translation 66-7). In other words, what makes good poetry or the ultimate goal of the poet is for the poet, with great thoughts and a power to touch the reader, to train himself well in the art and techniques of versification. It is obvious that the emphasis in Longinian poetics is again, like that of Aristotle's and Horace's, placed heavily upon the poet and his influence on the reader. One of Longinus' most quoted statements—"Sublimity is the echo of a noble mind" (*On the Sublime* 181)—reminds us of the social or interpersonal purposes of Longinian poetics.

The third source of the sublime, "Figures," is especially related to our discussion of objects. Objects are here presented in poetry in various figures and figurations. Yet the concept of the sublime itself is left undefined, as are its sources, including the application of figures. Among observations made by scholars in various periods, some introduce the essential traits of the sublime. The sublime, contrary to what might be thought, "has always been constituted by antinomies" (Potkay 208); yet such antinomies, instead of making the sublime deviate from nature, achieve art in "so high a point of perfection, as when it resembles nature so strongly, that it may be taken for nature itself" (Stackhouse 50). Aesthetic values and a secular, moral function are again highlighted in the statements that "Longinus makes it abundantly clear that the sublime is not merely a matter of rhetoric and phrasing but a matter of character and morals" (Evans 93) and that "the sublime is a call to personal, social, and spiritual

greatness" (ibid). It has even been said that sublimity, or the sublime, "raises writers near the majesty of God" (Evans 94). Such emphasis on the function of literature almost elevates poetry to the height and weight of religious belief, but since the main assertion resides on morality, the sublime tends to be more secular than clerical, more society-oriented than object-oriented.

As mentioned at the outset of our discussion of the sublime, "Longinus does not offer a clear definition of the sublime, referring to it as a certain eminence or perfection of language" (Brady 12). It is obvious that the ultimate goal of the aesthetic concept of the sublime shall be fulfilled by serving human society or morality, but the vague definition of such "perfection of language" is characteristic of an early stage of the development of the sublime. In ancient Greece, or in the English-speaking world when the concept of the sublime was first brought into British thought by Nicolas Boileau, "the sublime remains strongly connected to language and style" (Brady 13) , and what Boileau emphasizes "continues to influence modern appropriations of his [Longinus'] work" (Shaw 13). It is then reasonable to assume that the Horatian idea "to teach" is embedded in the Longinian sublimity – a great personage or personality leads to great influence on others, and the aforementioned function of enabling people to see the unseen or making refused facts visible suggests a similar intention. The poet is said to begin with a "subject formally unteachable" (Brady 12); he later renders the subject teachable in his art.

"The title *Peri Hypsos* [*Hypsous*]," as recorded in *Classical Rhetorics and Rhetoricians*, "is traditionally translated *On the Sublime*," but "On Grandeur of Thought and Expression" would better describe "the work's content" (Kellner 245). By tracing back to the very beginning of the work and its title, we come to realize that the seemingly inexplicable aesthetic value of the sublime aims at a rhetoric-based or language-oriented pragmatic application—the down-to-earth influence of moral good.

Any subject matter, within the understanding of such poetics, is to serve the same purpose.

Pioneering and socio-regulating, the Greco-Roman critics share a didactic pragmatism on an anthropocentric ground with an interpersonal concern. The earliest poetics seems to aim at communication of moral teachings, with poetry serving as a vessel of benevolent messaging from the poet to the reader.

English Poetics: From Sidney to Arnold

While Classical Poetics centers around the three ancient figures—Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, the English Poetics section includes a wide expansion of Anglo-American viewpoints on the art of poetry. In this section, literary figures of the English-speaking world, poets or critics (oftentimes both in the same person), come into our discussion in chronological order—Philip Sidney, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, William Hazlitt, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, and lastly Matthew Arnold. However, two things need to be pointed out about such a contingent temporal categorization: (1) differences in time and language form a watershed between the first three Greco-Roman figures and their Anglo-American followers; (2) either temporal category (Classical Poetics or English Poetics) subsumes diverse and even conflicting viewpoints of the art of poetry, so that a universal consensus about poetry remains absent. Nevertheless, a tentative grouping method may help our understanding of how the idea of poetics has been developing and evolving.

For scholars devoted to the study of poetics in English, there always seems to be a gap between the major Greco-Roman figures (with Aristotle being the most-mentioned one) and the later critics from the English-speaking world (with Philip Sidney being widely considered the pioneer). The gap in time, however, does

not imply an unbridgeable break from the tradition. The most quoted lines from Sidney's "The Defense of Poesy" give strong proof of this:

> Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely; her world a brazen, the poets only deliver a golden. (Sidney 121).

The essence of Aristotelian poetics—imitation of nature, selective focus on part of nature, the emphasis of artistic creation beyond physical verisimilitude—are almost all reflected in this passage with which Sidney in a sense pays his homage to Aristotle by concluding that "Poetry, therefore, is an art of imitation" (Sidney 122).

As Marvin A. Carlson indicates, "Sidney also stresses a moral purpose," and he continues: "virtuous action is the end of all earthly learning, and poetry…is best suited to this" (Carlson 82). This observation on Sidney helps us notice the discursive continuum from Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, passing through centuries to Sidney. The aesthetic inception in mimesis and the application to social and moral uses remain intact among them. As reiterated by Michael Mack, "poetry, just as with theology, can lead an audience to God; Sidney follows the method of his humanist predecessors and begins not with the beginning but with the end of poetry" (*Sidney's Poetics* 111). An analysis of such a connection between nature and humans is given by Robert E. Stillman. There was at first philosophy in the guise of poetry to teach human beings and influence human society (Stillman 161). The early poets, as "the first deliverers of their knowledge to posterity" (ibid) were later followed by historians, and such a heritage is recorded by Sidney (ibid). To conclude, Stillman points out that "Sidney's purpose in narrating this background is less historical than anthropological," showing that poetry is primary but not primitive (Stillman 161).

Owing to Sidney, several aspects of Classical poetics have been well maintained

in the English world. As one of the founding fathers of English poetics, Sidney especially stresses three aspects which help establish an almost seamless continuum between Classical and English poetics: mimesis, modification, and morality, or to be more precise, the imitation principle, the selective focus on nature/objects which introduces the individual creation of the poet, and a moral purpose of benefiting humanity. These three M's (mimesis, modification, and morality) are ubiquitous throughout Classical and English poetics. From this perspective, the beginning of English poetics does not fundamentally break with Classical poetics and the contribution of Sidney helps to keep Classic assertions intact.

John Dryden, with overlapping ideas from Classical poetics, contributes to the line of heritage with his own in-depth sociological point of view. Like Sidney and his Greco-Roman predecessors, "Dryden believes that the poet, like the ancient orator, employs reason and sound argument for a moral end [purpose]" (Jon Clay 105). The moral purpose of poetics remains the same, but a new viewpoint starts to form—reason and argument. Before Dryden, it was mostly the poet's selective focus on nature that led to his creation of poetry, with frequent reference to the employment of imitation and imagination. Dryden's mentioning of "reason" and "argument" seems to reflect his association of the poet with "the ancient orator" who speaks for the public as his calling.

Dryden's socio-political view of poetry implies more than a down-to-earth pragmatism; it is an early initiative in aesthetic materialism because Dryden "regards the poet as a figure who deals with material of public interest and who presents that material in a logical, organized, and often argumentative manner," and furthermore, "literature, in his [Dryden's] eyes, is inextricably connected with man's political and social life" (Jon Clay 105). In other words, Dryden suggests two possibilities of poetics that were either absent or obscure in poetics before him: a socio-political

poetics and a material poetics, the former being a further development of Classical poetics and the latter an initiative for the generations to come.

Since "Dryden defines his poetic power as a moral condition" (Jennifer Keith 41) and the purpose of benefiting humanity through positive influence is always a premise in Dryden's idea of poetry, Dryden's imposition of political causes on poetry is less a new invention than an advanced version of the long-standing tradition of poetics. What seems to take first root here is the obscure yet promising idea of materials involved in the production of poetry. On the one hand, Dryden "tried nearly every form of poetry, originated some, revived others from the languages of antiquity, and was equally successful in all" (Robert Bell 1). On the other hand, Dryden first subsumes "reason," the human quality of consciousness and contemplation, and "material," in both senses of the word—a social or political matter or a solid object of "public interest" as described by Jon Clay, in the discussion of poetic creation. The inclusion or embodiment of "reason" and "material" in the production of poetry recognizes and emphasizes human consciousness (an indispensable element in the later discussion of agency) and the materiality of poetry. Dryden's idea of human consciousness or material agency in aesthetic production is, of course, still under development and still in want of centuries of enhancement that lay ahead of him. Still, it is amazing that with so much formality and materiality involved in his creation as well as his idea of creation, John Dryden is hardly mentioned as the first literary figure to introduce the topics of human consciousness and materialism into poetics.

A comparison is made between John Dryden and his contemporary who had much the same literary prominence—Alexander Pope:

> Dryden Knew more of Man in his general nature, and Pope in his local [individual] manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation [contemplation], and those of Pope by minute attentions. There is

> more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden and more certainty in that of Pope. (David Hopkins 174)

Dryden seeks universality in human nature and resorts to deduction, deducing from universality in humanity to everyday habituality or behavioral rituality to retrieve, reify, or reiterate anthropocentric values. Pope, on the contrary, attempts to explain diversity in human nature and resorts to induction, inducing from everyday rituals back to universality in human nature. Dryden's efforts are dedicated to proving one divine law in humanity and hence render "more dignity" to humanity, while Pope's efforts contributed to meticulous observation of human possibilities, hence promising "more certainty" to humanity.

Such a comparison, however, regardless of its virtue of informing us of Pope's methodology, tends to mislead us into believing that Pope and Dryden are by nature similar critics of poetry, differing only in their approaches. As a matter of fact, Pope contributes to the study of poetics in a way that claims credit on its own—his insistence on literary criticism, including poetics, as a study and an art in its own end. This is a crucial turn in literary criticism and poetics, a turn away from the traditional human-centered or society-oriented demands on poetry as a vessel for moral good, into a pedagogical or didactic cause. After Pope, the critical concern is with seeking the right qualities in the critic to establish poetics, instead of imposing a didactic and pragmatic poetics on all poems and critics.

From the demand on the function of poetry to the demand on the understanding of poetry, and hence on the required qualifications of critics, Pope's interest is in "the just conduct" of critics, and he "reveals a deliberative purpose…to invoke prudent criticism" (Ruben Quintero 21). In addition to his requirement of a decent and competent critic, Pope lays out the basics for the critic by using "three rhetorical methods for appealing to his reader, rational argument (*logos*), character (*ethos*), and

emotion (*pathos*)" (Quintero 28).[6] For Pope, "the most important source of appeal lies in the poet's power of reasoning, his own evident wit and judgment" (ibid). From this point of view, it is obvious that Pope focuses on the achievement of a thorough and reasonable literary judgment instead of the application to any literary work. The definition of poetics is hence altered from seeing the applicable function of poetry in benefiting humanity to reasonable reading of poetry in order to offer a fair judgment. To achieve the latter, Pope senses the need to reveal what requirements a decent critic has to meet. It may still be anthropocentric in a way, but an exact opposite is also shown here: before Pope, poetry was meant to serve humans; after Pope, humans are meant to serve poetry.

It is then widely agreed that Pope's poetics and criticism, in *An Essay on Criticism* in particular, "aside from the attacks on false critics, seems to be an honest attempt to set up practical rules for judging literature" (Allen & Hayden 2). The demand for a qualified critic and the goal of reasonable judgment are two of the major traits of Pope's aesthetic position. The former demand, in particular, can be very extreme and, accordingly, is often understood in a more or less extreme way. Some would even agree that "An Essay on Criticism sets out as an attack on the stupidity of the critics, it ends on the note of firmly instating the institution of the critic" (Christa Knellwolff 102). Pope's poetics may be best summarized in three aspects: the continuation of a part of the critical tradition, the emphasis on reason in the critic as well as the reader, and the due respect paid to literary criticism:

> Though it contains a comprehensive summary of neo-classical premises, the *Essay* also offers shrewd technical advice to both critics and poets, and one of its original aspects is the attention it gives to the art of criticism. It is also, of course,

[6] Loginus, before Pope, proposed pathos as one of his sources of the sublime. See The Classical Poetics.

> an example of what it teaches—a brilliant neo-classical poem. (Samuel Hynes 151)

Once again, the classical purpose of making a person morally good has now been changed to making a person a competent reader so as to understand a poem or the art of poetry. The art of criticism, poetics, or aesthetics has now apparently stood up to claim its place as a worthy subject in the humanities, thus paving the way for its later status as an independent field of study.

After Alexander Pope, William Hazlitt comes in with his most noted essay "On Poetry in General". Although many believe Hazlitt is largely and deeply influenced by Shakespeare, as once commented by Harold Bloom—"Hazlitt may not have been aware of how Shakespearean his cognition had become" (*The Anxiety of Influence* xxviii-xxix), Hazlitt's poetics instead of harking back to the classical tradition before Pope actually opens up toward the soon-to-blossom Romantic poetics championed notably by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Understandably, comparisons between Hazlitt and Shelley are common. The follow statement by M. H. Abrams is one of the most representative comparisons:

> Hazlitt opens his most important aesthetic essay, 'On Poetry in General' (1818), with a definition which closely parallels Shelley's Aeolian lyre, including its implications of automatism and of a pre-established harmony between objective stimulus and poetic response." (*The Mirror and the Lamp* 52)

The focus on the interaction between humans and nature, one of the many forms and definitions of "the Imagination" as realized in the Romantic period and present in both Hazlitt's and Shelley's poetics, justifies the frequent association between these two critical figures.

Hazlitt sees poetry as a form of human interaction with nature, as the finest form of language that serves as a vessel to delineate beauty, as a human device to glorify

nature, and as the ultimate achievement of the Imagination:

> Poetry, then, is an imitation of nature, but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. […] Neither a mere description of natural objects, nor a mere delineation of natural feelings, however distinct or forcible, constitutes the ultimate end and aim of poetry, without the heightenings of the imagination. The light of poetry is not only a direct but also a reflected light, that, while it shows us the object, throws a sparkling radiance on all around it: the flame of passions, communicated to the imagination, reveals to us, as with a flash of lighting, the inmost recesses of thought, and penetrates our whole being. (Hazlitt 315)

Before we come to Shelley, some of the typical Romantic ideas of poetics are already present in Hazlitt's words on poetics. The key phrase here is "communicated to the imagination." Before Shelley's metaphor of the Aeolian lyre to designate interaction between humans and nature, for Hazlitt poetry should be understood as an association, a communication of what is similar between humans and nature. Poetry, fruition of such communication and of the passion and joy from such communication, is at the same time a reflection of thoughts and a revelation of joy and beauty which we should be immersed in. Hazlitt's poetics defines and initiates a time when literature will proceed to explore the origins of humans, the relationships between nature and humans, and how poetry, by presenting beauty to humans, can soothe the mind and ease pain. In other words, Hazlitt initiates an epoch in which literature establishes itself as a religious belief or consolation; this will later become a well recognized trait of Romanticism.

Shelley's main concepts of poetry are revealed in "A Defence of Poetry," and they often involve, as some may claim, an "ethical principle in poetry" (Lucas Verkoren 137). Shelley believes, from his particular angle of examining language in the very beginnings of human society, that anyone whose creation involves language

is a poet because language itself is poetry (ibid). Such an extended definition of the poet enables Shelley to contribute to the development of his poetics in two specific ways: (1) unlike Pope, who believes reason and fair judgment are indispensable in people who work with poetry because they are of the chosen few, Shelley's definition of the poet debunks the Neo-Classical concept of elitism applied to poets; (2) following Sidney, whose critical work "The Defense of Poesy" inspires Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry," Shelley is trying to connect everyone with poetry and to render poetry into something relevant to anyone who might encounter a social milieu similar to Sidney's which calls for a defense of poetry. In addition, when "Shelley denies that poetry is irrelevant [to life] but seems to affirm that the general public believes that this is so" (Jeannine Johnson 32), Shelley may also, retroactively rather than revolutionarily, voice "the Renaissance view that poetry has an ennobling influence upon mankind" (Lucas Verkoren 137).

By showing the public that poetry is something "relevant," Shelley accidentally endows poetry with a certain materiality which is new to poetics.

In "A Defense of Poetry" Shelley contends that, in Pyle's words, "poetry, conceived in its broadest sense, is another name for the process of demystification in social and political history as in literary culture." Pyle also points out that "[t]he imagination can conduct such an activity because poetic language and social history are inextricable for Shelley, and the connections he describes unsettle the presumed boundaries of both" (Forest Pyle 95). The merging of poetry, history, and politics by Shelley is exactly what gives a new materiality to poetry, or materialism to poetics. The solid, secular involvement of socio-political elements in poetry is a new aesthetic and a new embodiment of awareness of the social milieu and the immediate concerns of a political climate. The aesthetic form of poetry and the secular concern of the body socio-politic, instead of one serving the other, seem to be interdependent upon and

intertwined with each other:

> [M]uch of the *Defence* ["A Defence of Poetry"] is devoted to restoring an understanding of the historical effectivity of poetry. Poetic language is treated throughout the essay as a material force of worldly legislation in a history understood as the strife-ridden and discontinuous confrontation of cultural and social forces. (The Ideology of Imagination 95)

The "material forces" in the context of a political climate and a social milieu have ushered Shelley's poetics from the world of *belles lettres* into the world of political engagement. Poetry and people have never been so close before; poetics and politics have never been so conflated and synergistic. With Shelley's critique, through Pyle's keen observation, poetics is furthered into a solid world of socio-political materialism.

Summing up Shelley's poetics, Martin Travers mentions Shelley's efforts devoted to the art of poetry in the their trajectories and approaches:

> Shelley seeks to define (and defend) the nature of poetry and the poetic activity. He [Shelley] does so both by highlighting the expansion of personal consciousness that poetry makes possible, and by stressing its humanizing effect upon social and political custom, which is achieved through the encouragement of empathy and the expansion of the moral sensibilities of mankind. (European Literature from Romanticism to Postmodernism 12)

The nature of poetry is to be understood as poetic activity enacted by human consciousness, in the case of Shelley, especially in social and political affairs. This is what Shelley considers the "humanizing effect" of poetry, and this is Shelley's idea of poetics—human-centered yet nonetheless fraught with social and political material forces.

The literary trend that parallels English Romanticism is American

Transcendentalism, and the poet-critic who emulates Shelley in critiquing poetry is an American Transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson. In a certain sense, "Emerson's poetics relies upon a Romantic model of subjectivity with an assumed unity of self, through which will pour universal meanings" (Selby 122). The Romantic subjectivity or the Self is identical with or embedded in the Emersonian poet as described by Pennell:

> The poet is an interpreter who recognizes through his or her own experiences the universalities that apply to all. The poet also perceives beauty to a greater degree than the average person and finds beauty present in things that are often regarded as vulgar or low. […] [T]he poet…must possess a purity of soul as well as genius and be self-reliant enough to use them to uncover the truths that reveal the interconnectedness of all things. […] When the poet expresses the truths that he or she perceives, the poet becomes a liberator who frees others to seek spiritual heights. (Pennell 42)

It is explicitly understandable that Emerson sees the poet as an elite figure who is superior to an "average person" by nature or in technique, and his interpretation or description of his world, through his own experience, tends toward universalities that apply to all of humanity. In other words, Emerson's poetics encourages a Neo-Classical elite-poet who will see beyond what meets the eyes for an ultimate and uniform meaning—a Transcendentalist poet.

Although here we may perceive a risk of ignoring objects and materiality because they may seem to the poet nothing but superficial expressions of a universal message or meaning within, Emerson's poet does not seek in-depth meanings of life or the world at the cost of objects and materiality. The poet, for Emerson, is at the same time an American Adam and "writing to be a form of Adamic naming of the world" (Stein 27). Emerson's Transcendentalist poet is "the sayer" and "the namer"

(ibid) who not only praises and records the beauty of things but also rules over them by his act of naming and writing. As Emerson says, the poet "once inspired by the infinite, is himself the creator in the finite" (Loreto 73), i.e., a creator after the Creator, a god after God. The religious connotation of the poetic mechanism, a salient celebration of the Christian God who presumably creates everything in the world, somehow functions otherwise through detailed wording and poetic metaphors that dwell on objects and materiality in various forms.

Emerson's Transcendentalist poetics bifurcates into two disparate yet coexisting research efforts, each with its critiquing values and aesthetic credits—the reading of objects and the retrieving of meanings. These two sides of Emerson's poetics originate from his belief in sensing objects in nature and then going beyond what is sensed for an underlying message; "Emerson had envisaged a poet who would perform an act of ongoing interpretation that would make the meaning of the hieroglyphics of nature transparent for the rest" (*Sentimental Collaborations* 101). This process of reading objects as signs for messages coincides not only with the basic concept of poetics—interpretation of poetic signs, but also with an object-oriented viewpoint in poetic studies. The goal of Transcendentalist poetics is of course to reach whatever meaning is available beyond the sign, yet the attention paid to appraising, adoring, and sometimes abhorring the object/sign paves the road for a later poetics that is exclusively devoted to objects and materials.

Between Emerson and Whitman, our attention needs to digress to Edgar Allan Poe, not so much because his poetics is systematic or well-founded but because his poetics makes its particular contribution to the discourse of objects. For Poe, "a poem can often say things that might never be said in any other way" (Frank 3), and a poem, by serving as a verbal vessel for an object, "becomes an object held in view" (McGann 34) and accordingly asks an aesthetic question—"[How] to make the

object" and constitute "understanding the object" for its reader (ibid). While Shelley endows poetry with material force in social and political causes, Poe transforms poetry into objects by using poetry to convey a vicarious aesthetic experience. By comparison, Poe seems to draw more attention to the object itself rather than to social or political worldliness. Shelley's materiality in poetry aims for a communication between aesthetics (poetry) and politics (materiality), but Poe's "making the object" and "understanding the object" have no social or political causes underlying the poetic efforts; we may therefore consider that Poe's aesthetic investment rests upon the object/poem as genuine poetics should.

As a critic of conflated poetics from the early American poet-critics, Walt Whitman, "like Emerson" with "a poetics of transcendence" and "like Poe" with "an aesthetics of pure poetry," "sought to practice a streetwise poetics that collapsed the traditional hierarchies separating hero and people, poet and audience" (Erikkila 76-9). Instead of seeking a universal message underneath various objects, Whitman's "poetics of union" aims to establish itself as "a poetics whose aesthetic appeal often relies on Whitman's capacity to elide rather than confront divisions" (Beltrán 82).

This particular poetics of Whitman's is often considered a product of his democratic thoughts. Noting his boundary-debunking poetics of unity, we come to realize that Whitman sees himself as part of America, part of the people, and the same as all, and the corollary is: Whitman can be everyone, Manhattan, America, and kosmos (Beltrán 64). Whitman, while embracing all homely everyday objects in life for subject matter, creates an identity on a cosmic scale; this identity, in turn, "produces a democratic poetics capable of identifying across lines of gender, region, race, and class" (ibid) and oftentimes across lines of species, objects and humans.

Whitman's attention to solid objects is closely related to his down-to-earth democratic poetics. Matters and materials lead to a portal of universal praise for the

world, so that "Whitman's 'democratic poetics' dedicates itself to 'formal universals'" (Maslan 20). Objects with a form instead of amorphous and abstract concepts, companions in flesh and blood instead of unseen presences, are abundantly present in Whitman's poems. Besides describing creatures and created objects already in the world, Whitman's poetics is also associated with "a form of carpentry" that sees the poet as a "forger," "maker," "welder," and "temperer" (Handley 117). The poet is then capable of depicting the created but at the same time capable of his own creation; the poem, as a result, is itself a form and a solid object fraught with a certain materiality. In fact, in *American Poetic Materialism*, one of the major works on materialism in modern poetry, Whitman is singled out as an early example of a materialist poet exactly because "Whitman develops his enthusiasm for the popular science of the 1850s into a progressive atomism" which he believes "capable of demonstrating that human subjects and human polities are built from 'a common air that bathes the globe'" (Noble 10). Such an idea of the world and its creation, of course, extends beyond human beings into all sentient beings and inanimate objects.

Matthew Arnold, on the contrary, harbors very different ideas about poetry and maintains that poetry must not be "sullying itself with the mundane or ignoble aspects of daily life, or wallowing about in the Time Stream, but keeping up the stands of philosophy and serenity established by the best of the Greeks, Sophocles" (Tasker 31). For that matter, Arnold is sometimes believed to be "gaining worth through restoring a broken connection with the past" (Carol T. Christ 105), and this could refer not only to his aesthetic attitude favoring the ancient Greeks but also to his frequent resort to nostalgia, which elicits negative responses from the contemporary aesthetic attitude. As examples of the latter, we may cite the "contemporary impatience with the poetics of nostalgia or strict classical decorum" (Tasker 34), or "because for all his humanism, Arnold does not value art" (Mazzeno 32), to name only a few.

Despite his underlying attitude in favor of classicalism, Arnold is surprisingly modern in terms of his view toward objects and materials. Many have quoted Arnold on this, but Pater in particular is quoted and compared with Arnold in this matter (Biswas 513). Arnold tries to include a wide spectrum of "all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science" in order to manifest the ultimate purpose of all intellects—"to see the object as in itself it really is" (Arnold 1). This different side of Arnold, with a rigid, scientific, and materialist point of view toward the object under the pen of the poet, reveals a fairly advanced attitude toward literary study based upon objects and matter. Furthermore, in Arnold's opinion none of the objects or humans stand alone from the rest. He believes that "everywhere there is connexion, everywhere there is illustration: no single event, no single literature, is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures" (Longenbach 135). Obviously, Arnold's classical decorum extends to a relatively objective relationship of harmony between objects and humans, even though he emphasizes that "'the study of the classical writers of antiquity' is mandatory to the production of excellent poetry" (Harrison 68).

Coming down to modern times, something of the classical idea of the poet still lingers in Ezra Pound's poetics. His unique poetics is believed by some to be both classical and pragmatic, and the two sides of his poetics are juxtaposed as follows:

> Pound's [poetics] is avowedly pragmatic poetics; the poet, in his scheme of things, is not the purveyor of great truths but, in the classical sense, a *maker* (*poietes*) and inventor of language…his seemingly simple formulations—"Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree" (*ABCR* 28, 36)… "poetry…is the most concentrated form of verbal expression" (*ABCR* 36). (Tryphonopoulos & Adams 224)

Pound's step away from great truths does reveal his belief in something solid, physical,

i.e. materialistic which appears in the above quote as language, the lingual materiality. The poet, according to Pound, becomes an artist of language, and poetry is a substantial creation made from the material of language.

In terms of his poetic language, he is almost always associated with Imagism, which, too, contributes to a material-centered poetics that encourages awareness of physical reality. For a convincing explanation of the connection between Imagism and a material-centered poetics, we may refer to the statement that "Imagist poetics from Symbolist poetics, discovers the 'registration of reality' to be the ground and goal of Imagism…the various strands of Pound's thoughts…combined to form a coherent poetics for a 'poetry of reality'" (Thomas F. Grieve 13). To depict physical reality, Pound believes that poetic language, in the form of images and symbols, should flesh out amorphous ideas into the perceivable. This poetics also helps us to understand two of the poetic procedures which Pound is famous for: "to go in fear of abstractions" and "to demand direct treatment of the thing" (Michael Alexander 98).

The critic-poet most closely related to or associated with Pound is T. S. Eliot, whose poetics conveys an extremely strong sense of time. For Eliot, "poetry is not the effusion of private emotions of the poet" and "the poet…is not a free being; but is submerged in the tradition, and must not escape from the tradition" (Sarker 37). However, it is crucial to point out that instead of insisting upon merely following tradition, Eliot's strong sense of tradition concerning poetics and poetry intends to express an ever-new, ever-changing idea of the art of poetry so as to maintain a poetics which always keeps up with the time. It is on this principle that Eliot contends:

> Each age demands different things from poetry, though its demands are modified from time to time, by what some new poet has given. So our criticism, from age to age, will reflect the things that the age demands […] Our contemporary critics,

like their predecessors, are making particular responses to particular situations. (*The Use of Poetry & The Use of Criticism* 141)

While Eliot is mostly understood as a poet/critic self-situated in the stream of literary tradition, he is in a sense free from a constant sense of situatedness; he in fact asserts that there should be a new poetics for a new time. The situatedness often attributed to Eliot is thus more of a kind of aesthetic mobility of appreciation, which allows poetry to be fitted into the poetic context of the time. Such awareness of time and maybe its socio-political milieu can be traced back to the fact that "Pound connects individualism to poetic precision and integrity" and that "a poetic equivalent of their politics can be found in the regular metre" (Beasley 61)—a shared and similar view.

Besides Eliot's emphasis on a proper poetics for a proper time, his idea of poetic creation has a salient inclination to make concrete what is abstract, i.e., to materialize the elusive, for he believes that the poet "in the act of composition, is 'engaged in the task of trying to find verbal equivalents for states of mind and feelings'" (Rampal 98). In Eliot's view, the abstract mentality and feelings, visceral to the individual, must be converted into something perceivable and tangible in the solid form and materiality of language.

In addition to lingual materiality, Eliot is frequently noted for his allusions to Greek mythology, which transposes his lingual materiality onto a higher level. Although it is said that "Eliot has used the Greek myth in his poetry because he, like the symbolists, found a very deep spirituality in Greek mythology, which was quite different from the vulgarity of the modern world" (Barzinji 4), it is noteworthy that mythological allusions, a system of symbols effective in the double context of the poem and the culture, embody more literary physicality than the poet's idiosyncratic employment of language. Similarly, Eliot in his poems pens life and death with images and symbols based upon materials and matter, as suggested by Tiwari's

striking statement: “If we analyze the pattern in Eliot’s poetry as far as death-in-life archetype is concerned, we will discover that the imagery and symbolism were related to material sphere...” (Tiwari 105).

Eliot’s poetics is at the same time secular and transcendental: the secular side of his poetics proclaims that “politics, history, orthodoxy are key features in the poetry” (Rao 8) while the transcendental side is “based on a monistic ideal” (Cuddy 222) that “explores origins and process while also offering his [Eliot’s] own ‘conception of the universe’” (Cuddy 41). Besides making sense of these two sides of his poetics, we must also come to terms with Eliot’s use of language and the possible meaning it intends to convey. In the study by George Williamson, we find one of the best answers and the most appropriate way to approach Eliot’s often conflating and heavily allusive language:

> This study assumes that poetry as meaning is neither plain sense nor nonsense, but a form of imaginative sense. If we insist that a lyric poem does not mean but is, we assert not a different mode of being but that its emotional values cannot be translated. (Williamson 15)

If the basic meaning of poetics designates the part where interpretation is its function, what Williamson says here is that poetic language like that used by Eliot or by Stevens should still, through the right kind of examination, reveal to the reader a proper meaning, or in Williamson’s own words “an imaginative sense.” Such is the ultimate goal of this dissertation.

Since New Criticism

Literary criticism witnesses periods when various schools and diverse criteria strive and thrive in coexistence and oftentimes interference. Such a time is especially obvious after the emergence of New Criticism. According to *American Literary*

Criticism Since the 1930s, the fundamentals of New Criticism poetics, or a formalist poetics, include: "to separate literary criticism from the study of sources…and to focus attention squarely on the literary object itself," "to explore the structure of a work," "to champion an organic theory of literature rather than a dualistic conception of form and matter and to focus on the words of the text," "to practice close reading of individual works," and "to distinguish literature from both religion and morality" (Leitch 23). Because of its focus on texts and words, New Criticism, after Pound's and Eliot's emphasis on how language fleshes out abstract feelings, raises the appreciation of literature's literal and textual materiality to an even higher level.

Owing to its close relations with other schools, structuralism, deconstruction, etc., several scholars from these related schools may often be mentioned alongside discussions of New Criticism, and Roman Jokobson is one of them. "In his most direct statement of his poetics," says Art Berman, "Jokobson asserts that 'the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination' (*Linguistics and Poetics* 95)" (*From the New Criticism to Deconstruction* 137). In Berman's explanation, Jokobson means that "in poetry, where an 'equivalence' of grammatical or sound structure is found in the syntactical sequence, there too can be ascertained a semantic equivalence" (ibid). The close reading of New Criticism in this manner leads to its well-known ever-ramifying possibilities of interpretation of a text or even one single sentence.

New Critics also argue that "literary works in which the merging of thought and sensibility occurs" become "the highest achievement of literature" and that "the knowledge they thus provide is genuine, and cannot be reduced" (Ewa M. Thompson 78). This is an argument shared among "Eliot, Ransom, Tate and Brooks" (ibid) and this further explains why each and every word in the text demands meticulous and manifold interpretation by the New Critics.

What New Criticism is often accused of is in fact what is most conducive to reading poetry: “The New Critics’ insistence on referring to literature as poetry immediately prompted the complaint that New Criticism’s theories and methods were relevant primarily to poetry” (Childs 123). New Criticism is new in the sense that the focus on textual materiality, including the text itself and the words within, with all peripheral sources and background ignored, had never before been so intense. Yet New Criticism is not as new in the sense that it features and honors poetry as much as, if not more than, in Classical times. Such a classical attitude toward literature, especially poetic study, allows New Critics to maintain their meticulous interpretation of the poetic materiality of language as described “in the words of Cleanth Brooks,…‘if poetry exists as poetry in any meaningful sense, the attempt must be made’” (Bozak 11).

Sometime around “1957, when the hegemony of the New Criticism was breaking” (Lentricchia 7), its derivative, descendent, or dissident schools began to thrive and map out the terrains of contemporary criticism. But the influence of New Criticism has not ceased. The wave of New Criticism, though not necessarily with all its principles and methodology, develops into and holds together various literary concepts and critical approaches. The overall development may be best described by the following observation:

> Each of the New Critics contributed to this general conception of poetry and criticism even as he sometimes performed his own variations on it, calling notice to this or that aspect of the text as especially meaningful, bringing forward a new element of interpretive technique, or disputing a precept of critical procedure that another New Critic had outlined. The New Criticism was a common enterprise that was spacious enough to absorb disagreement. (William E. Cain 521)

It is most useful to conclude that New Criticism, rather than absolutely designating a

certain school of literary criticism, may well serve to name a period of special awareness of, and emphasis on, the independence of literary texts.

The focus on language later leads on to an emphasis on the structure of language, on which both literary criticism and linguistic study depend heavily, as for instance in Saussurean linguistics, which is also one of the many contributors to New Criticism. Some critics believe that "Derrida derives his tenets of deconstruction from Saussurean linguistics—the same source of theoretical insights for structuralism, the predecessor of deconstructive textualism" (Cai 28). On the other hand, while likewise mentioning poetics in the viewpoint of Deconstruction, Derrida quotes Barthes (for example) and proclaims that "poetics tries to identify the system of codes responsible for these accepted and acceptable meanings." He continues his proclamation by saying "Saussure's project of scientific linguistics also depends on meaning—specifically, difference of meaning" ("The Purveyor of Truth" 68). Ramification of the principles and approaches concerning Deconstruction go on to develop further after Derrida and his contemporaries, but there are still grids of this critical territory for a basic grip of its terrain.

Deconstruction "can be viewed as a method particularly well adapted to…inquiry into poetry and criticism concerned with knowledge," but knowledge is not here to serve as the focus of study; "rather, deconstruction questions the scope, the concept, the production of knowledge as the basis of mastery, power, authority" (Nantell 26). It is obvious at this point that "deconstruction examines the force of power and authority in the text as a desire for mastery—the attempt to master knowledge through language, and meaning through interpretation" (Anderson 138). Deconstruction, purposefully and ultimately, aims to debunk the constructions of authorities, powers, and their desire; dubious of knowledge and the power to construct knowledge, it tends to go beyond all structures and objects, including language, to

seek an underneath message. Deconstruction may thus be viewed as less connected or attentive to objects and materials in general.

After we understand the aim of Deconstruction, we may better understand the nature of the target of the "de-" in "Deconstruction." In speaking of Structuralist poetics, Jonathan Culler, borrowing a term from Noam Chomsky—"literary competence", explains that "the notion of literary competence was frequently critized in reviews of later discussion of Structuralist Poetics—generally for presuming that there was one proper way to read literature, but in fact the notion need not entail any such presumtion" (*Structuralist Poetics* xi). From the myth or misunderstanding of what Structuralist poetics asserts, we may realized that Deconstruction attempts to liberate literature from one fixed structure and method of reading and interpretation. An additional point to be noted here is that Culler, as a major critical figure himself, is the subject of poetics discourse among other critics and is often held under discussion of poetics and hermeneutics.

We may turn from this point to poetics and hermeneutics, which are often found in heated discussion among critics around Culler's time as to "Culler's work and the critical quest for a transcendental hermeneutics which began with Schleiermacher and which reaches its climax in Gadamer, Ricoeur, Apel and Haberman." Thiselton continues: "Thus in his earlier book *Structuralist Poetics* Culler makes it clear by '*Poetics'* he means the conditions for the possibility of processes of reading" (Anthony C. Thiselton 504). It is evident here that Structuralist poetics either traces back to hermeneutics or shares considerable similarities with it. The relation between poetics and hermeneutics or the attention to such a relation actually started with Jonathan Culler's *Literary Theory*, in which Culler contends that "there is a distinction…between two kinds of projects [of literary studies]…poetics [starting from meaning to the possibility of meaning] and hermeneutics [starting from forms to

meaning/interpretation of forms]" (*Literary Theory* 84). While poetics is stated to be linguistics-oriented, hermeneutics is considered from "the field of law and religion, where people seek to interpret an authoritative legal or sacred text" (ibid); this explanation helps to explain why abundant biblical studies were coupled with poetic studies at this time.

Michael Riffaterre, another figure much mentioned at the time, proposes a poetics which is often understood as "poetics of reading" or "poetic semiotics" and is explained as a method of "examining if and how the poetics of literary form can be made compatible with the…reading" (Kinczewski 14). His poetics demonstrated that "words do not refer directly to an external reality but to a signifying intertext woven from writings of the literary heritage" (Juvan 152). Even though this was after New Criticism in point of time, we can still see how later-developed poetics, with a brand-new focus on the text itself, can still be strongly influenced by the literary tradition which stood as a firm belief for Eliot. Critics and critical schools after New Criticism, though new and ever-developing, in a way form a continuum rather than a discontinuation. One more noteworthy point is that Riffaterre, among other critics, is a major figure who starts drawing critical attention to the idea of intertextuality, as is featured in Marko Juvan's work—*History and Poetics of Intertextuality*.

Roman Jokobson, "inspired by Saussure's linguistics and by Husserl's phenomenology," demands "a strictly scientific attitude towards the artistic work" (Edward J. Brown 254). This "strictly scientific attitude" helps develop a "a semiotic view, which included…the syntactic and semantic domains of sign texts…the pragmatic realm as well, encompassing the encoder and the various decoders of the aesthetic message, as well as all kinds of cultural contexts" (ibid). The resort to strict linguistics (in its three aspects: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) and the inclusion of cultural contexts are both evidence that Jakobsonian poetics is a response to the

preceding New Criticism and an opposite modification of it. With its indispensable dependence on the study of language, critics believe that "Jokobson's achievement in poetics is to have explicated and vindicated a…dictum that 'literature is…a kind of extension and application of certain properties of language'" (Kiparsky 36). This is why in the development of other literary and linguistic studies than poetics, such as translation studies and communication theory, Jokobson's linguistic approach is likewise influential.

Paul de Man, or European literary criticism "in de Man's characterizations," "tends to stand for a historically informed study of literature or, even better, a synthesis of attention to both history and form" (Balfour 56). We may say that Paul de Man establishes his poetics from a human-centered point of view in two ways: the employment of anthropomorphism and the focus on the poet. Paul de Man's "primary contribution to a formal theory of personification" can be found in his work which "attempts a distinct definition of the general term 'anthropomorphism' as something like a trope" (Paxson 33). His use of personification, instead of serving as the poetic device of a figure of speech, expands into an anthropomorphic poetics, "which takes one entity for another and thus implies the constitution of specific entities…into one single assertion or essence…[which] excludes all others" (De Man 241). The spirit of seeking one entity that speaks for all tends to see all entities as interchangeable and, finally, leads to seeking an underlying message. De Man's second focus is upon the poet himself. De Man tries to define the poet by his nature rather than his function, for he believes the poet is not building something to serve a practical purpose like a person who builds a house to live in. (See Newmark 95). For De Man, the poet "constructs nature in a thoroughly non-theological manner…is therefore a wild man, *ein Wilder*" (Kevin Newmark 95). What "wild" means here should be a sense of intimacy with nature and spontaneous appreciation of nature, as Newmark later

explains: “What is wild…is the poet’s…capacity to find nature sublime, to consider the world in a thoroughly literal and therefore non-teleological manner” (ibid). This non-teleological wildness in the poet seems to balance De Man’s anthropomorphism by attending to nature instead of what lies underneath the sometimes personified nature.

Geoffrey Hartman, famous for his “Poetics of Prophecy” which “makes more explicit the connection between his view of Wordsworth and the Hebrew prophets” (Judith Page 184), intends his “prophetic mode” of poetics “to repair time” along with trauma (Mary A. Favret 83). Hartman claims that “testimony [often identical to poetry] goes hand in hand with trauma” (Ruderman 89). This close relation of testimony to trauma, as understood by Harman, makes it possible that “as a discourse, poetry itself is a traumatized genre, compelled to tell its story out of some deep wound” (ibid). In the discourse of pain and related literature, Hartman’s poetics accordingly often applies. However, by adding a tactile texture to poetry along with pain and trauma, Hartman inadvertently offers poetic study another portal to materiality and thus contributes to a new materialistic poetics.

As hermeneutics is an influential element to poetics in the early 20th century, so is phenomenology. Phenomenology, to be brief, is “a philosophy of incompleteness that precludes closure” and it “accommodates the enigma which haunts the artist’s naïve frequenting of the world,…a non-demiurgic philosophy” (Carole Bourne-Taylor 18). This willingness to embrace enigma and lack of closure is reflected in the poetics of Gaston Bachelard when he describes poetic imagination as an ever-moving, ever-flowing interaction:

> His [Gaston Bachelard] poetic phenomenology describes imagination as a perpetual interaction between the human subject which imagines and the image itself. Imagination is thus recognized to be conscious of something other than

itself which motivates, induces and transforms it. (Richard Kearney 97)

Phenomenological critics, Bachelard in particular, can be content with the amorphous poetic imagination among other poetic elements. However, this is not to say that such amorphous imagination denies any forms or embodiment. On the contrary, Bachelard "considers phenomenology as tied to the spontaneous appearance of the poetic image in consciousness, presented as an immediate product of the heart, the soul, and the being of man captivated in its immediacy" (Balzar 184). In Bachelard's expressions like "spontaneous appearance," "poetic image," and "immediate product of the heart," we see that images, signs and symbols of all kinds should be employed as vessels for the poet's feelings, rendering concrete what is abstract, without a specific form but indefinitely amenable to all kinds of forms.

Another alliance between philosophy and critical thinking in the 20th century is that between Marxism and poetics. In the words of *Theater of the Oppressed*: "For idealist poetics, social thought conditions social being; for Marxist poetics, social being conditions social thought" (Boal 93). Marxist poetics asserts that social forces decide all human production, including cultural production like literature. Thus it is understandable that Marxist poetics "focused, in important ways, on issues of ideology and class" (Perloff 22). Such a poetics aims to be a voice for the oppressed class and the injustice of human conditions; as a result, the term "Marxist poetics of revolution" often becomes a fuller designation of it (Hörmann 49, 90, 308, 337, 358). Marxist poetics of revolution, also known as "poetics of the oppressed," makes possible the idea that the spectator in the theater or the reader of poetry "no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or to act in his place," thus the spectator and the reader are freed (Frances Babbage 38). Marxist poetics is by nature political, sociological, and has the overall liberation of the human race for its ultimate goal.

Between Marxist poetics and the next major wave of literary study—Reader's Response, another literary figure needs to be brought into our review of poetics—Walter Benjamin. With his idiosyncratic choice of words, Benjamin "defines the core or quintessence of a poem as the 'poetic': 'the sphere [that] encompasses the 'poetic task', which in turn is 'both immanent and external to a poem'" (Jo Law 164). Although the poetic system of Benjamin is too complicated to be summarized as a uniform idea, through two of his key words—the "poetic" as mentioned above and the "awakening" which shall soon be discussed—we can gain some basic understanding of how his influence on literary criticism has lasted down to the present. While the former keyword "poetic" informs us of "the form or immanent construction to emerge" in art and poetry (Caygill 45), the latter keyword "awakening" designates "Benjamin's conception of interruption" which "is significant because it offers an alternative to teleological thought" (Michael Mack 64). In other words, Benjamin brings into modern poetics the idea of immanent structure in poetry and the dissent from teleological critiques, among others yet to be discussed.

One more poetics that draws contemporary critical attention, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, is Reader's Response. "Reader-response criticism," put briefly, "replaces examinations of a text in-and-of-itself with discussions of the reading process, the 'interaction' of reader and text" (Mailloux 20). By so doing, reader-response criticism seeks to convince us that "the intensity of reception [of the reader] will correspond to the intensity of the message [in the text]" (Stanley Fish 94). In trying to define reader-response poetics, Christopher Collins mentions that it is "a poetics of reading, which equates language with action,…naturally opposed by a hermeneutics [from form to meaning] of reading" (*The Poetics of the Mind's Eye* xx). Language, in the view of reader-response poetics, is an action involving writing and reading rather than a static tool or a set of fixed signs. Another application of such

poetics can be found in Hans Robert Jauss. When De Man speaks of Jauss' reader-response position, he points out that Jauss "views the text in relation to the phenomenal world, to the sensory or perceptual experience of the reader, rather than retaining the focus on grammar [linguistic elements]" (Anne Jamison 57). This means that reader's response refers not to emotional spontaneity but to individual experience and a new aesthetic experience reflected by or built upon the individual. Reader-response poetics is in this sense a new individualist poetics.

Chapter One

The Given Food against the Constituted Subject

> *But what is the given? It is, says Hume, the flux of the sensible, a collection of impressions and images, or a set of perceptions. It is the totality of that which appears.*
>
> —Gilles Deleuze (*Empiricism & Subjectivity* 87)

Neither Hume nor Deleuze has dealt specifically with food agency, the idea that food acts as an agent and exerts influences over human beings in life as in art. Nevertheless, the idea of food agency is derived from them – specifically, from Hume as analyzed and emphasized by Deleuze. In *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, Deleuze opens his eponymous Chapter V, "Empiricism and Subjectivity," by quoting and supporting Hume's assertion that subjectivity itself is a critical problem due to its acts of believing and invention (86).

While the act of believing is an arbitrary act of assuming the truth of one thing rather than another, invention is an arbitrary act of constituting the totality of all things—so as to enable the subject to engage everything. These are of course ill-grounded acts of the human mind according to both thinkers, but something worse-grounded comes before believing and invention—a very problematic constituted subject. It is the awareness of this problematic subject that calls for the shift of paradigm from human subjectivity to material agency. Material agency, as opposed to constituted subjectivity, helps the human mind avoid the arbitrary acts of believing and invention, so that objects external to the human mind can be sensed without an assumed truth or, on the other hand, an invented totality.

In a Humean-Deleuzean understanding of the human subject, the external objects are referred to as "the given," the presented objects or environment the human being

finds himself among or in. The given comes first, or in other words, the perceived or to-be-perceived external objects are always there.[7] The human being tries to experience the given by sensual contacts with it and eventually tries to systematize it. In this attempt at systematization, as Deleuze puts it:

> The construction of the given makes room for the constitution of the subject. The given is no longer given to a subject. Rather, the subject constitutes itself in the given. Hume's merit lies in the singling out of this empirical problem…. (87)

Obviously the human efforts are first made to comprehend the external objects and environment but later turn inward to form the human subject. The external, in this theoretical frame, is always there as the goal of human understanding. Accordingly, the constitution of the given is necessary for the systematization of the external, or the understanding of "the world." However, halfway through experiencing the world, the human being turns his attention, trying to position himself in the world. Hence "the subject constitutes itself in the given."

The invention of the subject, in other words, is a deviation from an attempt to acquire understanding of the physical world. If the human understanding of his world is completed only after the invention of the subject, then such an understanding of the physical world is achieved through an invented subject. Human understanding is then

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[7] Strictly speaking, there is certainly a distinction between a sensuously observed object and what an object really is. If we may, for the sake of discursive convenience, refer to the former as the given object and the latter as the absolute object, the distinction between the given object and the absolute object is of no indispensable significance for our current discussion. Instead, the major concern rests upon the difference between the experiencing of external objects and the forming of an internal subject. In addition, once the absolute object enters into human perception, it is already transformed into a given object by human senses. An objective perception of the absolute object is therefore impossible. It is also with such an awareness that material agency (including food agency) is asserted to replace human subjectivity, in the hope of a less anthropocentric, less human-chauvinistic understanding of the given object, even though an understanding of the absolute object is logically denied.

mediated, deflected, and defected.

Imagine there are flora and fauna, and there is a man. The man tries to acquire an understanding of the flora and fauna, but during the process, he acquires an idea of "I" and marks everything he tries to understand with this "I." If he sees the land surface, he sees vegetation (the difference between where the plants stand and where I stand). If he sees a potential function, it may be e.g. a hideout (the contrast between the plants in density and I in danger). If he sees no one else is around, he thinks he owns a garden (the relationship between ownership and availability). However, the flora are the flora. The subject-vs.-objects "I" sees a difference of footholds, a benefit of the surroundings, and a claim of property. He never looks into the plants. In the same manner, the fauna he sees are likely to be the wild (the uninhabitable land full of animals), a game park, or a zoo. He cannot look into the animals as themselves.

This example, though falling short of the philosophical depth or theoretical seriousness of Hume's observation, helps us understand how we are prone to measure the external objects from our own standpoint rather than to see them as individual objects in a non-anthropocentric perspective. This is why Deleuze says that "Hume's merit lies in the singling out of this empirical problem" (*Empiricism and Subjectivity* 87). In the opening quotation from Deleuze, the word "totality" has a crucial twofold meaning: it points to the wholeness of the world constituted by human observation, and it also informs us that such a constituted wholeness is an arbitrary and totalitarian mediated impression. Such a Deleuzean observation by no means stands alone. It is up to date, well supported by contemporary psychology:

> Our brains build models of the world and continuously modify these models on the basis of the signals that reach our senses. So, what we actually perceive are our brain's models of the world. They are not the world itself, but, for us, they are as good as. You could say that our perceptions are

fantasies that coincide with reality.…. (Frith 134-5)

There is nothing wrong with the attempt to explore the external, but there is something wrong with the subjectivity through which we explore the external. It bends the external to its own will. If the constituted subjectivity, or, the constituted "brain's models" may always stand between us and the world, then they become a tinted, deflecting pair of glasses. Through them, we see less of the world than our projection of the world.

Yet the contribution of philosophy is to single out problems, to wake the human mind to new perspectives, not to specify applicability. From Hume to Deleuze, from Deleuze to the current academic schools of new materialism and extended cognition, we are hardly told how to see and think without a constituted subject. If it is entrenched in our human nature that we constitute a subject while constituting a perceived world, how can we possibly rid ourselves of this epistemological predicament? How can we turn from the subject and focus on the given? Under what discourse or circumstances can we achieve an understanding of the given without the constituted subject? One possible answer to these questions may lie in the topic of this chapter—food agency.

Food agency is of course a type of material agency. The assertion that food can act as agent is basically the same as that about various materials, although food has one unique feature which other objects cannot emulate—to become part of the human being, to become ultimately immanent. In the later sections on new materialism and the extended consciousness, this unique feature shall again be elaborated upon.

The shift from human subjectivity to food agency is a shift of paradigm, and this shift of paradigm first alters the relations between humans and food. While such a paradigm focuses on experiencing the given without rather than constituting models within, this is a resort to empiricism. "Empiricism," as Deleuze points out in *Pure*

Immanence, "had always fought for the exteriority of relations" (37). The aim of empiricism is to place relations or all things related to human beings in perspectives of exteriority. Deleuze follows such an observation by offering us the necessity of resorting to empiricism—because "relations are external and heterogeneous to their terms—impressions or ideas" (37-8). This is to say, the world is one thing, whereas our ideas of the world are another. By turning to Hume's philosophy as re-introduced by Deleuze, we are trying to bypass delusions caused by human subjectivity.

It would be impossible, though, for the human being to think and observe the world around him in a completely non-human way. The point of adopting material agency in the Hume-Deleuzean perspective is to acquire awareness. The shift of paradigm originates from the awareness that human viewpoints are often deluded or confined to seeing the world only from certain angles. With the added awareness, we see that the way human beings relate themselves to the world should be reversed—from the inside to the outside. This is exactly how *Pure Immanence* describes this exteriority-based paradigm: "it is a world of exteriority, a world in which thought itself exists in a fundamental relationship with the Outside" (38).

Not only is the standpoint reversed, the thought that used to be considered to exist in the human mind now exists in the relationship or interaction between the human being and his outside world. (Schools of Extended Consciousness are of course derived from such a thought, then going on to the idea that human consciousness resides oftentimes outside humans and that human thoughts are frequently found in things). This is what Deleuze calls "an autonomous logic of relations" made possible by Hume (ibid). Hume and Deleuze not only claim that our relationships with external objects are autonomous and independent, but that all objects external to us are likewise autonomous and independent. Food agency is based on such a Hume-Deleuzean claim.

The awareness of this Hume-Deleuzean claim shall enable us to be aware of two more things: (1) human consciousness has to function in time, and (2) three basic relations between humans and food must first be noticed. From Aristotle in *Physics* to Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason*, numerous philosophers and their works in between and afterwards argue that human consciousness has always been conditioned in the sense of time. That is to say, anything we see, know, and learn has to be perceived in a time frame. As for the basic relations between humans and food, the relations that change in accordance with a focus on food agency are consumption, recollection, and memory. As pertinent to the paradigmatic shift, these three relations shall be re-examined.

"[T]here would not be time unless there were soul," says Aristotle (88). If the human soul is a prerequisite of time, then time is a built-in sense within human consciousness. The idea of the soul as human consciousness that necessitates the sense of time has been passed on from Aristotle to Hume (*A Treatise of Human Nature* 278) and Deleuze (*Difference and Repetition* 101). Kant, on the other hand, with the same belief that the sense of time is indispensable for human consciousness, makes his statement quite clear:

> Time is a necessary representation, lying at the foundation of all our intuitions. With regard to phenomena in general, we cannot think away time from them, and represent them to ourselves as out of and unconnected with time. (*Critique of Pure Reason* 32)

The idea that human consciousness is always conditioned in time and is always measuring external objects by time should be a prerequisite in realizing relations between humans and external objects, including food. According to Kant, we might say, anything we eat is eaten at a certain time. It is impossible to think of a kind of food without being able to situate it in a certain period of time. Therefore, food is

always associated with time.

The awareness of how much human consciousness or cognition depends on time has a twofold meaning for our understanding of food agency. Because the sense of time is something from which we cannot detach ourselves, a less conventional (hence less anthropocentric) but more Deleuzean sense of time can come to our aid (Or, to do justice to Hume, it is still Hume-Deleuzean, for Deleuze quotes Hume in pointing out that time is "the structure of the mind" (*Empiricism and Subjectivity* 94).). His three syntheses of time offer a feasible middle ground to re-examine the human being's temporal dimension via his relationship with objects around him.

The three traditional relations between humans and food are consumption, recollection, and memory. Since these relations are established from the conventional anthropocentric point of view, modification is necessary for the shift of paradigm. From the conventional point of view, the purpose of food is to serve as the source of nourishment for the human being. Such a purpose defines the first relation between food and the human being, with the former as the consumed and the latter as the consumer. Once the food is consumed and its features are well registered in the human consciousness, it then forms a memory. This memory defines the second relation between food and the human being – memory. If the former relation is established when the food is served, and the latter relation is established when the food is finished, we may say that food, when present, enables consumption and food, when absent, establishes memory. There is yet one more relation—recollection.

Recollection here refers to the limbic stage between consumption and memory. Recollection is not to be identified with memory. Memory designates the stage where impressions are available or retrieved. Recollection denotes the stage where efforts and struggles are being made to gravitate toward memory. Therefore, in their proper order, the three relations are consumption, recollection, and memory.

Anthropocentrically, consumption emphasizes that the human being owns the agency to act upon food and to consume the food. Recollection emphasizes that the human being has full control of summoning back lost time or past experiences. Sooner or later he will re-collect the remainders or reminders and piece them together. First is the conscious act of consumption. Later comes the conscious effort to piece together experiences. The memory that emerges from these is of course a result of the human mind. Memory is registered in the human mind. The human consciousness is the only site for these relations.

When human subjectivity is replaced by food agency, none of the above makes sense. Consumption ignores the influence of food over man. Recollection ignores the fact that the human being is more of a recipient of stimulus than a spontaneous gleaner of thoughts and scenes. Memory defies the extended-consciousness and transitive-memory theory that part of human consciousness is lodged outside and that memory is not retrieved. In other words, the relation of consumption should be known as a relation of interaction, the interaction between humans and food. The relation of recollection, triggered by a certain food, is mostly passive. The memory, constituted in bits and pieces from external objects, is certainly created rather than retrieved intact. The trajectory from the limbic stage of recollection to the stage of memory creation is what *Proust and Signs* is mostly concerned with. It is what Deleuze tries to realize with his idea of "involuntary memory" (14).

Food is defined by its function. Food discourse is all in all a journey in search of the middle ground. There will not be food, but only objects, if human needs are not taken into consideration. Food in itself is already an anthropocentric term. Yet our understanding of food from merely human-centered viewpoints is insufficient. The middle ground has to have foundations based on human attachment to food influence and detachment from exclusively anthropocentric values. This is why consumption is

better understood as encounter, why time is included in the discourse of memory, and why food is experienced as signs. In arguing these assertions, I am arguing that food discourse is a Deleuzean discourse as food poetics is a Deleuzean poetics.

The premise of food poetics is simple. The point of departure is food itself. Food is an object with a feeding function. Since its active function defines its properties, food should not be taken as a passive, inactive item in its literary representation. Food is also the most basic human need. If food is desirable for human survival, enjoyable for human indulgence, and active in terms of exerting influence over humans, then food, as an agent, claims firm ties with human beings in life as in art. In the poetic art, such understanding is devoted to interpreting how food functions from actual life into art form. My methodology is heavily based on Deleuzean thoughts. My food poetics, loosely defined before we get into details, is accordingly a Deleuze-based system in interpreting food as things, signs, and times, in cultural as well as literary contexts.

Identities of Food: Function, Thing, Sign, and Time

Function: Consumption, Recollection, and Memory Recapitulated

In the preceding section, we saw the conventional idea about food—a feeding functionality. Also mentioned were the three ideas of consumption, recollection, and memory. When its physical function defines its identity, food has not yet entered into a cultural discourse. The first step to take is to pay attention to the problematic, arbitrary anthropocentric paradigm of the human subjectivity. To abandon human subjectivity and to adopt food agency becomes the second step. Only after the second step can we realize that consumption should be seen as interaction, recollection is passively triggered, and memory is created rather than retrieved. When the above awakening is acquired, we have prepared food for discourse.

Food as a Thing: Agency

On the premise that "thing" designates an object with agency to act instead of an inanimate, inactive article, food possesses the capacities to feed and affect people. In "The Functions of Things," Beth Preston distinguishes all functions of things in two categories according to their structural conditions: "system function" and "proper function" (29). The former refers to how things function among other things, the latter among their similar kinds. In the case of food, the "system function" of food is how food functions differently among other things. What distinguishes food from other things is of course its feeding function. Therefore the "system" function of food is feeding. On the other hand, the "proper function" of food is how one food object functions differently among other food objects. Since all foods feed human beings but only a certain food object produces a memory of a certain person on a certain occasion, the "proper function" of food can be understood as memory production. The system function of food is of course self-evident, but its proper function takes a longer reasoning curve.

Food objects interact with different objects in a diverse system and they interact with their own or similar kinds in an exclusive lineage (e.g.: system function: The desk lamp enables the function of a book, a pen, or helps locate a paperclip in the drawer. proper function: The desk lamp is a revolution compared to the candle, but may one day be displaced by the energy-saving LED lamp.).[8] With both its system function and proper function, food influences people. One either allows food to go into the body system for feeding or into the consciousness to produce memory.

While comparisons between food items can be made, as the proper function of other things often lead to, [again I suggest deletion] such comparisons are not an end

[8] The word "proper" in Preston's context obviously means not "appropriate" but "in itself" or "*per se*," as in "America proper."

in themselves. The food items eventually have to enter and affect the human body to fulfill their identity as food. The 'proper function' of interaction with its own kind eventually becomes a 'system function' interaction with the human being. If involuntary memories are mostly triggered by food (as later discussed as the main issue of food discourse and food poetics), as long as one sees a certain quality in a similar food, the food object, however similar or dissimilar, may trigger the same memory (Technically speaking, the very first food object that triggered a memory was digested and is gone. All later food objects are at best similar but never the same.). The food-memory mechanism operates on such a principle of recognition of similarity.

Before we move on to involuntary memory triggered by food, there are scholars who draw our attention to the relations between human emotions and their encounter with food. "To be made happy by this or that," Sara Ahmed suggests, "is to recognize that happiness starts from somewhere other than the subject who may use the word to describe a situation" (29). Ahmed starts by emphasizing the passive role the human being assumes. Not only is the human being passive, the human feeling demands an external source instead of an inner inspiration. Happiness, among other human emotions, is a feeling channeled from outside to inside the human mind. For Ahmed, happiness is an "involving affect" (ibid), and "happiness also turns us toward objects" (ibid). That is to say, we are first made happy by objects and then made attached to objects.

When we consider food a thing with agency to act, we must first talk about its encounter with human beings. The physical contact between two objects, human or non-human, is addressed by Deleuze as affect or encounter. While affect is fully charged with philosophical implications, encounter helps keep the human contact with food on a physical level. Like Ahmed, Deleuze starts his observation of such an

encounter with joy. According to Deleuze, "two sorts of encounters must be distinguished":

> The first sort occurs when I meet a body whose relation [something like its overall 'embeddedness' or 'relatability' in other ways or contexts] combines with my own. Whatever the case, a body whose relation is preserved along with my own is said to "agree with my nature," to be "good," that is, "useful," to me. It produces in me an affection that is itself good, which itself agrees with my nature. The affection is passive because it is explained by the external body, and the idea of the affection is a passion, a passive feeling. But it is a feeling of joy, since it is produced by the idea of an object that is good for me, or agrees with my nature. (*Expressionism in Philosophy* 239)

The ideas that food interacts with the human being, that the human being is a passive recipient of feelings and emotions, and that food owns its own nature and agency, are all there in this description of the encounter of the two bodies—the body of the human being and the body of the non-human object.

In the same manner and on the same premise, Deleuze explains the human acquisition of the feeling of sadness:

> I meet a body whose relation cannot be combined with my own. The body does not agree with my nature, is contrary to it, bad or harmful. It produces in me a passive affection which is itself bad or contrary to my nature. The idea of such an affection is a feeling of sadness, a sad passion corresponding to a reduction of my power of action.

He then goes on from the feeling of sadness to a general description of the interaction between the two engaging bodies:

> Everything in such an encounter seems to depend on the respective essences

> or powers of the bodies that meet one another. If my body has essentially a greater degree of power, it will destroy the other, decompose its relation. And the reverse will be the case if it has a lesser degree of power. (*Expressionism in Philosophy* 241)

Such power in the body of an object is agency. Food agency refers to this power, this capacity to influence another body at encounter. During the encounter of food and humans, humans are always the overpowered. The only difference is the given affection—joy, if the food agrees with us. sadness, if it does not. The two encounters described by Deleuze explain more than what meets the eye when we see "the food does not agree with me." On the level of emotional affect, even if we are given our favorite food which somehow triggers our memory of a certain loss, it then accounts for a disagreeable encounter that induces sadness. Either way, in an encounter of joy or sadness, the mood is tied up with the food.

Food as a Thing: Affect

To look at how affect is defined by Deleuze, we turn to his *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*:

> The affect is impersonal and is distinct from every individual State of things: it is none the less singular, and can enter into singular combinations and conjunctions with other affects….The affect is independent of all determinate space-time. but it is none the less created in a history which produces it as the expressed and the expression of a space or a time…. (98-9)

In terms of food, the affect is surely "distinct from every individual State" and "singular." The kind of food is singular in itself, while it affects different individuals in a distinct, different way. This often applies to poets in their particular situation, or,

"individual State."

Apple pie is such an example. It is singular, representative of, or often associated with American values of family, history, and an emphasis of simplicity (See "American as Apple Pie," Palmatier 4). These singularities often make a casual entry into poems before they reveal their different influences over the poets. Apple pie, for Barbara Crooker, channels the image of her mother into her mind ("My Mother's Pie Crust"). For David Lee Garrison, it speaks for the sensuality of his lover ("Recipe for Apple Pie"). Oyster shells reveal for Seamus Heaney a starry sky and a journey through time ("Oysters"). They reek of the "one-night cheap hotel" for T. S. Eliot ("The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"). For William Matthews, happiness begins with dicing onions ("Onions"). For Naomi Shihab Nye, onions peels off pages and pages of history ("The Traveling Onions").

The second half of the block quote specifies two qualities of the affect: it is independent of space and time and it is expressive of space and time. While these two qualities of the affect may not be quite obvious in relation to other things, they are certainly obvious in the case of food. If human consciousness and cognition are always formed in a sense of time and space, the human experience of food must be formed in like manner. The affect Proust receives from the madeleines is instilled with the sense of his childhood (time) and his impression of Combray (space). The food is expressive of time and space.

The other quality of food affect is based on the first one, although it may first sound contradictory. The food, expressive of time and space, with its affect so powerful, is capable of channeling its built-in temporality and spatiality into the human mind regardless of where and when its encounter with the human being takes place. Therefore, one may once have had a terrible experience of eating alone on the far-off island of Sicily where he ordered a fish for dinner. Years later, when the same

person sees a fish in his own city, the food affect of the fish, independent of the time-and-space determinants of the moment, expresses again the unforgettable loneliness situated in Sicily from years ago ("The Fish" by Billy Collins).

Affect itself is a complicated and comprehensive force. This applies no less, if not more, to food affect. It connects bodies/objects (Ahmed). It triggers human emotions, joy or sadness (Deleuze *EP*). It is independent of time and space but at the same time produces its own time and space (Deleuze *Cinema 1*). It may also refer to an object or "a body's capacity to enter into relations of movement and rest" (Massumi 15), and this capacity, a force passed on through "sensation, perception, and memory, is affect" (ibid). It is noteworthy that affect is also a destructive "capacity to undermine our best attempts at deciding on identities and selves" (Crawford 133).

Food affect, following the principles stated above, forms relations between objects (food and humans, humans and humans, humans and eating places, etc.), induces emotions, and enables journeys through time and space. Its influence is tenacious. It is conveyed through physical contacts and experiences through the senses. It may, as when it makes us sad, work against our will and undermine identities we wish for. Food affect explains a lot about food: food preferences, food dislikes, comfort food, food we wish people to see us eat, food we never want to be associated with (but usually secretly like). Food is not only charged with powerful affect, food is also charged with significance and information about human life. This is why food articulates human life better than other objects in poetry. Food speaks for humans as part of humans.

involuntary memory

When food exerts its affect in literature, the foremost influence we should notice is involuntary memory. Involuntary memory is so termed because it is a memory

given to us through our contact with objects like food, instead of a piece of information we register in mind through conscious efforts. The term involuntary memory indicates the passive role of the human being in the formation of memory. It is memory planted into the human being by food, without human consent or consciousness.

In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze explains how involuntary memory surfaces from objects like Proust's madeleines:

> [A]n old sensation tries to superimpose itself, to unite with the present sensation, and extends it over several epochs at once. But it suffices that the present sensation set its "materiality" in opposition to the earlier one for the joy of this superposition to give way to a sentiment of collapse, of irreparable loss, in which the old sensation is pushed back into the depths of lost time. (14)

The taste of madeleines in childhood emerges to merge with the taste of madeleines at the present moment. The taste from before is suddenly transmitted or extended into the present time through years. Soon the difference between the two tastes is distinguished: the solid food material that accompanies the present taste betrays the absence of food material in the taste from the past. The registered taste brings forth a memory which tries to identify itself with the present taste. However, there is a difference between the previous experience and the present experience, and such a difference forces the memory back to its time, a lost time and "an irreparable loss." For this reason, Deleuze, by quoting Proust, defines memory as a curious assemblage of "survival" and "nothingness" (ibid)—the survival of the remaining taste and the nothingness of the past. In this example, memory is the product of the sensuous experience offered by the food. Food exerts its affect to produce memory. Food serves as a memory mechanism.

In trying to figure out the mechanism of this memory machine, Deleuze first makes an attempt at examining it as an associative mechanism before he goes further to solve questions that an associative mechanism cannot explain.[9] According to Deleuze, the real reason is beyond human understanding – he therefore calls it "an apparition," *PS* 37) – but we can be certain of the memory-producing procedures of this mechanism: an extraordinary joy, the identity of quality, and the virtual (*PS* 36-8). By explaining the memory production of Proust's madeleines, Deleuze leads us to the understanding of three important concepts: the creation (as opposed to retrieval) of memory, the virtual of Bergson, and essence in a Deleuzean sense.

We may never know the source of the "extraordinary joy" (*PS* 36) brought to us by the madeleines and yet it is a joy of "time regained" (*PS* 37). It is a joy so strong that we ignore the difference between the present sensation and the previous sensation, a joy so strong that we see a shared identity of quality in between. This quality in between (emphasized by Deleuze as "the sensuous quality," ibid) is seen as a duration, an extension that "imprisoned and enveloped Combray" (*PS* 39). By using the figure of speech of imprisonment, Deleuze does not mean the past is brought back intact. He recognizes the fact that memory is a situational **creation** in itself by saying that "we do not proceed from an actual present to the past, that we do not recompose the past with various presents, but we place ourselves directly in the past itself" (*PS* 38). This is what Deleuze calls **the virtual** or **Bergsonian virtuality**.

In other words, the production of involuntary memory is not a re-collecting of

[9] This is almost a follow-up statement or a paraphrase of what Deleuze had said earlier in the same book (the block quote from Page 14): "How to explain the complex mechanism of reminiscences? At first sight, it is an associative mechanism: on the one hand, a resemblance between a present and a past sensation. On the other hand, a contiguity of the past sensation with a whole that we experienced then and that revives under the effect of the present sensation. Thus the flavor of the madeleine is like that which we tasted at Combray, and it revives Combray, where we tasted it for the first time" (*Proust and Signs* 36).

remnants from the past, but a re-inventing of the past. It is not about bringing the past to the present moment, but about being placed back in the past. The temporality (re-inventing a lost time) and the spatiality (placing oneself back in the past) of the past in involuntary memory is contrary to those of the past we know of in a conventional way. So far, memory production and Bergsonian virtuality have been pertinent, but a third concept must be included to make our discussion complete—the Deleuzean **essence**.

The process of the production of involuntary memory proceeds from joy to identity (or, to be more precise, an identified quality) and then to virtuality. This virtuality ascribed to Bergson is simply the **essence** in Deleuze's definition. Involuntary memory achieves essence in that:

> The essential thing in involuntary memory is not resemblance, nor even identity, which are merely conditions, but the internalized difference, which becomes immanent. […] "Real without being present, ideal without being abstract." This ideal reality, this virtuality, is essence, which is realized or incarnated in involuntary memory. (*PS* 39-40)

Based on Deleuze's statement that the real cause of involuntary memory is unknown and unknowable like "an apparition," there is no way to know what reduces the difference between the madeleines Proust tastes in his childhood and the madeleines he tastes in his adulthood. The difference in between is somehow imperceptibly reduced so that any madeleine can direct Proust's consciousness to the same event and experience. The difference is somehow internalized in the madeleines. The madeleines with internalized difference in them are immanent. Immanence, in this context, is then the quality that empowers affect to channel one experience into the other, to contract a time into the other, while at all times retaining its physical reality in a tangible form.

Such definition of essence or immanence is almost a patent of food. The two keywords "realized" and "incarnated" speak for the materiality of food. "Real without being present, ideal without being abstract"—almost a manifesto slogan for food poetics—is called by Deleuze "ideal reality." If the idea, or what is ideal, is an amorphous apparition, the madeleines it haunts are the reality in form. Essence of involuntary memory, i.e., the immanence in food, is better understood through the trope of the genii in the lamp, in terms of its affect and the medium it resides in.

We are now aware that the essence of involuntary memory is achieved through **joy**, **identity of quality**, and its final stage of **virtuality**. When Deleuze tells us later that "involuntary memory retains its two powers: the difference in the past moment, the repetition in the present one" (*PS* 40), it would be difficult for us not to surmise that the power of difference refers to an extraordinary joy from the past and the power of repetition refers to an identity or quality that reappears at present. These two powers are what achieves essence. In a sense, the entire project of *Difference and Repetition* has already been burgeoning in *Proust and Signs*. If the two powers of difference and repetition are a recapitulation of the madeleines' affect, the essence that initiates these powers is rooted in the madeleines as food and as signs. To use a food metaphor, *Proust and Signs* may be the cake, *Difference and Repetition* the recipe. The cake is certainly more ready and enjoyable than the recipe. *Proust and Signs* demonstrates an established system in which all things are classifiable into a certain category of signs. It is not only easy but also highly applicable. *Difference and Repetition* helps explain how one category of these signs (i.e., the sensuous signs) can trigger involuntary memory and how each memory production is achieved by difference and repetition. In comparison, it is obvious why the former work is more accessible than the latter one.

The materiality of involuntary memory, as we see in *Proust and Signs* (39), is the

very foundation of food poetics. Not only is food itself a solid, existent material, but the spatiality of food which agrees with the principle of localization (40) also adds more materiality to food. This materiality, this persistent feature of food objects, defines food and its capacity. It will also lead us to a later consideration of new materialism and extended consciousness/cognition.

Food as a Thing: Intensity

As affect and intensity are both central to Deleuzean thought, so are they also to food poetics which is based on Deleuze. We have seen in the preceding section that, during the encounter of food and humans, food agency exerts its affect on the engaging human beings. The effect of such affect is involuntary memory. Memory becomes a site of "affective magnitudes," as we see in following quote:

> Although intensities are virtual this is not the same as saying they are not real. For Deleuze we "sense" intensities […]. They are affective magnitudes […] not to be mistaken for a quality such as tall, soft, or dark in the sense that they are transtemporal: becoming-tall, becoming-soft, or becoming-dark. Memory is a field of intensity as is imagination. (Parr 154)

If intensities are affective magnitudes, then intensities are scales and degrees of the influence of affect. The materiality of affect leads to the materiality of its influence—intensity. The materiality of intensity is passed on to its field of influence—memory. The materiality of affect, intensity, and memory is eminently true about food.

We are informed that the process proceeding from joy to identity will eventually lead to the virtual—the stage when memory is created by placing ourselves in the past. Adrian Parr argues that such virtuality of intensity remains real because the virtuality is achieved and kept present through the senses. While poetics in general is dealing

with sensuous experience conveyed by literary works, food poetics goes even further in that it deals with not only the conveyed sensuous experience but also the immediate experience of embodied sensuousness in the food objects.

Another thing about Parr's emphasis is the becoming state of intensity. Although tangible to the senses, intensity is not stagnant in a static state. It is dynamic in an ever-changing state. As is said by Parr (154 in particular), it is not of a height that conveys the idea of being tall. It imposes on us the impression that it has a flexible height. It is not soft. It has a spectrum from softness to rigidity. It is not dark. It has various shades of light and shadow. This becoming state of intensity is especially crucial to its influenced field of memory. This becoming state is what enables Deleuze's internalized difference. Because all volumes of memory-producing objects are becoming/subject to change, the difference between the present and the past is resolved and internalized: a different batch of madeleines can channel the intensity of a long-lost batch through time to the present senses. For Deleuze, there is an old sensation trying to superimpose itself on a new one. For Parr, the sensation seems to be organic and self-adjusting to its surroundings. Both expressions—Deleuze's "old and new" and Parr's "transtemporal"—tell us the same thing: intensity and the field of intensity (memory) is all about the act of channeling sensations through time. Our understanding of the last sentence here—"Memory is a field of intensity as is imagination"—should be that both memory and imagination are products of creation, but their creations are based on sensuous reality and physical contact (all intensities in the senses). This makes both memory and imagination a field of intensity, and this tells the truth that memory is identical with imagination.

When Deleuze speaks of intensity, he emphasizes the idea of "distinctness," to which Parr's "affective magnitudes" are similar (but more explanatory even without the example of Scotus' white wall). Deleuze believes that we distinguish existing

things by their distinctness and hence by distinction. Distinction lies in intrinsic quality instead of the mode (*EP* 196). Deleuze uses Scotus' example of a white wall in his explanation of such intrinsic quality, i.e., intensity. The whiteness of the wall is the persistent, distinct intensity. No matter what shapes are drawn onto the wall, its whiteness remains intact. Intensity may travel in various forms.

Deleuze's definition of intensity, in the case of food, explains how difference is internalized. Intensity ("affective magnitudes") explains essence ("internalized difference"). The size, shape, and scent of madeleines may always be subject to change, but they remain the same to Proust. The intensity is so persistent that it internalizes difference. In other words, the emotional investment (e.g., Deleuze's joy or Ahmed's happiness) is so strong that it haunts different forms with the same quality. Other than the same quality shared between different batches of madeleines, there is a spatial similarity (Combray) shared among the cobblestone, the madeleines, and that cup of tea. Thus we see objects in different forms channel the essence in the spatial and temporal sense, because of the intensity that resides in them.

Intensity then explains quite well two things about food: craving and involuntary memory. The intensity of food is so powerful that it travels from one form to another. When a person is indulging in chocolate, this person is indulging in a category of different objects in which he sees a similar quality. Although this quality is conveyed through a physical medium, the medium does not have to be exactly the same. He is indulging himself in an empirical element, what Deleuze calls "pure difference" or "internalized difference," which is "imperceptible for empirical sensibility" and "which grasps intensity" (DR 144). Intensity is the empirical element which makes differences imperceptible to the senses. When we experience joy given by such intensity, we seek it in similar (blind to differences) objects. The search for intensity may be what is understood as a craving.

If it is not a sensuous intensity (the "chocolateness") we are looking for but an intensity residing in sensuousness (longing for the companionship of someone at the sight or scent of chocolate), then the understanding of intensity enables more understanding of involuntary memory. The detection of intensity depends on "a transcendental sensibility which apprehends it immediately in the encounter" (ibid). The keyword here is not "immediately" but "encounter." This is to say, no matter how fast this transcendental (tolerating or ignoring differences) sensibility detects the sought equality, the memory of it is passively triggered only at the moment of recurrence. Intensity contributes to food craving in activity. Intensity induces involuntary memory in passivity.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze points out the three characteristics of intensity: (1) Intensity is unequal in itself (232). (2) Intensity affirms difference (234). (3) Intensity is an embryonised quantity (237). We have so far covered some features of intensity and are aware that intensity is a spectrum of persistent distinct quality, that it tackles differences and internalizes them, and that it is a viable and insidious force that haunts various forms and materials. However, before the idea of intensity can be fully applicable to food poetics, we have to understand these three characteristics of it in terms of food.

In the context of food poetics, the **unequal intensity**, which originally refers to the quality of irreducible quantitative variation in itself and also the quality of its extensive quantity (for food and Deleuzean thought, the principle that quality cannot be considered without quantity always seems to stand), explains the persistence and viability of intensity. In terms of the first characteristic of intensity, the unequal quality means the quality that allows no clear divisions in itself and such quality allows quantitative extension (232). In "High Sugar," the same intensity resides in the honey which sweetens Athens and that which sweetens Rome. Intensity, in the poem

by Les Murray, expands itself to enact its affect in both the past and the present. It is one and the same indivisible intensity and it may expand itself further into the future in forms and quantity. The first characteristic of intensity is its **indivisibility** and **expandability**. Without this indivisibility, memory is impossible. The absence of connection will see anything as separate incidents.

The second characteristic of food intensity is the affirmation of difference. It is the awareness of difference in time, space, and form (Deleuze oftentimes uses "mode") and the tolerance of them. The second characteristic of food intensity is its **transformability**. In "Sunday Lemons," the one lemon in the end resembles a woman lying in front of him. The intensity that sees a woman in the lemon will do the same on a different day than Sunday and in a different space. Another lemon in the eye of the poet, though different in size or color, will enable the poet to see the same. Or, when such intensity travels from Derek Walcott to his reader, the reader in any different time and space, through any different lemon, may still see the image of a lying lady.

For the third characteristic of intensity, Deleuze use the metaphor of embryo in that intensity can exist in the form of a seed. It is capable of wrapping itself like a seed when dormant and it is capable of bringing itself back to burgeoning when it finds the environment adequate. In other words, intensity can bide its time and may travel from one environment to another. The third characteristic of food intensity is then its **transportability**. In "Love Is Not an Emergency," the food intensity that suggests an ambivalent attitude toward love dwells in an amorphous idea of picnic. The intensity is then transported into the form of Jell-O with flies resting on it. The mixed feelings we have from a lovely occasion and a pest-ridden situation come together to articulate the intensity. The intensity, in the poem by Erin Belieu, finally ends up in the table conversation: "we grant the name of love to something less than

love…because we all have to eat." Intensity is transportable in various forms and degrees.

The re-reading of Deleuze offers us a clearer idea of the three characters of intensity: indivisibility and expandability, transformability, and transportability. It is obvious that intensity makes use of forms (including time and space) but also ignores forms. Because "intensity gives rise to objects or extended forms recognizable in everyday perception," Anna Bonshek believes that "intensity is ontological" (340). For the same reason, Adrian Parr believes that although intensity constitutes "states of affairs" it is not "ontologically distinct" and all intensities are affective magnitudes (154). They both agree that the physical practice of intensity heavily depends on forms, but one focuses on materiality and perception while the other focuses on the affect that reincarnates itself in various forms and conditions. They therefore ironically disagree with each other on what they agree upon.

Actually, the difference of opinion between Bonshek and Parr can be resolved by one of Deleuze's definitions of intensity: "Intensity is the form of difference" (DR 222). If the form is perceived and experienced through physical contacts, it is by nature epistemological. If difference is always resolved and internalized, it is by nature ontological. The statement—"Intensity is the form of difference"—can be understood as "Intensity is the epistemological side of ontology." Intensity is therefore both ontological and epistemological. In addition, it is one of Deleuze's most basic thoughts that all things and phenomena are inextricably epistemological and ontological.

Deleuzean Intensity: A Note

In the research for this dissertation, a major part of the theoretical backbone has been formed by the Deleuzean idea of intensity. This section is therefore devoted to

the idea of intensity in Deleuzean thought, including some attempts by contemporary critics to define, apply, or exemplify the idea of intensity. Getting this concept clear will aid in understanding just why intensity has been such an appropriate concept for the development of food poetics.

One terse and clear explanation involves the ontological idea of intensity: "for Deleuze, intensity is ontological—intensity gives rise to objects or extended forms recognizable in everyday perception" (Anna J. Bonshek 340). This explicit statement immediately justifies taking intensity as the starting point of an object discourse like that of food poetics.

One of intensity's characteristics is its various forms of difference, at times also known as rupture: "To feel an intensity is necessarily to have experienced a rupture, a difference, a difference of intensity" (Juliette Simont 43). This rupture of difference as our experience of intensity explains how intensity is experienced as a series of various objects. In the discussion of intensity, we can never be "satisfied by…the series of objects that we encounter in reality" (Eugene B. Young 230) because intensity is forever in the status of forming more objects. Food is one such object in the case of a kind of food we long for and miss: "The good object as lost object is not what one eats but what never can be eaten" (Guyer 87). This idea of how we long for a food object and how such longing works, both with intensity working behind them, will be exemplified and explained in more detail, especially in the section dealing with distancing and channeling.

Intensity relates to its recognized objects as well as to Deleuze's materialist thought. "Intensity is not normally known in itself, in its original depth, as the absolute" (Philip Goodchild 162), and therefore intensity reckons and recognizes the world of objects and reveals itself through objects. The idea of intensity itself is also a necessary object produced by philosophy, as Goodchild points out: "philosophy thus

attains intensity, produces intensity" (ibid). The various forms of intensity are always with intensity in them, but not intensity itself, and as a result, the term "simulacrum" sometimes appears in the discourse of intensity instead of objects. When Ronald Bogue offers us a comparison between Socrates and Deleuze to explain the beginning of their philosophies, he says:

> Socrates says that thought begins with a contradictory experience, which Deleuze identifies as an encounter with the simulacrum. It is clear now that the simulacrum is the intensity...Thus the intensity, the potential energy of metastable states, the force of individuation, only reveals itself to the empirical experience of common sense as a masked difference… (*Deleuze and Guattari* 64)

Intensity is also termed the "force of individuation," a force that drives itself along in forms of various existence also known as simulacrum. In our discussion of food poetics, it functions likewise to seek physical embodiment wherever possible, as one emotion or longing can be tasted in diverse delicacies.

In speaking of Deleuze's idea of intensity, James Williams in his *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* points out two crucial points that also help understand the process of distancing and channeling: (1) intensity as an ever-extending force and existence, and (2) intensity as the ultimate resort for explanation of human experience. For the first point, Williams offers an explanation involving objects: "depth could not be sensed without referring to the objects in extended space that Deleuze's arguments started with" (176). "Thus," he continues, "intensity can be perceived as qualities in extension, but we never sense the intensity that allows us to perceive that shade since it varies" (ibid). In the discourse of objects, including food, the objects in this manner become units of measure and allow contact for human perception. To ignore this part of Deleuzean thought, trying to deny Deleuze as a materialist thinker, is to rid him of

half of his philosophical system. The second point made by Williams aims to explain that with intensity functioning through and behind this material world, the idea of intensity may be the last resort for philosophy, if philosophy is to dwell upon humanity instead of classical spirituality: “although Deleuze may be able to deduce that there must be something more than actual things, he cannot deduce anything more than that” and he may somehow decide on “falling back on strict materialist explanations of phenomena” (*Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* 178). This is also a conclusion that elucidates why Deleuze is a materialist philosopher.

Adrian Parr points out that “memory is a field of intensity” and that “Deleuzean intensity substitutes sensation for form” (Parr 154). This could almost be a Deleuzean manifesto of food poetics in the present study, besides being an explanation of the function of intensity in the process of distancing and channeling. It also serves the purpose of understanding the memory of Proust and the form of the madeleine. While critics try to explain how intensity functions, often within a certain context and with more sophisticated expressions that demand more explanation, Adrian Parr’s *The Deleuze Dictionary* offers us this definition: “Intensity is a singularity capable of generating actual cases, ” (Boundas 134) and “a virtual intensity exists nowhere else but in the extended that it constitutes” (ibid). When applied to our discussion of food poetics, this singularity is a feeling, left by a certain affective impact, which is unique, irreplaceable, but capable of materializing itself in different forms of food objects, as a person’s longing for someone or some place is often emotionally revived or comforted by a food object associated with the object of longing. Jon Clay, unlike other critics who seem to prefer involved and indirect wording, gives the most daring, concise, and straightforward definition of intensity for us to apply to the understanding of food poetics as well as of other objects: “Intensity is, of course, sensation” (Jon Clay 68). In parallel with Jon Clay is Joe Hughes, who gives a curt

definition of how intensity functions to extend itself into various forms in the material world—"[I]ntensity creates extensity" (*Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* 152).

Because of the characteristic of intensity, its capability of generating actual cases, or of revealing itself in various forms, Jon Roffe argues that "the conception of intensity…allows Deleuze to account for the relationship between the virtual and the actual in a quite refined manner" (*Badiou's Deleuze* 143) because when virtual intensity (it is always "virtual" intensity because we should not be able to see it as it is) is equated with the actual, the actual becomes diversified enough to facilitate a versatile discourse of intensity: "the actual…is not a fixed state of affairs, but a fluid and charged reality, where the movement of explication founds and brings about ever new states of affairs" (ibid). This is why in the discourse on intensity Christopher Ben Simpson asserts that "the virtual is a realm of pure becomings, of intensities, of changes that cannot be captured in terms of a final identity" (*Deleuze and Theology* 26). Intensity is a force, a singularity without a definite form and therefore capable of a versatile philosophical role as what functions imperceptively in the material world.

Intensity, a singularity "to be unequal" and "the ground of quantity" (Gavin Rae 133), does not, however, produce materiality out of nowhere. As often mentioned in the present study, an affective impact must first influence its recipients so that the sensation named intensity can begin its route of revealing itself in various objects. In Sauvagnargues' argument, "intensity depends on a certain type of experience" (47) and this "experience" designates what an object or a food relates to. In this dissertation, this experience is understood as affect or the affective impact which takes place when an individual has contact with a food object.

A final point to be made about intensity is to trace it back to its very fountainhead in the history of philosophy:

Nietzsche is, first, the portal through which Deleuze enters into the notion of

> intensity. *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962) functions as a prelude. Although the notion of intensity is only alluded to in this text, it appears nonetheless as a synonym for force. For Deleuze, force is neither a substance, nor the result of multiple forces, but rather pure difference. This idea is taken up again in *Difference and Repetition*, where Deleuze makes intensity difference in itself. (Jean-Godefroy Bidima 147)

Through Bidima's research, we can see that even though the idea of intensity may be varied or modified by Deleuze as well as by other critics, the basic trait of it as a driving force somehow remains. The contemporary understanding and employment of intensity is actually not far from what was first intended. In elucidating a sensation that travels through diverse forms of embodiment to reveal itself as a kind of incompleteness or simulacrum, intensity seems to fit the description of "difference in itself."

new materialism and extended cognition: an addendum

A more vehement debate over ontology and epistemology can be found in new materialism and the school of the extended cognition. This is not a debate over the nature of something, but they are both in total revolt against conventional anthropocentric values. While one announces an epistemological revolution, the other denounces all anthropocentric ontology. Although not directly related, these schools do bear some Deleuzean streaks in their teachings. For the school of new materialism, we will look at Quentin Meillassoux and Diana Coole & Samantha Frost. For the school of extended cognition, we will examine David Chalmers & Andy Clark and Lambros Malafouris. But first of all, let's look at what Deleuze says in *Proust and Signs*: "…the realization of essence in involuntary memory is not to be separated from determinations that remain external and contingent" (41). Each school can find a

keyword from this passage as the point of departure of their ways of thinking.

The keywords are “external” and “contingent.” Let’s first look at the last one. All things in the world, including the world itself, are seen as contingent by the school of new materialism or speculative materialists. According to Meillassoux, a leading speculative materialist of our time, “contingency designates the possibility whereby something can either persist or perish, without either option contravening the invariants that govern the world” (53). Because of their insistence on contingency, they do not believe in laws of nature or reason. Instead, they believe in “the ultimate absence of reason,” which they refers to as “unreason” (ibid). Although they claim their discovery is of ontological nature, we definitely feel that they are encouraging new ways to re-examine the world around us—they are encouraging an epistemological discipline for now and for the days to come.

Besides the aforementioned contingency, the other main idea of Meillassoux’s philosophy is factiality. Factiality is a word coined by Meillassoux to deny and defy the human perception of the world. Facticity, not to be confused with factiality, refers to a fact or the world we perceive. Meillassoux’s coined word factiality describes “the speculative essence of facticity, viz., that the facticity of everything cannot be thought as a fact” (79). In short, the second main idea of Meillassoux’s philosophy, factiality, is an assertion that “worldly things could be otherwise” (39). Again, if there is a way to practice such a speculative thought on materials, it is a new way to look at things—a new epistemological way to observe the world. On this point, we can see that new materialism suggests an epistemological revolution.

In their introductory chapter to the speculative-materialist anthology “New Materialisms,” Coole and Frost draw a very distinctive manifesto guideline. Their field of study and ways of seeing things are to wake us up to “a posthumanist sense of material agency and a limitation of humans’ agentic efficacy” (14). Such a new

academic and philosophical attitude, in addition to Meillassoux's contingency and factiality, is essential and supportive to object studies and food agency. A radical idea of food agency is that human beings are passive recipients of affect and its intensity. Food poetics, a systematic approach to interpreting and constituting/constituted meanings behind food presentations in poetry, is in fact an aesthetic attempt at materialist efficacy. The contribution of new materialist ideas to poetics is to show a brand-new epistemological possibility of poetic interpretation.

The other school is the school of extended cognition. The key word for their thought is "external," because scholars of this school emphasize the external, or exteriority, more than anything else. Besides "extended cognition," this field of study is also known as "extended consciousness" or "theory of the extended mind," among various derivatives, but among these designations, the most common is "extended cognition." The philosophy of extended cognition is more radical than new materialism. Where new materialism solicits our efforts to reduce anthropocentric epistemes and values. the extended-cognition school denies the human body/mind as the sole site for mental activity. The extended-cognition scholars believe that memory is stored mostly outside the human mind and that cognitive process often originates outside the human mind as well. Such a belief is highlighted in their manifesto masterpiece, "The Extended Mind":

> If, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world is (so we claim) part of the cognitive process. Cognitive processes ain't (all) in the head! (29)

The entire cognitive system, which we believe to be internal and to take place inside our heads, is defied. If the very beginning site of all human knowledge is denied, the entire knowledge system has to start over. Their perspective is definitely more ontic than epistemic, and their philosophical revolt is more ontological than

epistemological.

For this perspective, Lambros Malafouris in *How Things Shape the Mind* offers an example: During the process of knapping, the sharpening of a piece of stone or bone as used by primitive people, if there is anything similar to an active mental space, it would be the interactive space between the raw material and the sensorimotor of the human hands on the working platform, "not in some sort of fixed 'idea' stored in the knapper's head" (176). Another even more famous example of their school is the Inga-Otto case in "The Extended Mind." Inga is a normally functioning individual, who relies on her memory for everyday plans. Otto is a victim of Alzheimer's disease. He always has to carry with him a paper notebook to tell him what to do next (from age or page 34 onward). Otto always has to stop and turn to his notebook. He has never stopped doing this. His condition is a serious case of short-term memory loss and he is incapable of forming new memories. Otto literally retrieves information from his notebook the way Inga retrieves information from her memory. That was an example given in the 1990s. In one of the 2011 Sydney TED talks, Chalmers says Otto retrieves information from his notebook the way we retrieve information from our smartphones. In addition, Otto's cognitive process is conditioned by his notebook the way Chalmers' cognitive process is conditioned by his iPhone.

What is significant about the idea of extended cognition? Most of all, perhaps, it is that it dares to defy conventional knowledge systems, whether ontological or epistemological, by questioning the problematic human mind and by valuing objects and spaces external to the human body. For scholars of this school, objects and space serve as a solid basis for human activities. While the ultimate goal of this school (seeing humans as inanimate and seeing objects as animate) is difficult to apply to food poetics, its ideas that (1) part of the human mind can be extended into its surroundings and (2) memory can be retrieved from objects agree with what we

believe about food agency. Almost all poets follow the principle of the extended mind to the extent that they identify their feelings and memories with sensuous signs. Hence Seamus Heaney remembers late August in blackberries (“Blackberry-Picking”). Frank O’Hara sees his love in yoghurt (“Having a Coke with You”). Amy Lowell senses a possible shadow of death among cakes and strawberries (“Interlude”).

Chapter Two

Distancing and Channeling

> *The real empiricist world is thereby laid out for the first time to the fullest: it is a world of exteriority, a world in which thought itself exists in a fundamental relationship with the Outside, a world in which terms are veritable atoms and relations veritable atoms and relations veritable external passages; a world in which the conjunction "and" dethrones the interiority of the verb "is," a harlequin world of multicolored patterns and non-totalizable fragments where communication takes place through external relations.*
>
> —Gilles Deleuze (*Pure Immanence* 38)

This chapter is a follow-up of Chapter One. While Chapter One clarifies perspectives on object-oriented views, Chapter Two is to present the distancing-channeling system of food poetics based on the premises established in Chapter One. The opening quote from Deleuze is both for emphasis and a reminder that the purpose of the Deleuze-based, object-oriented food poetics centers on physical contacts between humans and objects. Food poetics is mainly concerned with materialized media that convey intensity, avoiding any anthropocentric totality.

Food as a Thing in Space: Distancing

Whereas time is an anthropocentric concept, space is a spatial and material notion. Keeping in mind the ontological doubts and the epistemological concerns of new materialism and extended cognition, although it is unfeasible to put all their assertions into practice, this dissertation tries to focus on distance instead of time in dealing with food as a memory machine. From the very beginning of this dissertation,

the balance between objects and humans has been carefully maintained, for food is a thing partly defined by its edibility to humans. By using distance as our criterion while talking about memory, we manage to subsume "food as a memory machine" under "food as a thing."

First, by using distance, we do not have to embroil ourselves in the everlasting philosophical controversy over the existence of time. We do not have to argue, for example, that time exists only in human consciousness. Secondly, because we rely on distance in the discourse of memory, we are naturally led by distance to deal with space which is itself a major focus of modernity (and we will often turn to literary texts of modernity) and a significant form of materiality. Note that the interaction between the food object and the human being takes place in a certain space and that the food object itself takes up space with its presence. This is of crucial importance when food is discussed as a thing. Before the discussion of food as a sign and a third discussion of food as time, food shall remain as a thing, a solid object, a form of tangible materiality, at all times.

The previous surveys of affect and intensity are the premises of the theory of food as a memory machine. Food, as a thing, is equipped with agency. Food agency promises food affect. The affect of food constitutes food as a memory machine through two acts: distancing and channeling. In food poetics, affect starts the entire production of memory. Food affect first engages the human body through the senses. Such engagement imposes a sensuous/material impression upon the human being. This is still the starting point of encounter and imprinting. This engagement then triggers the first act – distancing – which then in turn triggers the second act – channeling. The second act, channeling, aims to follow (seek and emulate) the imprinting caused by food affect at the beginning encounter. This, in an ultra-simplified formulation, is the memory production of food.

According to Deleuze, distances "develop in extensity" and "explicate the apparent magnitudes" (*DR* 230). Distances too "are fundamentally linked to the intensity of the sensation" (ibid). In distances, we see something capable of extension ("developing in extensity"), something in forms ("apparent magnitudes"), and something of very distinct materiality ("sensation"). After looking into the three characteristics of intensity postulated by Deleuze (*DR* 232-37), let's move on to further clarify what powers the entire process of distancing after affect has triggered it:

> The perceived quality presupposes intensity, because it expresses only a resemblance to a "band of isolatable intensities," within the limits of which a permanent object is constituted—the qualified object which affirms its identity across variable distances. Intensity, which envelops distances, is explicated in extensity, while extensity develops, exteriorizes and homogenises these very distances. (ibid)

To better understand this Deleuzean viewpoint and to better apply it to food poetics, let's try to paraphrase it in the case of *Proust and Signs*. A taste of the madeleine enables an encounter of the quality of the madeleine and the human senses. The quality of the madeleine is the embedded intensity of the madeleine. We sense it in all madeleines. It is the intensity imprisoned (in Deleuze's own wording) in all madeleines. Only when we sense such intensity in a piece of shell-shaped butter cake can the cake mean a madeleine to us. This quality of the madeleine, this intensity, travels from place to place without wearing itself out. It spreads itself, but never too thin. Therefore we recognize a madeleine wherever we see one, smell one, or sense one in any other way. The intensity of the madeleine travels afar to instill itself into various objects (in size, color, flavor, etc.) that go by the same name—madeleine ("homogenized").

Re-reading this passage in a food context makes it more accessible and applicable. Re-reading this passage in the context of food intensity also makes the idea of distancing more understandable. Let us recall our definition: **Distancing refers to the act and phenomenon that intensity creates distances, materializes distances in various forms, and resolves differences in the distances** ("Materializing distances" may sound redundant at first, for distance itself is of considerable materiality, but it becomes clear when we see Combray – distances/space – at the sight of the madeleine, and when we think of Combray, which always is scented of tea (materialized/sensuously embodied) as shown in the passage discussed above. It is noteworthy that when we see distancing resolves differences in distances, "differences in distances" may include all differences in space and all differences of materiality.

Distancing is the act of intensity, especially food intensity, triggered by the encounter of an object and human senses. The encounter is enacted by the affect in food. That is to say, without affect, without the "distinct" and "individual" force which can "enter into combinations or conjunctions with other things," any random and affectless contact is not yet qualified as an encounter.). We may say that what affect starts, intensity takes over.

In hope of a better understanding of distancing, let's run the risk of oversimplifying the first act by merely reading two stanzas from a short poem by Theodore Roethke:

The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.

* * *

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt. ("My Papa's Waltz," from *The Lost Son and Other Poems,* 1948)

The encounter here is the affective contact of the poet as a child and the whiskey on the father's breath. The affect in the whiskey starts the process of distancing, but there is no telling why and how the whiskey first works its affect on the child and switches on the entire production of involuntary memory, if we still remember that Deleuze addresses the reason as "apparition."

Intensity (let's take it as a lasting imprint of affect for now) then takes over. The intensity the child feels from the whiskey breath of the father creates distances by including more and more space as well as materiality wherein the whiskey breath may be sensed and associated. Distances appear and extend between the mouth of the father and the nose of the child, between the child in the father's arms and the room that accommodates them, between the bedroom and a dance floor for waltzing. The creation of distances/spaces synchronizes with their coming into materiality and forms. Such distances are of materiality in two senses: they take up space and they are embodied. The creation of distances follows the characteristics of intensity. One of its characteristics is indivisibility and expandability, which keeps expanding distances and charges the distances with intensity (The other two characteristics, transformability and transportability, are usually the most obvious as in the association of the father and his breath or drunken steps and waltzing.).

What we see in the opening stanza of the poem extends into the last stanza. If the spatial expansion has not yet stopped, then the distance covered by the encounter of the father and the child must grow. In our materialist reading of food poems, time is

not taken into consideration, so the "still" in the last line must imply continuum of space, of materiality. Because time is not and can not be specified, the whiskey breath, the shirt, and the clinging act are all continuing their existence among the growing and expanding distances. That is to say, the clinging act may have the father at one end, but the "still" suggests the other end may be interchangeable between the poet as a child and the poet as an adult. That is to say, when all differences are resolved, the poet see his father at the smell of whiskey, at the sound of waltz music, at the sight of a shirt, or on a scene of a father tucking in his child. This is distancing at work.

In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard mentions that the creation of distances resolves differences and thus a sense of space and familiarity (through possessing something in the space):

> Distance disperses nothing but, on the contrary, composes a miniature of a country in which we should like to live. In distant miniatures, disparate things become reconciled. They then offer themselves for our "possession," while denying the distance that created them. We possess from afar… (172)

This shows us how distance multiplies and expands itself into a singular space, a little country, we'd like to move into. Within this space, we feel a sense of possession of things with which we acquaint ourselves. Within this space, intensity comes in various forms with references to something similar. While distancing is at work, the human recipient of intensity does not sense a gap between his previous experience and the present experience. A certain ubiquitous quality is sensed in both the thing from the past and the thing in the present. Therefore a sense of possession and a sense of virtuality (being involved in the space) are engendered. This is why Bachelard says "we possess from afar."

Bachelard follows up by confirming the materiality of such a distancing process in which distances and space are created to accommodate disparate objects. "This

coexistence of things in a space to which we add consciousness of our own existence, is a very concrete thing" (203). He stops to talk about how Rilke's philosophical lines and Leibniz' philosophical thought are contracted into one space before continuing: "In this coexistentialism every object invested with intimate space becomes the center of all space (ibid)." (This surely reminds us of Wallace Stevens' "Anecdote of the Jar"). We may conclude that distancing creates space and attracts all objects in the space (including the object which intensity distancing has acted upon—the human being). At the same time, the space it has created seems transparent and gives way to the objects in this space. Distancing, although it creates distances and space, foregrounds materiality by bringing forth objects tied up in relations. Distancing renders intensity tangible in forms.

To digress from this thought and to concentrate a bit on the general materiality among all things, let us conclude with the following observation. It is said that what space does to objects is similar to what language does to memory. If space renders more materiality unto objects and makes itself intangible, language renders more textuality unto memory and makes itself intangible (Middleton 6). This is to say that language, words, as well as texts like poems are originally materials, things capable of agency, affect, and intensity. They are connected with the production of distances, space, materiality, and memory. Yet anthropocentric scholarship has long been making us see things otherwise.

Heimat

To speak of how a specific space offers a sense of familiarity and hence a sense of comfort and belonging, we always have to speak of *Heimat*. *Heimat*, by etymology,

means in German “homeland” or derivatively “familiar space.”[10] According to Peter Blickle, *Heimat* is a perspective of "self-perceptions." It "unites geographic and imaginary conceptions of space." And, because it first refers to the German speaking community whose members share the same values based on subjective German codes and culture, it is also a singular or differential space (1-2). Instead of trying to define it, Jens Kugele pinpoints a few things central to the idea of *Heimat*: “issues of memory and space are intrinsic to the very notion of *Heimat*.” Kugele sees *Heimat* as a “human need for locality,” and the locality Heimat provides in its space of intensity offers a sense of belonging which may “involve attachment to material or virtual places, and these forms of attachment are necessarily mediated—and thus shaped—by individual and collective memory” (1).

Our reference to *Heimat* in the discussion of distancing is to explain the human attachment to space and the materials in the space, and the production of memory related to such attachment. Kugele’s analysis of *Heimat* encourages this reference. Comfort for the homesick should be based on locality. A sense of belonging should be based on locality. Locality must be embodied to the senses for us to acquire that comfort and that sense of belonging. It must be “mediated” through materiality. Namely, in plain language, the “atmosphere” must be brought forth by “things from home.”

In food poetics, *Heimat* is almost another word for the Deleuzean intensity. Due to *Heimat*, the intensity of home-like feeling, the imprint of the affect of homeland, people from different places favor different kinds of food. A sense of comfort and belonging in food are almost always ceremonially sought in a material or virtual space.

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[10] Scholars have shown disagreement on almost all transitions of this German term for their convenient imprecision. See Blickle 2-3. However, the need to explain the term in order to show how human beings can be attached to spatiality obliges me to run the risk of imprecision.

The Chinese people may ease their homesickness by a taste of General Zuo's Chicken. The Japanese may do the same by a taste of *sushi*, while the Germens by a taste of *Eisbein* and the Hungarians by a taste of goulash. Each nation considers what they put in their mouths a taste of home. Each constitutes locality based on materiality. This is the scenario of emigrants' life and for those who stay home, this is the scenario of a festival celebration. Therefore we find Thanksgiving in the turkey, we find Easter Day in the chocolate eggs, and we find St. Patrick's Day in the green cocktail. Geographic distances or virtual, the working of distancing is always there for the production of memory.

Earlier when we mentioned *Heimat* by quoting Kugele, we saw that memory was distinguished in two forms: individual and collective. So far, from General Zuo's Chicken to the green cocktail, we have only covered the collective memory, the memory or cultural construct shared on different levels among people seeking similar identity. As a matter of fact, modern poetry often deals more with individual memory. In previous sections, almost all the poems and examples we dealt with before "My Papa's Waltz" (including that whiskey) were of individual memory, which can be incarnated into "a little country" we'd like to live in. By talking about *Heimat*, we gain a concrete idea of how space, materials, and memory are interdependent and synergistic in the process of distancing.

In *No Place Like Home,* Johannes Von Moltke, in dealing with Heimatfilms, the nostalgic genre of the German cinema, notices the limited scope of *Heimat* and attributes the limited space to a necessity for the creation of a sense of familiarity in accordance with the limited perception ability of the human being (10-11). Moltke then quotes Alon Confino, who reveals people's strategy and purpose of creating a *Heimat* space. Confino shares his keen observation with more clarity and conviction than other scholars: "Whether through vocabulary changes or through *Heimat*

organizations, Heimatlers attempted to transform the impersonal nation into something manageable, intimate, and small" (133). It then becomes clear that through *Heimat*, a sense of belonging in space, the human need for locality, the synergistic relations between space and objects, the intensity that produces memory and attachment – one maintains one's identification with available spatiality, turns what is beyond reach into what is within reach, and eases a sense of loss with a makeshift materialized gain.

What is special about such a "home space" is that it indicates to us a "dynamic notion of space" which "challenges the container concept" of space (Kugele 1, 9). This helps explain how and why its intensity and influence are so forceful and ubiquitous. The conventional idea of space being a dimension of objects, engagements, and memory is not sufficient in realizing how space and distancing affect us. Space is no longer static with respect to the intensity it harbors. Familiarity with space is about cognition and consciousness. Once the cognition and consciousness are extended into objects and space, the "home space" appears in form. Home is then less of a location but more of a material-based cognition. This explains our attachment to "things from home" and the expression "it feels like home" as our compliment on an ambience.

Such intensity of the home space is also ubiquitous in food culture: national cuisines and festival foods are both representative examples. Both national cuisines and festival foods are based on collective memory, which operates in a comparatively larger space for communities that share similar cultural identities. The food-nationality connection and the food-festival connection are nothing private in terms of literary creation. On the premises that modern literature is about individual identity and about personal experience with a world packed with intensity, collective memory then belongs in a pre-modern world which accomodates a strong sense of

community. What modern literature, especially poetry, concerns is the individual memory and its representation in literary works. To make a second use of our previous examples, modern literature is more about Roetheke's whiskey than St. Patrick's green cocktail. (Unless it is a literary work that deals with ethnicity and identity. Memory will then freely travel between the individual category and the collective category or will even blur and defy such categorization. Li-Young Lee's poems are examples. For works like his, we will utilize another strategy of food poetics than the distancing-channeling approach.)

literary functions of space

Our focus on distances and space is demanded by our reading of literature based on the materialist point of view. The physical contact of human beings and their living space is often depicted in literature or employed as a literary device to reveal a character's mind, the construction of identity, or nostalgia. In *Memory and Architecture*, Eleni Bastéa indicates that "space is remembered in moments of crisis or loss" and "early memories of space are used to reflect the characters' states of mind" (15). In dealing with cultural identity and life related to coffee plantation, Bastéa notices the relation between the space and the mind. As for how a constituted space may enhance the materiality of memory, Luz points out that "the built environment is an important mnemonic agent that makes visible the differentiation of places" (15). It is believed that such constituted space and its mnemonic agency may serve purposes of nostalgic comfort, social identity, and even institutional discipline. In terms of the construction of identity, space and memory are indispensable, especially when the combination of the two involves a geographical space and a cultural memory. Castro Silvia Borrego points out that "geographical spaces…places with a strong sense of cultural retention, become places that encourage re-memory"

(56). It is noticeable that the use of "re-memory" tells us that memory is something with a powerful capacity to encompass other memories built upon it or with a capability of self-production. Distances, along with space, have always had ubiquitous but intangible presence in life and literature, functioning as literary devices.

A constituted space or distance may be compared to a dream. In other words, distancing is the process of the intensity building a dream world. The same has been said about the idea of a "national space." In a *Heimat* context, space is "featured as a utopian project" and "national space is a dream" and "the ultimate *telos*" (Umbach 3-4). Following this observation, it is understandable why a taste of the macaroon means Paris to so many people (the constituted space for exoticism) and a taste of bubble milk tea means Taiwan to the homesick (the constituted space for homecoming). A taste of the moon cake means mid-August to the homesick overseas Chinese (the constituted space for cultural/collective memory). A whiff of whiskey means the father to Roethke (the constituted space for individual memory). All these spaces are constituted, it seems, on one premise: "The loss of something significant and powerful is not to be ignored but to be mended. What is out of reach has to have its substitute or counterpart within my reach and I want it manageable and small!"

Distancing is metaphorically a dream-building process, and an effective one. As suggested in the preceding paragraph, it is an end in itself ("the ultimate *telos*"). Within the perimeters of materialist discourse and within the limits of the human condition, there is hardly anything beyond the materialized space of objects for us. When it is impossible to own a city, a macaroon will do. When it is time to stay abroad for studies, the tapioca bubbles will do. When homeland is lost in the memory, the moon cake will do. When Father is no longer at my bedside, a glass of whiskey will do. They all give us something to hold on to. It is all very spatial.

The success of distancing relies on the human dependance on materialized

contact and attachment to objects. Through related or repeated practice, human ties with objects can become even stronger unnoticeably. “Communication over a common object of memory can be direct and institutionally organized…as with the naming of a street or a school” (Matatyaou 16). Uri Jacob Matayaou asserts that even the naming of a street, an act performed upon something in the public space, produces memory “shared and recognized” which “manifests a minimal convergence with individual memories” (ibid). We are looking at two things here: institutionalization of memory and convergence of collective memory with individual memory. The former suggests that the once-sought comfort in an object may become permanently internalized in the object through institutionalization, of course, including self-training. Sometimes we choose the same food under the same circumstances, suggesting that the distinction between individual memory and collective memory may be blurred and subject to manipulation. The naming of the street or our constant recourse to a certain thing for help are both suitable examples of the inextricable relations between memory and objects. This is why it is most suitable to deal with memory by dealing with materiality.

To conclude, distancing is the first act of food intensity triggered by food affect. Distancing is also the first procedure in the whole process of memory production when food functions as a memory machine. Distances, space, and objects all contribute to materializing memory. Memory is thus rendered tangible and within our reach. Such materialization of memory takes place in literature as well as in life. In the discourse of food poetics, food in literature is not much different from food in life. Memory is first materialized in life and when the materialized memory is experienced by the poet, it becomes a literary subject matter. Materiality of food is coated with textuality, but textuality is also a form of materiality. Food poetics aims to read food in life as well as food in literature.

Food as a Thing: Channeling

Distancing is intensity at work to expand itself into space and objects in space. Channeling is intensity at work to draw the mind and perception into the space and the objects in the space. Distancing is the process whereby memory is embodied. Channeling is the process whereby the embodied memory is experienced. Distancing makes efforts to pursue something with the awareness of its absence (after the affective encounter). Channeling makes efforts to seek a second encounter with that thing while yearning for its presence (usually a materialized recurrence). The drive behind both distancing and channeling is intensity. Intensity powers both distancing and channeling.

Intensity keeps the memory machine going. When the memory machine finishes its act of distancing, memory is given spatiality. With both the space and objects in the space are ready, the wished-for presence of the first affective encounter must be seen in the newly constituted space and objects in it. The "already-seen" must appear in the "never-seen":

> The "never-seen" which characterises an always displaced and disguised object is immersed in the 'already-seen' of the pure past in general, from which that object is extracted. […] ultimately, it is only the strange which is familiar and only difference which is repeated. (*DR* 98-9)

This is channeling at work. It enables us to see the already-seen in something new, something we have never seen. To paraphrase Deleuze by examples of food, for an Anglophile, the same "Englishness" (the "already-seen," or already experienced) he sees in yesterday's shepherd's pie may be seen in this afternoon's scones for high tea (It could also be similar or "identical" foods, but the idea of disparate objects being identical is a misconception of categorization. We see new batches of the "same"

pastry.) Or tomorrow's fish and chips for lunch ("always displaced and disguised," in different shapes and forms). It may have been a scene in a film that triggered the pursuit of this Englishness, or it may have been the protagonist nibbling on a shortbread finger. This shortbread finger is the object extracted from the past, or in this case a re-constructed scene emulating the original scene. An Anglophile is able to see the old scene, materialized as the shortbread finger and many other objects, in numerous new things. Therefore the strange is seen as the familiar and the different always seem to be repeated. This is the second act of intensity—the act of channeling.

Although the term channeling is what I address the second act of intensity in the process of memory production, the idea and the word "channeling" have been used for other thoughts for quite some time. "Channeling," by one definition, means "the process of receiving information from some level of reality other than the ordinary physical one and from beyond the self as we currently understand it" including messages "outside one's own ordinary conscious or unconscious reality" (Klimo 436). In the original wording of this definition, the emphasis falls on "reality." In my adaptation of this word and its idea, the emphasis is shifted onto "physical." If distancing addresses the expanding of intensity in forms, channeling addresses the contracting of intensity in forms. As we have seen briefly in the Introduction, **the idea is that channeling attracts or sucks in the human recipient of (first affect and then) intensity so as to approach the original affective encounter in the memory**. Channeling is to seek the presence of what is absent in the process of distancing.

The idea of channeling is also applied to mythology and folklore, with similar meanings. In Greek mythology, the divine inspiration received from the Muses is considered "a guidance or source outside the individual's own self…it fits the description of channeling" (Klimo 111). In the case of folklore, it has been said that "the Celtic bards have a time-honored reputation for channeling. Animals and plants

were said to act as vehicles for messages" (ibid). From these two examples, we notice a strong sense of exteriority and materiality which correspond to the aforementioned extended cognition and new materialism. The messages are conveyed and mediated by materiality, whether it is an object or a life form. The information received always comes from outside rather than within. The idea that a message we are first ignorant or unconscious of comes to us, though, is disputable. What is disputable about this idea is not the message, but the direction in which the message travels. In an anthropocentric perspective, the message or object of course "comes to" the human being. In a non-anthropocentric point of view, the message in the form of objects "attracts" the human recipient. In both cases, the results of channeling might seem the same, but in my usage a non-anthropocentric stance must be maintained in order to facilitate object-oriented discourse. (It is the same with the following example from computer science, but on occasions when it is easier to explain channeling from a conventional point of view, we allow exceptions.).

Although channeling might have originated from folklore or religion, its working system resembles that of computer science. Through the following explanation of how channeling works, we come to know the elements of channeling In computer science, while processing memory, "relocation information identifies address-dependent byte-streams in the binary that need modification (relocation) when the linker re-maps the binary to different addresses" (Bhatkar 38). The relocation entry must contain two things: a corresponding offset, and relocation information (ibid). To put it in plain words, relocation means to process memory by transferring it from one place to another. Before it can be channeled (in the byte-streams) the information must be shown a way to go (address-dependent). Therefore, two things are indispensable in the act of channeling (relocation): a corresponding point and a label of the type of information to be relocated.

Channeling in the context of food poetics functions with the same elements: a **corresponding point** and an **index label**. While the corresponding point is a recognized object, the index label is the guiding principle for recognition. The index label decides on the corresponding point as the intensity decides on a possible second affective encounter. To show it in an example of food, let's look at a stanza from Maya Angelou's "I Love the Look of Words":

> When I have stopped reading,
> ideas from the words stay stuck
> in my mind, like the sweet
> smell of butter perfuming my
> fingers long after the popcorn
> is finished.

The poet's encounter with the words leaves behind a trace of ideas the way intensity trails behind affect. Ideas then stay in the poet's mind to work its influence over the poet. The intensity of ideas needs to be materialized for articulation and perception. The original point is the words whose intensity becomes ideas. The corresponding point is the popcorn whose intensity becomes the butter smell. During distancing, intensity transforms itself – transformability is one of three characteristics of intensity – in the distances or space it creates (i.e., in the distances or space it enters with intensity). Both ideas and butter are sweet to the poet's senses. This pleasant feeling emerging from both objects is the index label. With the index label, the poet locates the corresponding point—the popcorn. The channeling of the memory/intensity of words finishes its process on the popcorn. Popcorn, through the poet's individual experience, means poetry. (It may be that, in real life, the bigger the gap between the two corresponding points is, the worse a case of yearning or addiction becomes. In poetry, the bigger the gap between the two corresponding

points is, the more successful a metaphor is. The former is a case of a failed attempt at satisfaction. The latter is a case of extended aesthetic spatiality. Yet let's stay on the process of channeling for now.)

The operation of channeling relies on one thing the extended cognition school posits—the human body as an open system. In the field of contemporary philosophy or physics, "we are no longer closed physical systems. Rather, we are vibratory systems capable of being affected by other such systems" (Klimo 321). Since both the human body and any object external to it are equally unstable and equally open to each other's influence, traveling particles of objects, transforming sensations, and all sorts of materialized messages are ready to be channeled into and out of the human body. It is not surprising that part of the human cognitive process and memory registry take place outside the human head.

Besides memory registered in objects external to the human body, clinical psychologist Päivi Pylvänäinen draws our attention to another form of memory unrelated to the human mind—body memory. She equates body memory with implicit memory. She also points out that "the living body and its nervous system learn from the sensations received from the environment and from the body itself," and afterwards the "organism needs to integrate the sensory, tactile, proprioceptive [self-conscious] and motor efferent [output] information" in order to act and to get acquainted with the environment (305). This is another way to look at intensity. If there is a kind of memory, implicit and registered in the body (either the human body or the body of an object, when taken in a broader sense), we can say it is a medical version of Deleuzean intensity. Furthermore, this memory in the body integrates sensations (confirming the index label, "words" and "popcorns" categorized under the same index entry—embodiment for pleasant feelings) and develops motor efferent information (locating the corresponding point and readying the transportation to the

corresponding point) and draws itself near the environment (channeling). In philosophy, in food poetics, as well as in clinical psychology, the way intensity powers the process of channeling seems the same. Pylvänäinen concludes with even more surprising similarity:

> The ability for attention and consciousness that the body-self maintains, enables the channeling of some of the contents of body memory into our conscious processing. The tension patterns are one channel for body-memory to shape the state and responses of the body-self. (ibid)

The way philosophy interprets the world, the way poetics interprets poetry, the way computer science understands memory mechanism, and the way medical science understand the human mind are all following one operating process of channeling. All four agree that a thing called intensity by Deleuze is powering a process of channeling—the second act of intensity.

We must keep in mind that channeling is not just an act of conveying intensity but also an act of creating materialized memory. During the process, such conveyance and creation are always at work. It is moving something and making something new at the same time. The underlying intensity never stops transforming itself during its transportation. The result is repetition of difference. Exact similarity is not possible. There is a tendency for something to be added or enhanced. Daqing Yang notices this in a specific genre of cinema. Yang calls it “migration of memory” (294). While speaking of how Chinese Americans have been “channeling the memory of World War II in the United States,” Young points out that the Chinese Americans are “active in reviving a memory of the Chinese dimension of World War II,” especially “the first-generation immigrants from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan” (ibid). What Young calls a case of "migration of memory" and suggests is enhancement or exaggeration, is the process of channeling. Since no channelings are innocent and all channelings

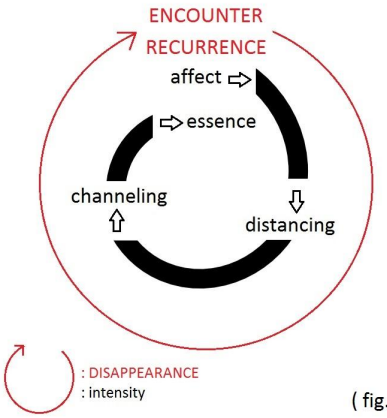
are charged with unknown intention, the moved memory is always different from the memory before moving. This is the creating and renewing function of channeling.

Changes of memory involved in channeling also have something to do with the nature of memory. While Sergei Kudryashov likewise uses the idea of channeling to describe the retrieving, acquiring, or forming of memory, he points out that changes are involved in the channeling process for two reasons: the "changeability and fragility" of memory and its "dependence on various factors" (87). The former increases its mobility, while the latter encourages transformation. In addition, the confirmation of the index label is very private and exclusive. The corresponding point may only appear corresponding in the eye of the person under influence of the intensity. In the eyes of other people, the corresponding point may be a miss or miles away from the original starting point.

This is why "cultural and individual memory can be subjective, random, biased, and transient" and even a "socially defined individual memory can be compromised" (Norris 7). For Van Norris, the "heavily mediated" memory and its "personalized frameworks" (ibid) cause memory deviation. On our premise that memory can only be created but not retrieved, the case of memory deviation does not stand. Channeling is after all an aim at presenting what was first lost at the other end. Through indivisible expansion, transformation, and finally transportation, the "heavily mediated," "personalized frameworks" of memory that demand interpretation are what we expect from involuntary memory and poetics.

If we resort to *Proust and Signs* for a final recapitulation, intensity is what Deleuze calls "joy" (similar to Maya Angelou's registry of "butter smell"). The joy then seeks identity or an object it can identify itself with. The identified object becomes a virtuality of the joy. This process achieves essence (in which all differences are resolved and internalized)—"real without being present (distancing),

ideal without being abstract (channeling)" (*PS* 36-9). The entire process of memory production of distancing and channeling is thus encompassed in one sentence: it is a quest for joy. And in the end we possess the joy from afar through varying materialized mediation. This is also how poetry works.



(fig.1)

To sum up the entire mechanism of memory production, we shall go through the distancing-channeling process in two ways: the process as shown in the outer circle and the process as shown in the inner spiral (See fig.1).[11] Let's first look at the outer circle. This is the process of how we usually experience an external object in a space. The process is based on a presence-absence contrast to simulate our conventional anthropocentric point of view toward objects. The encounter here refers to our first contact with an object. In the case of food, the food will be consumed and gone. This ends the encounter and the presence of the food. The food then disappears from the space. The foods stays absent till the next time we see the "same" food. The recurrence of the food is a second encounter which is nothing different from the first one. Nothing really happens between the encounter and the recurrence. It is just the disappearance of the food. We definitely think of a craving as a presence-absence-recurrence problem from such a point of view.

In the Deleuzean machine of involuntary memory, and in food poetics, the mechanism is shown in a more complicated structure as in the inner spiral. The first encounter with the food is in fact the first encounter with the affect in the food. The

[11] This graphic has been drawn, written, and designed by the author of this dissertation for the sole purpose of explaining the working process of food, among other objects, as a memory machine in poetics.

affect touches upon our senses and leaves its viable force in the human senses/body as an imprint. The object that mediates the first affective encounter is gone. The intensity in it stays in the human body. First, the haunting effect (intensity) of affect (or "apparition" if Deleuze's choice of word is preferred) starts to enter with us into different spaces and contacts with objects. Distancing begins. Its extension of distances and creation of space synchronize with our entrance into a new environment, a new environment where the food we first tasted and liked is gone. The distancing process then creates a home-like space by intensity exerting its indivisible expandability, transformability, and transportability.

When enough space is created and enough objects are housed in the space, channeling is ready to begin. Distancing starts by way of expansion. Channeling starts by way of contraction. The formally created distances must be drawn back closer. The space and the objects have to be small and manageable to create a *Heimat* ambience. An index label has to be confirmed and a corresponding point has to be located. Channeling is achieved only when both elements are available. When achieved, channeling creates a virtuality of the first affective encounter. Deleuze designates the virtuality as essence (*PS* 39). The virtual is not and can never be the actual. There is always a gap between affect and virtuality/essence. I believe the gap helps us realize addiction as a failed attempt of satisfaction and helps us realize how aesthetic distance contributes to the success of poetic metaphors. If metaphors are about how language maintains an appropriate aesthetic distance between two disparate objects while joining them in an encounter in order to let them speak for each other, the distance or space between the affect that impresses us and our efforts to emulate the affect must be fully charged with vigor and energy to result in an enduring aesthetic goal. Unlike the first process of the outer circle in fig. 1, in which nothing much happens besides the disappearance of the food, here we have intensity powering the entire process to

push one procedure to the next: affect → distancing → channeling → virtuality (essence)—the entire process of food poetics and memory production.

To see how all this helps our reading of food in a poem, let's look at "The Baking" by Larry Smith:

> A man and a woman are baking bread. They press their hands into the dough and think of children.
>
> In kitchen light the forms are danced into being, lifted into pans, and sailed into the oven. The man and woman nod and caress each other's hands. Their movement is a whisper.
>
> While the oven is baking they lie naked on a bed. They bathe in each other's touch. Their breathing is a song. Soon birds have gathered outside their windows, waiting to be fed.
>
> The man and the woman rise to feed the cries of birds and each other, to open the doors of the oven and meet the children within. (*Taste and See* 121)

From the point of view of the outer circle, a couple is making bread. Their contact with the bread discontinues because the bread has to be baked in the oven and they have to wait. During the making of bread, they are in the kitchen, among kitchen utensils. While waiting, they are out of the kitchen, naked in bed. When the bread is done, they open the oven, feed the birds, and think about children. The poem is beautiful. The couple is loving. The bread is done. There are disparate objects which seem unrelated. Though cursory, this is basically our first reading.

From the point of view of the inner spiral, bread is coming into form. The birth

of bread, as the affect, is sensed by the couple through the kneading of the dough. The dough passes on the intensity of something coming into being to the couple. Distancing begins. Objects and space around the couple are shaped by the intensity. Kitchen utensils are dancing into beings. Hands in sight become a whisper in earshot. Bakers become lovers while bodies become dough. Everything is involved in the relocating and corresponding process of channeling. Everything is in an urge to find its corresponding point for a sensuous articulation or expression. In the end, we see the two-becoming-one body become the dough they are kneading. The birth of bread foretells the birth of a baby and the feeding of the crying birds foreshadows the rearing of children. Therefore a new life is seen in the newly baked bread. Through such a reading, food in poetry can send out more messages or connect more objects in the poem that might at first seem unrelated.

Food as a Sign

In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze first reads Proust by way of reading the madeleine as a sign. He later uses the same method to read the world and everything in it. From food as a sign to all things as signs, ultimately he reads the entire knowledge system as a sign system:

> What unites the scent of a flower and the spectacle of a salon, the taste of a madeleine and the emotion of love is the sign and the corresponding apprenticeship. The scent of a flower, when it constitutes a sign, transcends at once the laws of matter and the categories of mind. (*PS* 59)

He follows up by explaining the apprenticeship of an Egyptologist as a necessary task we must assume:

> We are not physicists or metaphysicians; we must be Egyptologists. For there are no mechanical laws between things or voluntary communications

> between minds. Everything is implicated, everything is complicated, everything is sign, meaning, essence. (*PS* 59)

To conclude this paragraph, Deleuze reveals that the necessity of the deciphering task lies in the nature of things. It is the only way to understand everything:

> Everything exists in those obscure zones that we penetrate as into crypts, in order to decipher hieroglyphs and secret languages. The Egyptologist, in all things, is the man who undergoes an initiation – the apprentice. (*PS* 59)

If it is the synergistic effect of the sign and the apprenticeship that unites the world, the unity must refer to the human realization of the world. The world and everything in it are realized by deciphering everything in the world as a sign.

Apprenticeship is a word which suggests efforts and devotion. There seems to be a subtle connection between the idea of apprenticeship and the idea of obligation we have discussed earlier in the context of the joy → obligation → meaning sequence. There also seems to be a connection between deciphering and identity. This is to say that although reading food as a thing and reading food as a sign are two different approaches of food poetics, it is impossible to say that there is nothing related or overlapping between them, especially as the entire system of distancing and channeling (reading food as a thing) is built upon various Deleuzean thoughts. Reading food as a thing is how we explore food as a memory machine, and reading food as a sign is how we hone our interpretation of signs as an apprentice.

Although Deleuze points out that "Proust's work is based not on the exposition of memory, but on the apprenticeship to signs" (*PS* 4), for a reader and an analyst, it is both crucially important to read Proust for his signs and to read him for the exposition of memory. To understand how the madeleine functions as a sensuous sign is as important as to understand how the madeleine initiates the production of involuntary memory.

Deleuze believes the search in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (*À la recherche du temps perdu*) is "presented as the exploration of different worlds of signs that are organized in circles and intersect at certain points, for the signs are specific and constitute the substance of one world or another" (ibid). Judging from how philosophy tends to read literature into life, all searches in the world may also be seen as the exploration of different signs. This is the point of departure in our reading food as a sign in poetry.

What makes it pertinent to adopt the reading of signs, the apprenticeship of the Egyptologist, for the reading of poetry is Deleuze's basic belief that all things are encrypted as hieroglyphs. Poetry, being a coded language to encompass everything in life, is the most intensive code of all codes and includes all codes. Reading poetry is like reading the search in Proust's literary world. It is about the deciphering of all things as encrypted signs in a world constituted by signs. According to Deleuze, all objects can be divided into four different signs[12]: worldly signs, signs of love, and sensuous signs.

Deleuze finds **worldly signs** both profuse and elusive, ready to change and evolve. They multiply by number and category. Worldly signs rid objects of their meanings. They replace thoughts and actions:

> The worldly sign appears as the replacement of an action or a thought. It stands for action and for thought. It is therefore a sign that does not refer to something else, to a transcendent signification or to an idea content, but has

[12] The fourth sign—the sign of art, is "dematerialized" (*PS* 9 and onward). In reading food in poetry, the fourth sign must be excluded for the moment. The sign of art is different from the other three by nature. It is not a category of sign. It subsumes all signs. It affects all signs, especially sensuous signs—"the world revealed by art reacts on all the others and notably on the sensuous signs" (*PS* 9). It integrates signs and renders them aesthetic meanings—"all the signs converge upon art" and so do all interpretation of signs—"all apprenticeships, by the most diverse paths, are already unconscious apprenticeships to art itself" (*PS* 10).

> usurped the supposed value of its meaning. (*PS* 5)

It is further explained that worldly signs are empty signs which provide "ritual perfections" (ibid). Worldly signs alone give us "exaltation" out of nothing. Although emptiness usurping content and meaning is negative in almost all situations, the ritual perfection of worldly signs and the exaltation they cause seem worse. Worldly signs are in this context a kind of signs that either numb or cheat human experiences, but let's first move on to the second sign before we get back to them.

Signs of love earn their name not because they focus on the emotional exchange of amorous feelings, but because they center on the confusion of love. According to Delezue, to love is to understand every move your loved one makes, to decipher all signs emitted from the one you love (*PS* 5-6). However, the mind of another person is an entirely unknown world. The loved one is all in all a sign of love herself in addition to any other sign she makes. The loved one as a sign represents an inscrutable, multiple world which is full of possibilities and not available to the loving person. The contradiction of love lies of course in the world of signs of love. We try to make sense of the unknown world so as to alleviate anxiety and jealousy caused by the unknown, but the more we try to make sense, the more things do not make sense to us and anxiety and jealousy increase (*PS* 6).

The confusion of love is confusion about signs. Therefore signs of love are by no means empty signs. The confusion is caused on the premise that there is a meaning in the sign. The meaning remains opaque. Signs of love are signs full of meanings waiting to be deciphered. They encourage thoughts and actions and from them thoughts and actions are developed. They need in-depth exploration and meticulous interpretation. Deleuze uses the metaphor of love lies to give us a vivid idea:

> They [signs of love] are deceptive signs that can be addressed to us only by concealing what they express…The beloved's lies are the hieroglyphics of

> love. The interpreter of love's signs is necessarily the interpreter of lies. His fate is expressed in the motto To love without being loved. (PS 7)

From the quote and the motto in it, Deleuze seems to give us a message that to decipher signs of love is a necessary attempt and yet a doomed trial. If that is the case, then the deciphering of signs of love is to make us aware of the existence of meanings of signs and the need to decipher the signs. The deciphering act may also acquaint us with a world that is full of multiplicities and possibilities, a world which never yields itself to one single interpretation. In reading poems by poets like Stevens and Williams, such awareness often occurs to the reader and the enriched yet confusing food signs at their early stage assimilate signs of love.

If we may sum up the world of signs of love as an inscrutable and jealous world, we may take the world of **sensuous signs** as a joyous world, and its joys trigger influences in a certain order. The world of sensuous signs seems to have more physical contacts, solid bases, and less confusion:

> First a prodigious joy, so that these signs are already distinguished from the preceding ones by their immediate effect. Further, a kind of obligation is felt, the necessity of a mental effort to seek the sign's meaning…. Then, the sign's meaning appears, yielding to us the concealed object—Combray for the madeleine, young girls for the steeples, Venice for the cobblestones… (*PS* 8)

Sensuous signs first fill people with joy and then people are motivated by joy and feel a kind of obligation. Following the sense of obligation, people go ahead and explore the meanings of sensuous signs. We can see here that sensuous signs are different from worldly signs and signs of love by the nature of their meanings. Worldly signs are lacking in meanings. Signs of love are suggesting possible meanings but actually offering torture. Sensuous signs are full of meanings and joy (*PS* 9). Sensuous signs

are not as empty as worldly signs, nor are they as torturous as signs of love. However, Deleuze does not forget to remind us that the search does not stop at sensuous signs, because sensuous signs are still materialized signs (*PS* 8).[13]

It should be noted that the "material" in "materialized" is not opposed in meaning to "spiritual." The materiality under discussion refers to the state of the sign when it is still in the form of an object before the sign is pinned down on a meaning. This is why Deleuze reminds us that the search for lost time does not stop at sensuous signs. We have to have a follow-up search because we have not yet found the essence. One of Deleuze's definitions of essence is something "rises up absolutely, in a form that was never experienced" (*PS* 8). This is the moment when the essence of that thing comes out. In other words, essence is what is new in an object. It is a brand-new experience of an object and such an experience was never before expected from the object. Essence is the new, unexperienced meaning of an object. The world of essence is the world of signs of art. The world of signs of art is the world of meanings. Henceforth, "the world of art is the ultimate world of signs" (*PS* 10).

When all signs in the end enter the world of signs of art, all signs become dematerialized, beyond their materialized objects and gaining their meanings. All signs reach out to seek essence and by doing so transcend their own boundaries and limitations. Since sensuous signs are especially responsive to art, art must particularly contribute to the meanings of sensuous signs. Art must be particularly privileged in interpreting sensuous signs. Sensuous experiences may find them best articulated in the world of art.

If the search starting from the madeleine does not end in Combray, if the search does not start from one object and finish with another, if the search has to start from

[13] As already mentioned, the search for meaning must, along with the convergence of all signs, end in art (*PS* 10) so as to be "dematerialized" and have meaning (*PS* 9).

an object and ends in a meaning, then all the various signs on the journey of the search can be seen as different stages of the search, and signs of different stages bear with them different significances. Although dining experiences are related to the discussion of sensuous signs, food objects are not confined to the category of sensuous signs. Food objects are both food items and individual objects. As an object, a food item can be a worldly sign, a sign of love, definitely a sensuous sign, and finally it can become a **sign of art** and obtain its meaning.

Take the madeleine as an example. When the madeleine serves as one of the many desserts at the afternoon tea or after dinner, it is a worldly sign. It is an empty sign because it is part of a routine. The madeleine does not have to be the madeleine. It can be any kind of dessert in any form. It is just there for its ritual existence, without inspiring thoughts or actions. The madeleine can be taken to the next level and then serves as failed guidance for the search of memory. It rings a bell but gets stuck in a blurred impression. It brings up something obscure and the pain and torture it causes become more distinct than that obscure experience. The affected person has entered into a state of exploration and excruciation, trying to decipher an encrypted message in vain. He can only make one guess after another in the face of numerous possibilities. He makes efforts the way people make efforts to decode lies and hieroglyphs. The madeleine, given so much human devotion to exploration and so much mental investment in the frustration, has become a sign of love (so are the three trees pointed out by Deleuze, *PS* 37).

The madeleine first enters the world of worldly signs and becomes an empty sign. Then it enters the world of signs of love and becomes a sign of encrypted meaning and an inspiration for efforts. The madeleine must enter the world of sensuous signs and obtain its meaning. The madeleine, as a sensuous sign,cannot be empty, generic, or have merely ritual existence. According to Deleuze, sensuous signs are true signs

that come with meanings as material signs (*PS* 9). It is only when the madeleine serves as a sensuous sign that it can become a true sign with a meaning. In the world of sensuous signs, the madeleine becomes another object, a space, a dimension far away from the original madeleine, through the sensuous experience of the person. The madeleine now means many different things: genuinely a meaningful sign with its presence as Combray among other things.

To continue this search, the object-for-object meaning[14] of a sign cannot be final. The search must go further to seek a meaning which is not based on an object-for-object relation, since it is a non-materialized meaning. The final meaning(s) of a sign or an object must be dematerialized in order to converge on art, to demand a meaning from art. This is the final destination of the search and the last stage of the sign. Accordingly, the madeleine, which in the previous stage was Combray, must now become childhood in the world of dematerialized signs of art. A dessert for tea is a worldly sign whereas the madeleine that teases a blurred memory becomes a sign of love. When the madeleine conjures up Combray, it becomes a sensuous sign. But when the madeleine tells of childhood, it becomes a sign of art.

In the world of worldly signs, the food object has nothing unique in itself. It barely has an identity. In the world of signs of love, the food object becomes the madeleine with its own identity. In the world of sensuous signs, the madeleine has transformed itself into a town, another object and space. It has its object-for-object meaning. In the world of signs of art, the madeleine goes beyond materiality and creates newness by its reference to Proust's childhood. It is abstract and it is new. And these two qualities belong to the final category of the four signs—the signs of art.

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[14] In the world of sensuous signs, the definition of a sign's meaning is a corresponding object in it: the madeleine means Combray, the moon means the mother, and the persimmon means the father. All meanings have to remain materialized. Therefore in the world of sensuous signs, the meaning of a sign is always an object-for-object meaning. See *Proust and Signs* 9.

In understanding food as a worldly sign, we can resort to cultural studies and anthropology. In understanding food as a sign of love, we can rely on new materialism for methodology. In understanding food as a sensuous sign, we may feel comfortable adopting the way Deleuze reads Proust. In understanding food as a sign of art lies our goal of establishing food poetics based on the previous three kinds of understanding and how they work together to interpret poetry.

Taking a closer look at the three aforementioned recourses, we may come to realize how they come together to help understand food as different signs at different stages. In the research of the afternoon tea and some shell-shaped dessert that accompanies the afternoon tea, cultural studies and anthropology will inform us of more related food culture and custom. When the madeleine seems to reveal some half-concealed message which somehow we never get any closer to but are merely made to wonder about, we understand the limited human capability and the active role objects may assume against the perturbable, permeable human being, if we learn to see the madeleine the way the new materialists see objects. When we stop wondering and allow the sign to enter the world of sensuous signs, we see the meaning of the sign. By way of Deleuze's principle: joy → obligation → meaning, we are able to see how meaning is brought forth. After we see Combray, after we know about childhood, the madeleine has finally become a metaphor and its poetic meaning is achieved. Art is then achieved.

Food as a Time:

Supposing the different worlds of signs are different spatial dimensions for signs to travel through, then signs should also have their temporal coordination they travel by or rest upon. Each of the four different signs may find its own temporal coordination in one of the three Deleuzen syntheses of time. Worldly signs belong in

the first synthesis of time, namely the time of Habitus or the living present. Signs of love and sensuous signs are closely related but dissimilar. They both belong in the second synthesis of time, namely the Eros-Mnemosyne time or the pure past. Signs of art belongs in the third synthesis of time, namely the time of the New or the future.[15]

The idea of temporal synthesis or synthesis of time-consciousness was previously adopted by Edmund Husserl to explain that the human senses can only experience objects in timeframes. That is to say, the human consciousness can only function within an awareness of temporality. Without the synthesis of time, we have no way to experience things and objects and therefore sensations are impossible.[16] This is a traditional point of view toward time adopted from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*[17] by Husserl, and then modified and specified into three syntheses of time by Deleuze. The idea of the synthesis of time was originally put forth to deal with the human subject and his consciousness. In Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, the synthesis of time has been further specified and categorized into three syntheses of time which are available for and conducive to the discourse and reasoning of material signs and agency instead of the human subjects.

The first synthesis of time is a passing present (*DR* 79). "This living present, and with it the whole of organic and psychic life, rests upon habit" (*DR* 78). In the context of food discourse, habits that move along with lapses of time establish the routine timetable for eating behavior. We need only recall a typical day's dining routine: breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack, and sometimes food before bed. Of course, there are still subcategories under these. Dinner is an example. If we take dinner in parts, we

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[15] See *Difference and Repetition*. For the first synthesis of time, see pp. vi, 78-80, 93-4, 108-9, 114-5, 225. For the second synthesis of time, see pp. vi, 79, 88, 94, 114. For the third synthesis of time, see vi, 88, 94, 111, 114, 274.

[16] See Mensch 14, 256, Held 46, Husserl 517.

[17] See 32, from SECTION II. Of Time.

may have soup, salad, entrée, main course, dessert, etc. Yet either a main category like dinner or a subcategory like main course does not really reveal much of the food content. They merely address habits but nothing specific. When these terms are taken for signs, they are empty signs. How we call a meal does not make a competent reference to any unique food object. A dining procedure simply does not respond to the food content. A procedural sign is a ritual sign, which bears no reference to any solid content. It is incapable of instigating thoughts or actions and has no meaning for development or derivation.

Empty ritual/worldly signs exist in a living present, a time synthesis of habits. Worldly routines have their own temporal coordination in the first synthesis of time. Ritual/worldly signs which belong in the time of habit also include object-signs like festival food objects: Zongzi for the Dragon Boat Festival, Moon Cake for the Mid-Autumn, cold food for Tomb Sweeping, the indispensable turkey for Thanksgiving or Christmas, the matching of lucky names and dishes during the Chinese New Year…these are all example of empty signs belonging in the time synthesis of Habitus. All these signs have lost their significance in the process of being handed down. They become one-on-one reflexive signs that allow no future development. They become arbitrary signs, stop evolving, and in the end they become dead. Their only chance is when they are placed in an entirely foreign environment and become unique again. (Say, in a Chinese community, Zongzi is an arbitrary sign for a certain time of habit...until in a poem by a homesick poet about a nostalgic night, Zongzi comes back to life with viable significance and new references.)

"The second synthesis of time, that of memory," as Deleuze observes in *Difference and Repetition*, "constituted time as a pure past" (94). As pointed out earlier in the same work by Deleuze, "Habit is the originary synthesis of time, which constitutes the life of the passing present. Memory is the fundamental synthesis of

time which constitutes the being of the past" (80). In the second synthesis of time, the exploration of meaning must be based on memory. The transformation of signs is a form of difference and the production of meaning and memory is a process of repetition. In a way, the time synthesis of the pure past produces memory and meanings through the transformation of signs. This is how the statement that the second synthesis "includes difference at the heart of repetition" (109) makes sense. The pure past has ever-changing signs at the center of its memory production. Transformation produces meaning. The word "pure" in "the pure past" means surpassing and dominating the world of representation (88). "Pure" in a sense means new, untainted by the original object. As we see from the madeleine, "Combray reappears, not as it was or as it could be, but in a splendor which was never lived, like a pure past" (85). From Deleuze's point of view, "pure" is free from the already-experienced madeleine and "the past" is the never-lived Combray. This is the production of involuntary memory of the pure past.

In the second synthesis of time, signs of love and sensuous signs coexist. To cite Deleuze again, the madeleine that makes the human recipient wonder is a sign of love. The madeleine that successfully leads to Combray is a sensuous sign. The breakfast, to cite Li-Young Lee's "Early in the Morning" for example, is a worldly sign. The specific dish of pickled vegetables prepared by the mother—a food object with an inscrutable meaning—is a sign of love. The sliced pickled vegetable, while referring to and associated with the mother's tresses, is a sensuous sign with a meaning. Let's once again go through what Deleuze has to say about "difference at the heart of repetition" in the second synthesis of time:

> …the two figures of difference [the transformation of signs], movement and disguise—the displacement ["movement"] which symbolically affects the virtual object and the disguises which affect, in imaginary fashion, the real

> objects in which it is incorporated—have become the elements of repetition [production of meaning/memory] itself. (*DR* 109)

The two kinds of signs that coexist in the second synthesis of time—signs of love and sensuous signs—can be taken as these two elements: signs of love as the element of **displacement**, sensuous signs as the element of **disguise**. A sign of love is an element of movement, making efforts and attempts to seek the displaced object. The sign of love as the element of displacement tries to locate one of the many possibilities of the displaced object. It deals with a **virtual** object. A sensuous sign is an element of disguise, locating and figuring out the transformation of one thing into another. The sensuous sign as the element of disguise explains the transition between two things in their materialized forms. It deals with **real** objects.

The way signs of love function is to serve as a failed attempt. While facing all virtual possibilities, they pick up the torture given by confusion and jealousy. They are charged with the urge and anxiety needed for the deciphering act. Signs of love function as an exploration attempt that enhances the obligation of sensuous signs. The way sensuous signs function, on the other hand, is to serve as a successful transformation. While facing all disparate and dissimilar objects, they exert imagination and mellow up objects in some correlated association that enables displacement and production of meaning and memory.

"[T]he second synthesis of time," as Deleuze points out, "united Eros and Mnemosyne (Eros as the seeker after memories, Mnemosyne as the treasure of the pure past)" (*DR* 274). Signs of love become the seeker in search of memory whereas sensuous signs accomplish transformation between objects and produce meaning and memory. Love powers the search while the senses reconstruct the content of the lost time. Sings of love and sensuous signs work synergistically together in the second synthesis of time. They are two signs of the pure past and memory. They coexist and

cooperate to conduct the search of lost time.

The third synthesis of time is a synthesis of "the New."[18] It is the synthesis of the future. This is a temporal coordination whereby the literature machine produces the new and wherein food signs become art signs which necessitate poetics. In the third synthesis of time, "it is as though time had abandoned all possible mnemic content, and in so doing had broken the circle into which it was led by Eros" (*DR* 111). This future synthesis of time, unlike the first two syntheses, is not constituted upon any materialized signs and no objects belong in it. It is, rather, a synthesis of dematerialized signs of art, of "desexualized libido" (ibid). "[L]ibido and the death instinct defines the third synthesis as much as Eros and Mnemosyne defined the second" (*DR* 113). Deleuze goes on to point out that experiences corresponding to the third synthesis are escape, loss, and death, because in the third synthesis of time death must be extracted from love and time must be abstracted "from all content in order to separate out the pure form" (*DR* 114). This desire ("libido") to cast off the living body ("death instinct") and all materialized bases and media is the ultimate consummation of the third synthesis of time and its path to art. This is the way Deleuze can conclude: "There is an experience of death which corresponds to this third synthesis" (ibid). It seems that physical death gives birth to art and to the New in the third synthesis of dematerialized temporal coordination.

In the context of food poetics, if the third synthesis is taken as the last phase of the development of poetics, then we are looking at the sequence of (1) habits, (2)

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[18] In Joe Hughes' reading of Deleuze, the third synthesis of time must be the time synthesis for the production of thoughts. According to James Williams, the third synthesis must be the time synthesis of the New. Although their choices of words differ, the ideas that the third synthesis is the time for the new aspects and meaning of things to appear and also for thoughts to come out of things are actually interchangeable. Here, "the New" is adopted because it fits better the literature machine which is always producing the new. See Williams 102.

inspired imaginations, and (3) beyond-object newness or meanings. This future, this time of the New, is also an abstracting time (*DR* 114). Because it is abstracting, it has the capacity to encompass most interpretations and meanings. It has the capacity to house most signs of art. As dematerialized signs of art function in an abstracting time, so dematerialized food signs in poetry function beyond a feeding purpose, beyond the satisfaction of a craving. The dematerialized signs function as aesthetic signs, which produce abstracted meanings. That is a memory machine.

When placed in the three different syntheses of time, food has its different temporal functions and significances. When under discussion according to the four different types of signs, food has its different identities and intensities. To practice this Deleuzean reading of food in poetry, we must start from Deleuze's notion that memory depends on habit (*DR* 79). Habit, as the first synthesis of time, refers to the living present and as a routine ceremony, it refers to worldly signs. Take Li-Young Lee's "Persimmons" as an example:

> In sixth grade Mrs. Walker
> slapped the back of my head
> and made me stand in the corner
> for not knowing the difference
> between persimmon and precision.
> * * *
> put the knife away, lay down newspaper.
> Peel the skin tenderly, not to tear the meat.
> Chew the skin, suck it,
> and swallow. Now, eat
> the meat of the fruit,
> so sweet,

all of it, to the heart.

*　　*　　*

I part her legs,

remember to tell her

she is beautiful as the moon.

*　　*　　*

Mrs. Walker brought a persimmon to class

and cut it up

so everyone could taste

a Chinese apple.

*　　*　　*

My mother said every persimmon has a sun

inside, something golden, glowing,

warm as my face.

*　　*　　*

Finally understanding

he was going blind,

my father sat up all one night

waiting for a song, a ghost.

I gave him the persimmons,

swelled, heavy as sadness,

and sweet as love.

*　　*　　*

Some things never leave a person:

scent of the hair of one you love,

the texture of persimmons,

in your palm, the ripe weight. (*Rose* 17-9)

The persimmon first appears as a word, a sign for learning. It has nothing to do with the fruit the word refers to. As a sign, the word "persimmon" is a worldly sign, used as a means to learn how to read. It is a typical worldly sign of the routine ceremony in the classroom. It is a sign in the living present that demands present efforts and investment. Mrs. Walker, as the first synthesis lays down the foundation of memory through habit, enables acquisition of the sign through habit.

Once how to eat the persimmon is mentioned, the persimmon as a sign for learning disappears. What appears now is the persimmon as a fruit, an object. Peeling, chewing, swallowing…these are all sensuous investments in the fruit object. While one procedure is followed by another, the ritual characteristic of the worldly signs is shown. The former persimmon is a word, whereas the latter persimmon becomes a fruit. The former is a sign for learning whereas the latter is an object to taste. Both are persimmons, but they are separate objects—a language object and a fruit object.

Through routines and rituals, the memory of persimmons begins to take root and comes into being. The memory starts to develop multiple references and various possibilities. In this example, we do not have any failed attempt that stalls as a sign of love. Instead, all displaced possibilities are soon deciphered and all disguised references soon located. All signs enter into the phase of sensuous signs: the contact between the fingers and the lips, the joy that travels from the outside to the inside, and the sweet memory constructed by such experiences…all these contribute to an obligation to begin a search for the meaning of the sweetness. When signs transform themselves, meanings appear (joy → obligation → meaning).

By the material quality of the persimmon—its taste, its shape, and its color, the sensuous sign of a fruit transforms itself into "she," "apple," "sun," or even "face." These are all meanings produced by a sensuous sign, and all meanings thus produced

rest upon materiality. The sweet taste of the persimmon transforms itself into the sweet taste of her, the round shape of the persimmon transforms itself into the round shape of the apple, and the golden color of the persimmon transforms itself into the golden color of the sun and the glow on the face. But when the persimmon is passed on to the father, it is tinted by night, by ghost, and becomes something heavy with sadness and sweet with love. It has become a scent, a texture, and weight. Except for "scent" which is still much of a material or material-based contact, the rest are already dematerialized ideas, namely, meaning beyond objects. They are the New.

Reading food in poetry from the Deleuzean point of view reveals how the transformation from food into another object produces meaning and allows us to see how people may be indicators of the synthesis of time they are in. Mrs. Walker, for instance, is situated in the first synthesis of time. She is in the living present, monitoring learning, the scheduled and ritualize habit at the moment. "She" and the mother, and also the Mrs. Walker who brought along persimmons for the class (as opposed to the Mrs. Walker who pushes through the rituals of learning) are situated in the second synthesis of time, namely the pure past, because they contribute to the production of memory. They function in the "Eros-Mnemosyne" synthesis of time (*DR* 108) and cause the Eros-Mnemosyne coordination to function. The father who is about to lose his eyesight and therefore his contact with all shapes and forms, is already situated in the third synthesis of time, in the future. The father is to lose part of his senses. His loss will usher him into a dematerialized world where all objects shall be purged and all kinds of ideas devoid of forms shall haunt the person, like nights and ghosts.

A second reading of the poem may allow us the new discovery that, back in the class of Mrs. Walker, the word "persimmon" could be taken as a language object but also a dematerialized fruit. That is to say, in this poem we see signs travel in a

transformation cycle instead of a mere linear development. What was first worldly can change into something amorous and sensuous, and what was amorous and sensuous can change into something artful. In the end, art seems to be subtly inextricable with worldliness. Through Deleuze, we re-read the poem as the production of memory and meaning. Through the poem, we re-read Deleuze and find out that the living present of habit traces back to the memory in the pure past, that the memory in the pure past leads on meaning and the New, and that the meaning and newness in the future may one day become a stale and stagnant habit in the form of empty signs.

Chapter Three: "Life is a Bitter Aspic":

Making Sense of Food in the Poetics of Wallace Stevens' Poems

> *To eat and to be eaten—this is the operational model of bodies...they [bodies] coexist within one another. To speak, though, is the movement of surface....What is more serious: to speak of food or to eat words?...If we then speak of food, how can we avoid speaking in front of the one who is to be served as food?*
>
> —Gilles Deleuze (*The Logic of Sense* 23)

Eating is never a one-party thing. It involves two parties. In a conventional point of view, the two parties are the eater and the eaten. From an object-oriented point of view, the two parties are the influencer and the influenced. It is a combination and it is surely a form of interaction. To speak of food is to speak of this interaction. To speak of words of food is to deal with food poetics. Then, according to Deleuze, we are in a way taking surface talk into an in-depth operation.

Food poetics, like any other poetics, is a way to interpret poetry, to extract meanings from signs. Wallace Stevens provides us with abundant food signs in his poems, but the food in his poems is idiosyncratically challenging. Many of the food objects, mostly desserts, are typical examples of his eccentric choice of words. Speaking of food in poetry is an in-depth difficulty in itself. Wallace Stevens, as widely believed, is responsible for making it even more difficult. Yet, in addition to his idiosyncratic choice of erratic words, there is another reason why his food signs remain contentedly unknown.

For readers and scholars of Wallace Stevens, there is always an inevitable embarrassment—the intermittent fits of pausing and wondering: "what is he insinuating with that food?" "Aspic," "bread," "chocolate," "curd," and his celebrated "ice cream," to name only a few, are all example of his inscrutable food objects in

poetry. This long-standing embarrassment has been effectively ignored with the aid of one recourse—Stevens' own letters and essays. People irked by this intolerable embarrassment almost always turn to his letters and essays for the following quote:

> Those of us who may have been thinking of the path of poetry, those who understand that words are thoughts...must be conscious of this:
> that above everything else, poetry is words; and that words, above everything else, are, in poetry, sounds. ("The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words" *Stevens Collected Poetry & Prose* 663)

By this quote, a lot of choices of words by Stevens, since he says this himself, are justified—he chooses words for their sounds. That supposedly shall be the final word and the definitive conclusion that silences all other attempts of interpretation. This convenient explanation seems unimpeachable as it is said by the poet himself. Readers and scholars no longer need to live in the shadow of grudged footnotes and incomplete understanding. It is acceptable to read Stevens without understanding the meaning of his words here and there, because what matters is the sounds they carry, not meanings. It is so convenient that people tend to forget that turning back to the author for interpretation—whether it is his aesthetic perspective or his (auto)biography—simply stifles the sustainable values of a literary work.

As long as we stay in close contact with scholarship on Wallace Stevens, we will often come across remarks like, Stevens "takes the sounds, colors, and capacity for suggestiveness of words," and his "fascination with suggestive sound and color is a central element in his poetics." The writers typically conclude their understanding of his poetic art by saying, "The poetic use of sound becomes not only a challenge to ideological meaning but anagogic…" (Holander 122). Though wordings may vary, the gist is the same. The ultimate answer to some of his choice of words always seems to be: "He likes the sound of it."

Except for this sound-above-all assertion, from time to time, stray and sporadic efforts are made to look for hints and traces in daily correspondence to explain some particular words and phrases. A number of reference books on Stevens' poems, like *A Reader's Guide to Wallace Stevens* (2007), include meticulously collected anecdotes and remarks on Stevens' milieu and times in order to make sense of Stevens' fantastical banquet of words and food signs, his "confected ocean."

"Esthétique du Mal," the poem in which "confected ocean" has its first appearance, was inspired, in time of war, by a soldier who once wrote to a literary magazine complaining that the "the relation between poetry and…pain" was not fully reflected by literature of his time:

> Whatever he may mean, it might be interesting to try to do an esthétique du mal. It is the kind of idea that it is difficult to shake off. Perhaps that would be my subject in one form or another. (Stevens *Letters* 468)

"Esthétique du Mal," therefore, starts out as a project focused on pain and poetry, with pain as an element in life and poetry as a voice of pain. This poem is "a study in suffering but of an existential kind" (Fuchs191). Food poetics does not renounce social milieu or political climate for poetic interpretation, but neither does it rely merely on the background information for definitive interpretation. With this in mind, we now proceed to "Esthétique du Mal," applying our analysis to food objects in this poem.

In defining and deciding on the title of "Esthétique" in a letter, Stevens mentions, "I am thinking of aesthetics as the equivalent of *apérçus*, which seems to have been the original meaning" (*Letters* 469). *Apérçus*, derived from a past participle of "to be perceived," is the first shade of meaning that designates *esthétique* here, as Harold Bloom asserts that Stevens is here "returning 'aesthetic' to its root meaning of

'perceptiveness,' " and what is perceived here is "the pain and suffering inseparable from a consciousness of self" in a cruel, devastated world (226). While *esthétique* stands for αἰσθάνομαι (*aisthanomai*; to know or understand through sense) and *mal* stands for the necessary evil of pain, "Esthétique du Mal" is both the aesthetics of evil and the perception of pain. Both senses enrich each other on the basis of the oxymoronic nature of the title, which suggests poetic engagement of chaos or an act of sampling a bitter sting to the taste of the affected human being (Riddel 202).

By tracing keywords back to their roots, we are minding two things central to food poetics: the materiality of language and the methodology of foodways. The emphasis on language is an awareness that language affects people and conveys meanings through the senses. It has materiality and its function is based on such materiality. Sensuous influence and material agency are central to food poetics as they are to any field of materialist studies. Foodways, as stated earlier, refer to the humanistic tradition of food discourse which deals with various food histories, food cultures, food impacts, etc., mostly from viewpoints of cultural and sociological studies. The foodway methodology is to food poetics as archaeology and anthropology are to material cultures. It is not always indispensable, but for a wartime poem, it may be conducive.

The entire scene is a writer at work at his desk, with his study facing the volcano Mt. Vesuvius. What probably comes through the window visibly and what he probably thinks freely of are thus interwoven, across different spaces, into the following verse:

I

It was almost time for lunch. Pain is human.
There were roses in the cool café. His book
Made sure of the most correct catastrophe.

Except for us, Vesuvius might consume
In solid fire the utmost earth and know
No pain (ignoring the cocks that crow us up
To die). This is a part of the sublime
From which we shrink. And yet, except for us,
The total past felt nothing when destroyed. (*CP* 314)

Here we have a corresponding point of lunch: pain. As James Hans points out, the pairing of "It is almost time for lunch" and "Pain is human" is a reinforced "awkward juxtaposition" and yet at the same time it sends out a message that "time for lunch" is no less important than "pain is human," or, "pain is human" is not more important than "time for lunch" (80).

The corresponding connection between lunch and pain in this context renders pain into something which answers the human need of dining. The materiality of the word "pain," its sound and spelling especially, reminds readers who are familiar with Stevens' frequent references to the French language of bread (*le pain*).[19] The materiality of the word "pain" makes sense of such a corresponding relation. The pain inflicted by the human condition is no different from the bread provided for human need.

With pain and bread as corresponding points, the index label between the two must be a similar or overlapping quality. We live on bread, but we may live on pain unknowingly as well. Says Jeffrey E. Foss in his *Beyond Environmentalism*: "consciousness of pleasure and pain extend within the natural world" (230). What is more, from an evolutionary point of view, pain serves the purpose of "avoidance of damage and death, nursing of wounds, prevention of further damage" (ibid). Pain that

[19] Thanks go to Dr. Lloyd Haft of Leiden University, a devoted Stevens reader and a scholar of modern poetry, for pointing out this interpretation.

warns us and bread that feeds us are thus of the same index label of human survival. Pain and pleasure are equally important to human need.

The pairing of disparate elements continues between “roses” and “cool café,” and between “book” and “catastrophe.” All these objects in the poem follow the first pairing at lunch time, i.e., the bread and the pain. If what we see in the first pairing of bread and pain is a mutually nurturing and awakening quality conducive to human survival, these two ensuing pairings, following the same logic, may surely function likewise. They are the projected scenes of the lunch-pain association. Specifically, they are carrying on in parallel the poet’s emphasis on the pairing of nurture and torture.

Consequently, the roses that feast the eye are yoked with a chilly eating place (“cool café”). A medium of learning (“book”) enables us to learn about disasters (“catastrophe”). The coexistence of positives and negatives is ubiquitous. If this is what we see, this is probably the basic scene of the human world. The symbiosis of pain and pleasure becomes what meets our eyes most of the time. The “awkward juxtaposition” is no longer awkward. It is a scene that defines the human condition. It takes both pleasure and pain to define our survival, to define human life. Hence, “It is almost time for lunch. Pain is human.”

The obvious act of dining in this stanza, however, is not conducted by the human being, but by Vesuvius the Volcano. It consumes the earth, and unlike human beings, it feels no pain. Nearing the end of the stanza, there is a follow-up line that says “The total past felt nothing when destroyed.” The volcano which consumes the earth feels no pain. Likewise, the total past, when destroyed, feels no pain. The earth and the past are equated: the earth or the human world is the past while the memory is the record of human civilization. No pain shall be felt when the total destruction of human civilization arrives. But, how so?

The agent that performs the act of eating is not human. The act of devouring the human world means pain only in the human eye. To the volcano, to Nature, it is part of its course. Nature's powers are all alike whether in destruction or in creation. So are human powers alike either in seeking pleasure or in sensing pains. The perception of pain belongs in an anthropocentric narrative. The destruction of human civilization, like any other destruction, is neutral and amoral by nature. Following the same logic, we may have a better insight into the seeming contradiction in the coexistence of necessary nurture and necessary torture. It may be an ultimate hope that we may doff our idea that all things serve a human purpose and that all other life forms answer to a human need. To see beyond this is a thing too sublime for us to achieve, and as a result we shrink from the sublime law of nature that pain (pain/bread, pain/pleasure) is human. Here, pain is the bread for life and for philosophical thoughts.

In Poem XI of "Esthétique du Mal", we do not have as many paired objects, but various objects and spaces are bursting out from another food metaphor:

XI

Life is a bitter aspic. We are not
At the centre of a diamond. At dawn,
The paratroopers fall and as they fall
They mow the lawn. A vessel sinks in waves
Of people… (*CP* 322)

To facilitate poetic interpretation when no obvious corresponding points are available, we take the development of a passage as a process of distancing. The point of departure is the bitter aspic. Aspic, the soft, salty, savory jelly made of fish or meat, comes with a bitter taste. In other words, this is a bitter taste following the word "life." Later, the materiality of aspic is contrasted with that of a diamond. The verisimilitude of the bitter aspic to life brings us away from the hard, immobile

mineral. Distancing continues and more space is being created along with the objects in the space.

The paratroopers fall, not to fight, but to do household chores like lawn mowing. Instead of having a vessel of people sinking in waves, we have a vessel sinking in waves of people. The two scenes in this distancing process seems hilarious and absurd. Since in this poem the paratroopers are the later development of distancing which follows upon "Life is a bitter aspic," we have to look into the intensity that powers this development. Intensity, being in itself amorphous, is ever-changing in shapes. It is helpful to bear in mind the noted metaphor of intensity: the white wall. No matter what shape is drawn on the white wall, the whiteness of the wall, hence the whiteness within the shape, "remains univocally the same under whichever modality it is considered" (*EP* 196).[20] If intensity has to remain amorphous, and we have to choose among "life," "bitter," and "aspic," bitterness is the only one qualified, for it is the only amorphous quality among them (unlike "life" as a form of being or "aspic" as a dish in a specific form).

The three characteristics of intensity, as explained earlier in "Food as a Thing" in Chapter One, are indivisibility and expandability, transformability, and transportability. The latter two are self-evident in this case: the bitterness in life has been transformed and transported into airborne rangers doing chores and a sea of people drowning a ship. How does bitterness travel, first from life to the aspic, and then from the aspic to the two seemingly ridiculous scenes or spaces? What is the intense feeling that strings them together?

Half-fluid, unstable, and lacking in substance, the aspic is compared to life.

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[20] Another vivid definition of the lasting but amorphous intensity is "an intense feeling of transition, states of pure, naked intensity stripped of all shape and form" (*Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 18).

These qualities, when compared to those of a diamond, seem to render an even stronger sense of emptiness. The feeble and bitter life suddenly appears familiar in the taste of the aspic. The serious disappointment toward life is now a casual taste of food. In like manner, the serious battle scene of air-borne rangers falling from the sky is no different from the routine of mowing the lawn. Losing life is a form of cropping grass, or the other way around. What enables people to better communicate with each other (a vessel) seems to be sabotaged by people themselves. Instead of the sea, people themselves are the major barrier to communication. By tracing the intensity that flows through life, the aspic, the paratroopers' scene, and the vessel sunk into a sea of people, the bitterness is enhanced and the absurdity becomes resolved. The seemingly unrelated objects—soldiers ("paratroopers"), cuisine ("aspic"), transportation ("vessel")—all utter voices of a bitter life. Bitterness in this context may be awareness of the absurdity of human life. Relevant in this connection is that Agnes Heller, while dealing with the comic phenomenon in art and literature, subsumes both the ridiculous and the bitter under the laughable (16).

Part XI continues as follows:

> A man of bitter appetite despises
> A well-made scene in which paratroopers
> Select adieux; and he despises this:
> A ship that rolls on a confected ocean,
> The weather is pink, the wind in motion;…(*CP* 322)

A man with the awareness of the true taste of life, of all absurdity in life, despises any sugar-coated depiction of life. Intensity of bitterness of life, or intensity of real life is simply blocked outside the following scenes/spaces where paratroopers choose to be sacrificed like heroes, where the vessel faces no confrontation but confection, where the pink sky foretells tomorrow's sunny weather, where the wind helps advance the

sailing of the ship. A man with the awareness of what life really is despises the idea of confusing real life with fairy tales.

The seeming difference between these scenes and spaces are resolved when bitterness is extracted from all of them. In a way, all scenes internalize in them a sense of bitterness. Out of the same sense of bitterness, different scenes and objects are created, and then we have the poetic space. The poetic space, i.e., the virtual, which encompasses all scenes of bitterness and resolves their differences, is the essence of intensity. In this case, the poem is the essence of the inevitable absurdity and the helpless awareness thereof. The poem is the essence of human pain.

Ice Cream

Probably the most famous food poem by Wallace Stevens, "The Emperor of Ice-Cream," appeals to the senses and a considerable number of objects which offer an enhanced sense of materialized intensity, even from the very beginning:

> Call the roller of big cigars,
> The muscular one, and bid him whip
> In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.
> Let the wenches dawdle in such dress
> As they are used to wear, and let the boys
> Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.
> Let be be finale of seem.
> The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream. (*CP* 64)

Before we even start, it is necessary to point out that many interpretations of the "concupiscent curds" rest or are arrested on the he-likes-the-sound-of-it explanation of the poet's personal preference: Jahan Ramazani (92), Bonnie Costello (176), Warner Berthoff (190 n.36), Eleanor Cook (*Against Coercion: Games Poets Play* 262),

to name only a few. They usually refer us to Stevens' own words: "I like words to sound wrong" (*Letters* 340). Although nothing is more intriguing than a humorous remark about a poet or an anecdote about a certain poetic line, a working comprehensive system of poetics should aim for proper functioning than anecdote retrieval.

The poem describes two conflicting scenes on the same occasion—a funeral day. The first stanza is so full of life and actions that it shows no signs of mourning over the loss of life. Instead, people seem to be gathering for some sort of celebration. The seeming celebration scene is the funeral reception where rituals begin. This is the living present in which life is built upon habits. In the living present of Habitus, worldly signs function as empty, ritual signs that perform routines and offer "factitious exaltation" (*PS* 9).

Worldly signs that perform rituals are: the cigar roller, the wenches, and the boys. They either have a duty assigned to them ("rollers" of cigars) or they perform rituals the way they perform routines ("used to wear," "bring…in newspapers"). The muscles, the cigars, the kitchen, concupiscence, and the curds are all converged upon the cigar roller. Two of them are carnal—muscles and concupiscence, whereas another two are culinary—the kitchen and the curds. One of them is neither about contact nor intake but about a burning sensation and scent—the cigars. When the cigar roller is taken as a ritual performer whose function is to mediate the carnal, culinary, and burning sensations, we can focus on the factitious exaltation a funeral actually provides rather than blaming people for enjoying themselves at a funeral.

The wenches dawdle in their everyday dress. They may be helping hands of the family. Their dress is the same and they are standing by as helpers around the house as usual. They are the habit of the living present. Life goes on as they dawdle away, and life is based all upon habits. The boys maybe bring in a lot of things in newspapers on

a daily basis as they are also helping hands who often help with delivery. What they deliver is of course new (the fresh flowers), but the wrapping on the outside is always old (last month's newspapers). The boys are like time in the first synthesis, the present that passes. The presence of them, like the present, immediately reminds us of the lapses of time. The news that newspapers convey is always already-happened history, not new. Anything the present time delivers is brought into the passing present that tells of lost time. Nor are the flowers in a static state. One part of them is living while the other part of them is already dying. The fresh flowers may look more living than dying at the moment.

Following the earlier reasoning on the three syntheses of time in "Food as a Time" in Chapter Two, the three media of worldly signs—the cigar roller, the wenches, and the boys present the first synthesis of time—the synthesis of the living present. They show us how the world is filled with rituals and factitious exaltation which people take for comfort or even luxury (the cigar roller). They show us how the world of habits remains the same and one person's death does not change the course of the world (the wenches). They show us how the living present introduces all and at the same time sends all away (the boys). The rituals, the habits, the living present—the three are the first synthesis of time ritualized. In the first synthesis of time, the actual life is established upon habits and habits are practiced upon rituals and ceremonies on the objectified "seeming" side of life. That is what Judith Brown says about "Let be be finale of seem"—"seeming has actual consequences…in the lived world" (39). All the performed rituals and habits become the idea of real life in the first synthesis of time.

While what we can have in the first synthesis of time are merely empty worldly signs, we are allowed to seek and have meanings in the second synthesis of time:

Take from the dresser of deal,

Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet
On which she embroidered fantails once
And spread it so as to cover her face.
If her horny feet protrude, they come
To show how cold she is, and dumb.
Let the lamp affix its beam.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream. (*CP* 64)

In this poem, the second stanza represents the second synthesis of time where meanings are produced and things make sense. Before the second stanza, in the synthesis of rituals and habits, various behaviors are carried out without being informative. We finally realize in the second stanza that all these actions are glimpsed at a funeral. In the second synthesis of time based on love and memory, objects stand for effort and confusion (love) but also memory (meaning).

The dresser is presented with something missing. The sheet seems to suggest a shroud in disguise. The limbs, instead of decently folded in death, are displaced. The concluding sensations are cold and mute. The dresser is a sign of both effort and confusion: its effort is to keep things inside while its confusion is caused by the intent to hide. Obviously the sheet was embroidered and put away for some future purpose, but that future never comes. The sheet then is appropriated as a shroud in disguise to cover the dead body even though embroidery does not match the occasion of funeral. With the embroidered sheet taken for a shroud and the limbs displaced at a bizarre angle, the inappropriate party scene in the first stanza seems much more appealing than the real reason for the funeral. The joy of the reception has rid the funeral of its solemnity and makes death ugly and out of place, as if it is the party that is spoiled rather than the funeral being spoiled by people coming in for a party.

Then the last line with which both stanzas echo each other: “The only emperor is

the emperor of ice-cream." In the first stanza, i.e., in the first synthesis of habit, the ice cream is there as part of the ritualized arrangement. It is a dessert prepared at the reception, an empty sign that all the worldly signs converge upon. In the second stanza, i.e., in the second synthesis of love and memory, the ice cream is there as an amoral "impersonal commentary" (Vendler 51). It is a sensuous sign that produces meanings. In the first stanza, the ice cream is ice cream *per se*, but, in the second stanza, it means more.

The ice cream in the first stanza is the main attraction or main distraction at the funeral. This is how the poem reminds us of the fall of Icarus in Bruegel's painting. The busy boisterous world never stops to mourn over the loss of life. Even the people at the funeral entertain themselves and feed their needs. The ice cream might be the sole purpose for some of them to be there. However, it is not a sin. It is rather an expected preparation for the living, because funerals, like any other activity in memory of a late person, are not altogether about the dead. This is part of the habits and rituals that constitute the world of the living present. So, when the ritualized performance becomes real life ("Let be be finale of seem"), the ultimate principle that rules the world is to focus on the living present and feed the living ("The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.").

The ice cream in the second stanza is not a distraction from the funeral, but a conclusion. It is also different from the ice cream in the first stanza in that the ice cream in the second stanza has nothing in common with the rest of the objects. The incomplete (with knobs missing) dresser, the shroud in the guise of a sheet, and the displaced limbs have to find their meanings in the ice cream. This is the second synthesis of time where signs find meanings, and meanings are products of difference powered by **disguise** and **displacement** (see Chaper Two "Food as a Thing: Channeling"). In other words, these disparate objects are merely materialized media

for the same intensity.

In the second synthesis of time, meaning stays based on a materialist sense. Back in *Proust and Signs*, it is the madeleine that stands for Combray. Here, it is the dresser for the ice cream, the sheet for the ice cream, and the lifeless limbs for the ice cream. To conclude, the ice cream as a meaningful sensuous sign in the second synthesis of time is the final transformation of all three—malfunction, disguise, and displacement. The ice cream here claims a double meaning by splitting itself in two—ice and cream. The "ice" in "ice cream" is the "mal" and "dis" that ruin the comforting "cream" of life. The ice cream is another phrase for the broken dresser, the wedding-bed sheet/ the shroud, and the lifeless limbs. It is ice and cream, a conflicting combination in itself. The cold and dead "ice" speaks for the dying past of the second synthesis of time while the soft and sweet "cream" speaks for the living present. It is more than a combination of conflicts. It is also a combination of two syntheses of time. In the end, the lamp sheds light on the cold fact and the dead body in its beam to tell us, "let it be plain that this woman is dead, that these things, impossibly ambiguous as they may be, are as they are" (Blackmur 117). For an insensate eye, it is a helping of dessert served at the funeral, nothing more. For a sagacious eye, it may be an inner shout that one never lets out—"I scream." The only ruling principle in a world full of meaning and understanding is the helpless recognition of conflicting elements in life that muffles a shout of intensity.

Simple Tea and Daily Bread

It is quite rare for the reader to come across a poem by Wallace Steven and find it self-evident and free of any esoteric choice of words. Among his food poems, there happen to be two: "A Fading of the Sun" and "Paisant Chronicle." In them, the poet mentions food as a simple meal for daily need. In them, food defines humanity. These

two poems seldom incur interpretative disagreement. Food poetics may function differently in interpreting them from the way it interprets the previous two poems in which abstruse diction and inter-image disconnections abound.

The food objects in both poems are alike in that they serve to feed humans and further to define humans. In "A Fading of the Sun," however, the second stanza starts in gloom:

> The warm antiquity of self,
> Everyone, grows suddenly cold.
> The tea is bad, bread sad.
> How can the world so old be so mad
> That the people die? (*CP* 139)

The poet looks for things to blame for people's death. The world that breeds people is an "old," "warm," and "antique" self. Self, in the sense of being self-centered and tending its own "warmth," is the world that goes mad and watches people die. For this, the poet puts the blame on the bad tea and the sad bread.

What we have here are two mere objects without a specific time setting. The consequence is also clear: bad tea and sad bread lead to death. There is no way to read the food signs in a time frame. Therefore we are denied the methodology of distancing and channeling because in comes the food and out goes death. Everything seems linearly straightforward. We are left with one choice—read food as a sign.

Tea, as a worldly sign, is itself almost a schedule—morning, afternoon, mealtime, etc. Bread, as a ritual sign, is a routine staple food and a ceremonial symbol for the flesh of Christ. When the time is bad and religion is sad, people die. This is what tea and bread, as worldly signs, signify.

Tea as a sensuous sign is a materialized sign which quenches thirst while bread as a sensuous sign is a materialized sign which satiates hunger. As both satisfy human

needs, both produce joy. In the system of sensuous signs, when joy is produced, obligation ensues and the search for meaning begins. But then the tea is bad and the bread is sad. When they malfunction and fail to serve their purposes, no joy is produced and no obligation is assumed. In the meantime, no search of meaning is under way. Life is stagnant and people die without any meaning. This is how tea and bread function as sensuous signs.

In the fourth stanza of the poem, tea is yoked with wine, and bread with meat. This is to say that the meanings of signs stay in the phase of sensuous signs. We do not see any dematerialized meaning beyond the object-for-object meaning production. We do not see something new coming out from the aforementioned objects. The reasoning remains the same: if the food (nutrient/time/religion) is good, people live. If not, people die. Although tea and bread as signs in a sense have entered the world of sensuous signs, they are trapped rather than furthered into dematerialized meanings of art. Trapped signs are signs of love representing confusion, effort, and jealousy.

Any yet, somehow, hope and comfort seem to arrive:

> Within as pillars of the sun,
> Supports of night. The tea,
> The wine is good. The bread,
> The meat is sweet.
> And they will not die. (*CP* 139)

Tea is reconfirmed by wine as a ritual sign, and bread by meat. The ritual where wine stands for Christ's blood and bread for Christ's flesh leads us back to the first phase of worldly signs. The signs do not evolve. All the poet does here is to look inward for hope and warmth. As is pointed out by Lucy Beckett, "instead of crying for help to God or one of the gods, we should look to ourselves for help" (99). The seemingly promising time to come is the only recourse. When there is nothing else to turn to for

help, we turn inward. The poem may seem optimistic at the first read, but in fact it is written in trapped signs of love. It is therefore full of characteristics of love: attempts, confusions, and jealousy—especially jealousy of a warm world where people are well nourished and do not die.

James Longenbach seems to be one of the few critics to discover this. He points out that the poet of "A Fading of the Sun" is a poet who "desperately needed to feel successful" (131), and who had to overcome fear as well, so that the whole poem "concludes too easily" (ibid). Or, it never concludes, because it is trapped in the end. In "A Fading of the Sun," food means a nutrient, a point of time, a hint of belief, a trapped feeling, and an effort to seek meaning or comfort. In reality, human life is inextricably associated with food whereas in this poem, human life is involved in or even trapped in food.

In "Paisant Chronicle," the poet first draws to our attention the fact that in human history, the hero ("the major man") "is the choice of chance" because in some sense everyone can be brave and everyone endures. How could anyone be singled out as a hero? Human beings, however, enjoy fame and "live to be admired by all men." So, heroes are made:

> The major men—
> That is different. They are characters beyond
> Reality, composed thereof. They are
> The fictive man created out of men.
> They are men but artificial men… (*CP* 334)

From the third stanza of the poem, we see how the poet defies the idea of "the major men," the heroes created by chance to be admired. The hero is beyond reality and a composite. He is a fiction concocted by collective labor in two senses: (1) He takes credit for everyone else's effort. (2) He is created by everyone's imagination. In either

case, the hero himself becomes something of a sign, an empty sign for worship. He is the center of rituals created by collective imagination.

Then, food is served. The poet, right after the creation of this myth, this hero, puts aside his argument of how heroes are made and shifts to the topic of how humans are defined by the most basic needs:

> The baroque poet may see him as still a man
> As Virgil, abstract. But see him for yourself,
> The fictive man. He may be seated in
> A café. There may be a dish of country cheese
> And a pineapple on the table. It must be so. (*CP* 335)

For an old-time poet who seeks legends, the hero has to be more "fictive" than factual. The hero is depicted fictive and abstract and is compared to legendary Virgil. However, as a sign of empty ritual, the fictive man is not a genuine art sign which creates a new meaning that defies human limitation. He is an ill-grounded empty sign that answers the human need for an idol.

The poet then tips the hero off his perch by showing us that the superhuman hero is situated in a common human place characterized by the need of food. His intake is what makes us human, what defines us as human. If his intake is no different from ours, the only difference about him is the way we look at him, for it is our opinion of him that makes him a hero. For that matter, Jacqueline Brogan points out that "'Paisant Chronicle' satirizes all men, all nations, the human race itself—and even the idea of 'major man'" (81). Although Edward Ragg suggests the poet is actually rescuing the heroes by telling us their "humanness" is glossed over by our opinion of their "superhumanness," there is a mutual agreement that food serves to identify human dependence which actually defines humans.

The poet's deliberate reference to the most common food objects—the country

cheese and pineapple[21]—gives us an impression that the fictive hero is nothing unlike us at core. Among all sorts of cheese, the poet assigns the kind with a name of a rustic air, popular among us. Among all sorts of fruit, the poet chooses the kind whose supply is always sustainable in time of peace or war. The fictive man is not anything different from us, not even by a higher taste or a finer need for his intake. If we are what we eat, he is what we are.

The common saying prevails—"You are what you eat." This is a resort to food culture, not to Deleuze. Even so, the presence of food as a down-to-earth reminder of the human position is relatively rare in poetry, not just in Stevens. Food poetics here relies heavily on food as a worldly sign to equalize all human beings. But, turning back to Deleuze, the worldly sign of food harbors within itself a self-subverting power—it is a worldly sign that defies the worldly sign. Food is here a sign of routine: it is to feed humans, but in feeding humans, it makes the hero become one of us. In making the hero one of us, food as a down-to-earth routine sign (=worldly sign) is employed to defy the hero as a worship-centered ritual sign (=worldly sign). Worldly signs in poetry may function in many more ways than we could first have imagined. Food as a worldly sign possesses a self-subverting power from within.

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[21] By the First World War, the American pineapple industries around the world were powerful enough to help the U.S. government gather "a wide variety of intelligence." "The pineapple industry," in return, "made considerable use of the BFDC [Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce]'s San Francisco and Chicago offices" (Hawkins 166). In 1932, one of the largest merger cases in the U.S. involved "Hawaiian Pineapple," "a company that supplied three-quarters of the world's pineapple supply" (Wong 133). At the beginning of the Second World War, "pineapple" becomes a term for American success in agriculture and economic assimilation of Hawaii, so that the army recruited from Hawaii for the war effot was nicknamed the "Pineapple Army" (a partly racist nickname, of course, for the members were Japanese-American soldiers) (Bartlit and Rogers 166). These were all in Wallace Stevens' time (1879-1955) when pineapples became a common food, whole or canned, even in time of war. The idea of pineapples being exclusively tropical and therefore unavailable or expensive may come from Renaissance impressions.

Chocolate

One of the most enigmatic food signs in Stevens is the chocolate in "Sea Surface Full of Clouds," which consists of "five portrayals of the sea surface off Tehuantepec, Mexico" (Cook, 2007 80). In each of the five portrayals, three elements repeat themselves: chocolate, umbrella, and green. Here is the first:

I

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night
And in the morning summer hued the deck

And made one think of rosy chocolate
And gilt umbrellas. Paradisal green
Gave suavity to the perplexed machine

Of ocean…
[…] in that ambrosial latitude (*CP* 98-99)

This is Stevens' version of the production of involuntary memory. For Proust, the madeleine produces memory of Combrary. For Stevens, the chocolate is tied up with the seashore near Tehuantepec, a tropical area in Mexico.

The opening stanza does not provide any ready corresponding points like those of "lunch—pain" and "life—aspic" in "Esthétique du Mal." We must start, when corresponding points are yet unavailable, by taking objects as the creation of distancing. This is a portrayal of a seashore, a poetic depiction of scenery. The time is November but the location is tropical. What remains unchanged through the five sections are the chocolate, the green, and the umbrella. While chocolate is what meets

our sense from inside, green is what meets our sense from outside. The umbrella produces shadows and comes between the inside and the outside.

On the seashore, the unchanged green we have been sensing can be understood as the sea. The sea is too boundless and too enormous for human senses to contain. The sea is symbolic of the entire world out there. The sea out there is to the eye what the cup of chocolate in the mouth is to the tongue. Just as the chocolate drink is too bittersweet to categorize, the sea water is too huge a body of water for the eye to contain. The inarticulate sea is addressed as "green" and the inarticulate taste is addressed as "chocolate." This is a moment of affect. The affective encounter cuts between the external world and the internal sense and forms a shadow ("umbrella") of extraordinary joy ("paradisal").

The distancing-channeling approach claims its best functionality while reading into Stevens' poetic deployment of seemingly random signs of color and objects, for it focuses on the expansion and contraction of space and the objects in such space. Stevens oftentimes spreads dazzling colors and objects which take long to finally make sense as a whole. We may therefore have the following understanding: green is the sea, symbolic of the external world, whereas chocolate is the taste, symbolic of the internal feeling for the world. The umbrella is the shadow, symbolic of the projection of the world as represented in front of us. The reference of the umbrella, partly from the materiality of the word—its spelling, is relatively obvious. Not only does the umbrella always function between objects (as between the sun and the person), but the "umbra" in its spelling reminds us of its Latin root of "shadow" and "projection."[22]

[22] As one of the most enigmatic poems by Stevens, "Sea Surface Full of Clouds" has invited three kinds of explanation ever since its publication: authorial, biographical, and non-critical analytic explanations. In a letter "To John Pauker," Stevens explains to his reader that the Chinese chocolate in the fifth section is "a big Chinese with a very small cup of chocolate: something incongruous" (*Letters* 426). A friend of Wallace Stevens, Peter Brazeau, in a biography of Stevens says that a piece of brown

In the first section, where the poetic locale is set, the affective encounter tells us the time is winter but the location is tropical. There is a lot of sun in winter. Therefore the evening hue touches the deck and gives our feeling for the world a rosy color. The chocolate taste of the world is neither sweet nor bitter and the color it is tinted with is neither red nor white ("rosy"). This place seems neither heavenly nor mundane ("paradisal" and then freely "swimming"). Such sensuous experience is later situated in "ambrosial latitude"—ethereal and yet still sensuous. "The sea-blooms," or the waves, seem to come from the clouds. All dictions seem too vague. The poet then refers to the sea as "the perplexed machine of ocean." In our Deleuze-based food poetics, this is the affective encounter between the chocolate and the taste of the complicated world. All the in-betweenness, all the mixed feelings, all the non-solid and unanchored sensations are signs of the working of the affect. The first section of the poem is the first phase of the operation of the Deleuzean memory machine. This is the inarticulate moment of the affective "apparition" (*PS* 37). After the affective encounter, the time and place will be relegated to the background in the opening of every section.

In the second section, as if we were ushered into another space with the same setting, the extraordinary joy we first felt from the affective encounter has been subdued into a mundane world as a routine in life:

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paper (of scraps by Stevens) in his possession points out that the "chocolate" in the poem is derived from "chouchouter" in French, meaning "to pet, to caress," while "hue" is derived from "hoo," a mimicry of the sound of petting or brushing over (Brazeau 104). According to Sarah Riggs, this poem is another example of Stevens preference for "colors and food" in his poems. "This is a savoring and sensing of language itself," though his words are not to be taken literally (27). Such resort to "linguistic indulgence" (ibid) is quite common among Stevens scholars. Detailed and sensible as some of them may sound (Even the exhaustive guide to Stevens by Eleanor Cook misses out on the Brazeau anecdote.), we here ignore all, for biographical interpretation often hinders a systematic study or the generalization into a larger humanistic perspective.

II

In that November off Tehuantepec
The slopping of the sea grew still one night.
At breakfast jelly yellow streaked the deck

And made one think of chop-house chocolate
And sham umbrellas. And a sham-like green
Cappped summer-seeming on the tense machine

Of ocean, (*CP* 99)

Time in the second section of the poem begins with a hurried breakfast with yellow jelly, the most convenient smear on a piece of toast. The word that describes our feeling toward the complicated world with multiple layers of flavor is a chop-house—a homely eating place, a makeshift restaurant. The breakfast is conveniently prepared in a makeshift fashion, and so is the lunch. But the taste of all things, including the taste of the world, comes with a business-like stench. Nothing is missing, but everything seems perfunctory. The projection ("umbrella") of the world seems fake ("sham"). The sea/world out there seems fake ("a sham-like green").

All signs here are worldly signs. The space constituted in the second section is a world of worldly signs: a hurried breakfast (with jelly dropped on the ground to streak the deck), a ready meal from the chophouse, a perfunctory façade of the world, and the phony sea. The entire world appears in the eye of the poet as a "tense machine," a scheduled, functional, business-style kind of world. In this world as well as in this ocean, empty and ritual signs abound. All the waves in the ocean turn into "the mortal massives of the blooms." In the world of the second section, the search for poetic meaning is conducted in a world of worldly signs. The empty, functional, and ritual

way of life seems to be concluded by "the mortal massives of the blooms"—this is how the majority of people consume themselves to death.

In the third section, all objects seem to mellow down. The worldliness in the second section disappears while everything appears a bit fuzzy and silvery. From the first paradisal seashore to the second greasy restaurant, now we have a gauzy vision—pleasant but in a gauze:

III

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night
And a pale silver patterned on the deck

And made one think of porcelain chocolate
And pied umbrellas. An uncertain green,
Piano-polished, held the tranced machine

Of ocean,…
[…] *Oh! C'était mon extase et mon amour*. (*CP* 100)

The sea/world seems uncertain. Hence we feel such a world is delicate and fragile ("porcelain"). The color that identifies the affective encounter is rosy. The color that dominates the mundane world is business yellow (legal pads for school notes and yellow pages or industry directory for business people). The color that presages this world is moonlike silver ("pale silver").

The world is lightened up by the moon and the feeling inside is delicate. What is projected in front is colorful ("pied" and, of course, mild in moonlight). The sea/world itself is full of uncertainty. Upon the sea, the silvery waves are blooming into white flowers. All is concluded and confirmed by the manifesto of love: "Oh! It was my

ecstasy and my love." This is the world of signs of love. The machine is a "tranced machine." Signs of love do not produce meanings. They are awareness of memory, attempts at search, and efforts during uncertainty. The word "tranced" also speaks for the experience of love as confusion. It is a phase between the actual and the virtual as the world of signs of love is half-aware of the memory but cannot recollect any. The polished piano adds up to the sensuous indulgence by suggesting the music of "*La Luna*" in the moonlight.

In the fourth section of "Sea Surface Full of Clouds," we have references to specific, solid sensuousness:

IV

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The night-long slopping of the sea grew still.
A mallow morning dozed upon the deck

And made one think of musky chocolate
And frail umbrellas. A too-fluent green
Suggested malice in the dry machine

Of ocean,…(*CP* 101)

Instead of an adjective for color ("rosy," "yellow," "silver," etc.), we are given a specific flower—the mallow, a flower with notched petals in color of light purple—to set the color of the day. The sign of a flower then grows into a sign of a sleeping beauty, dozing off upon the deck. Unlike the beginnings of other sections, this is more of a portrait than a picture of scenery.

Our internal feeling for the world is then covered with a musky scent, the typical scent of perfume. The way we feel about the world becomes sensuous as if we were

facing a lady. The world/sea suddenly becomes eloquent like a person. As the world becomes real, its projection becomes frail. The sensuous world stands out from behind the shadow. The clouds in the sky start to look like waves. All these transformations indicate that this is a world of sensuous signs, the world of genuine signs which produce meaning when one object turns into another (as "signs of alteration," *PS* 14). The eloquence or expressiveness of the world is so personified that what it says can mean solid impact and hurt people ("malice"). The sensuous world is dense and solid ("dry") and acts like a human being ("too-fluent" green and a follow-up "thinking green"). The world of sensuous signs is a world that communicates with us and we are accordingly given meanings. The world appears to be a lady with a flower, smelling of perfume, coming out of the shadow. As she is fluent, the world is fragrant.

The sensuous qualities offered by the signs render prodigious joy. The joy then makes us feel a sense of obligation to seek their meanings. The meanings appear to reveal to us the concealed objects (*PS* 8). In the world of sensuous signs, it is through these procedures that the ocean and the world appears to the poet a lady. What he sees in the entire world is a lady, and the way she feels and the air she emits are like a suggestion of muskiness in the air. The chocolate smell of her.

The sea in the fifth section of "Sea Surface Full of Clouds" is a diverse, exhaustive, all-encompassing sea. It seems that all things converge upon it as all signs converge upon art the world of signs of art:

V

In that November off Tehuantepec,
Night stilled the slopping of the sea. The day
Came, bowing and voluble, upon the deck,

Good clown…One thought of Chinese chocolate

And large umbrellas. And a motley green

Followed the drift of the obese machine

Of ocean,…(*CP* 101-2)

As the ocean/world reflects various colors, mixed and many ("motley"), the adjective to describe the poet's feeling for the world is Chinese—ancient, oriental, and distant. The temporal distance is matched by spatial distance: "large umbrellas" and "the obese machine of the ocean."

In the world of signs of art, all signs shall converge upon art by becoming dematerialized to produce a new meaning. That is the reason why in the fifth section all the attributes tend to be the most amorphous among all sections. The incongruity of the combination of "Chinese" and "chocolate" nevertheless makes sense in our interpretation here—an ancient, exotic, and distant ("Chinese") mixed feeling toward the world ("chocolate")—the word "Chinese" has already been rid of any materialized sensuousness. Later in the section, we see no clouds left as we saw in other sections of the poem. It is just "the wind of green blooms." What used to fill our vision over the ocean (clouds and waves) has been displaced by the invisible wind.

The same principle seems to apply to other recurrent elements than chocolate. Hence the green, the sea as a representation of the world, is described as "motley"—colors alongside colors or colors within colors—without tangible, solid bases yet including the entire spectrum. The ocean, the world, the specific space constituted by signs of art is now "obese," whose sound rhymes with "Chinese" and whose sense becomes equally amorphous and encompassing. This world of art promises all possibilities and resolves all differences. When all differences are resolved and internalized in a world of art, the search for meaning, the production of memory, and the creation of art consummate essence—"real without being present,

ideal without being abstract" or "virtuality incarnated in involuntary memory" (*PS* 39-40).

In this world of art, Combray is preserved in the madeleine as the world is preserved in the chocolate. The memory is now in the food object (internalized) rather than in the consciousness of a human agent. This is the world where all senses converge upon art. This is the world where childhood can melt in the mouth. This is the world where a cup of chocolate can be churned into an ocean.

Through the reading of food poetics, the poem appears as a series of sign and meaning productions: affect, worldly signs, signs of love, sensuous signs, and finally signs of art. The sequence fits the idea of art creation according to Deleuze. The choices of words appear coherent. The separate themes in each section in the end come together. While each section speaks a different mood in the face of a different world, the entire process from the encounter of paradise (affect), scheduled routines (worldly signs), uncertain trance (signs of love), dating the world like a lady (sensuous signs), to entering an enlarged world with assorted objects (signs of art), is telling of the production of memory, meaning, and of art, as Deleuze understands.

Maybe Deleuze has always known the poetic reading of distancing and channeling but by some other name. In *Difference and Repetition*, discussing *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, he points out that the dilemma of interpreting esoteric words in literature is that esoteric words appear as nonsense but then create sense by repeating themselves and by expressing "displacement of sense" and "disguise among the series" (123). In other words, we have to read into the words or signs to find out what has been displaced by them and what category they actually belong in. So, in Proust's case, Combray is displaced by the madeleine, and it is a disguised or ill-labeled childhood. Deleuze seems to simplify the entire distancing-channeling process into the equation: "object=*x*" (*DR* 122).

Since displacement and disguise are the two powers of repetition (*DR* 288) and repetition is a power of involuntary memory (*PS* 40) in Deleuzean thought, in dealing with meaning and memory, Proust and Joyce, Deleuze may have developed a way to read Wallace Stevens. While no interpretation of any poem can be definitive, the comparatively applicable Deleuze-based food poetics seems to find an edge to cut in with. With the main distancing-channeling approach for interpretation and with the help of sign categories from *Proust and Signs*, the reader of Stevens is allowed to lay aside supposed biographical evidence for obscure expressions or allusions. Poetics is expected to serve more than as theory and it must help understand poems. Food poetics is an attempt to qualify for the definition of genuine poetics.

Chapter Four: "A Solace of Ripe Plums Seeming to Fill the Air": Making Sense of Fruit in a Poetics of W. C. Williams' Poems

> *The sensuous signs lay a trap for us and invite us to seek their meaning in the object that bears or emits them, so that the possibility of failure, the abandonment of interpretation, is like the worm in the fruit….we continue to believe that we should be able to listen, look, describe, address ourselves to the object, to decompose and analyze it in order to extract a truth from it.*
>
> —Gilles Deleuze (*Proust and Signs* 22)

While the worm in the fruit is inevitable, we become the worm ourselves when we try to decompose the fruit, the sensuous sign, in order to extract its meaning. This is a perfect description of the interpretation of William Carlos Williams' poems. First of all, his sensuous signs of food are often fruits. The reader's attempts to interpret them often fail because oftentimes a decomposing or rotting metaphor may be involved. These characteristics are revealed by his famous plum poems, potato poems, and their interpretations.

Before we look at Williams' poems, there is something about the poet and his poems we have to know. With Wallace Stevens in our study of food poetics, we faced our first challenge of idiosyncratic preference for esoteric words. As we now go on to William Carlos Williams in food poetics, we face a second challenge: idiosyncratic avoidance of food objects in versification. But food poetics, having proved itself applicable to an inscrutable poet like Stevens, shall now show itself feasible in dealing with a poet who tends to avoid food.[23]

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[23] Up till the writing of the dissertation, only three anthologies of food poems are comparatively available or in print. Two of them are fairly limited in scope. All three anthologize William Carlos Williams. *Taste and See: Food Poems* anthologizes "This Is Just to Say" (26). *Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: Poems about Food and Drink* includes"Breakfast" (36) and "The Dish of Fruit" (62). The most comprehensive one among them, *The Hungry Ear: Poems of Food and Drink* has "To a Poor Old

The three poets included in our study of food poetics are intriguing and challenging each in their own way. If we may sum up each in one word, Wallace Stevens is intriguing and challenging for being esoteric, Li-Young Lee for being diasporic. As for William Carlos Williams, he is intriguing and challenging for being sporadic. He is sporadic in that he is used to leaving space and distance between words. There always seems to be a lot left unsaid. When one thinks of Williams, one often thinks of his "The Red Wheelbarrow" and feels frustrated when asked for its meaning.

In an interview, Williams speaks of the difficulty in understanding the meaning of poetry:

> Q. Aren't we supposed to understand it [a word in the poem]?
>
> A. There is a difference of poetry and the sense. Sometimes modern poets ignore sense [meaning] completely. That's what makes some of the difficulty…
>
> Q. But shouldn't a word mean something when you see it?
>
> A. In prose, an English word means what it says. In poetry, …you're listening to the sense, the common sense of what it says. But it says more. That is the difficulty. (Rosenthal 100)

But what is more is never fully explained. What we can still feel is the difficulty. If there is a difference between poetry and the sense, then poetics is the belief that

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Woman" (78) and "This Is Just to Say" (276). But we must beware of a misleading impression. Williams is almost always remembered by either "The Red Wheelbarrow" or "This Is Just to Say." The latter often gives us the impression that he writes about food. That is probably the reason why he is oftentimes thought of as a food poet. Actually, he sometimes writes about fruit, but hardly about other food. In fact, food objects in his poems are comparatively scarce. Take his collected earlier poems for example (1909-1939): in 30 years' time, he uses in his poems the following words: "cheese" once, "coffee" 3 times, "bread" 4 times, "steak" 0, "beef" 0. Other poets often double or triple the number of food terms mentioned by Williams.

poetry can make sense and the sense can be realized by a thorough system of poetics. One aim of food poetics is to live up to the belief.

Williams mentions a difference between poetry and the sense in this interview because he believes there are two things in a poem that an audience is listening to at the same time: poetry and the sense. The sense, as in "to make sense," refers to the meaning of a certain expression, while poetry designates what goes beyond words or what lurks between the lines. He also says in this quote that words come with meanings in prose but in poetry words do not work the same way and meanings are not the poet's major concern. This leaves us in an awkward situation: words in poetry can never be contained in simple definitions and their senses are often absent. What else can we expect from a poem? This is why we feel contradictory about Williams' poetics: "no ideas but in things."

Originally a phrase taken from his poem "Paterson," "no ideas but in things" later becomes Williams' aesthetic standard for the poetic art. Although it was a phrase that Williams was often asked to explain, we are first given the impression that, for Williams, every idea is embedded in a thing, if it does not actually come from a thing. If this is a guideline for his creation, then things and objects must have in them ideas and meanings for us to find out. What seems discrepant is that there is usually an object in a poem without any reference to or any trace of an idea. When asking for a sense or meaning of that object, we are told: "It is in the object." In terms of down-to-earth poetic interpretation, this is more sophism than poetics.

Food poetics aims to find a starting point for interpretation from objects, especially food objects. If there is an idea in the object, the object has to make sense. Remarkably, what Williams says about his poetics correlates well with the Deleuzean food poetics applied in this dissertation:

> "No ideas but in things," said William Carlos Williams. This does not mean

> "no ideas." It means that "language [and here I quote Wordsworth] is not the dress but the incarnation of thought." "No ideas but in things," means, essentially, "Only connect."…. (Levertov 116)

If language is the incarnation instead of the dress of thought, then language must be the embodiment of thought and the word is the body. This then suggests that the materiality of the word, its sound and shape, helps to realize and incarnate thought (and this is how we have understood Wallace Stevens in the previous chapter). The way Williams speaks of language in poetry is exactly how Deleuze speaks about objects as signs of art in the mechanism of memory (*PS* 39). The memory, the meaning, that is to say the **essence** is "realized and incarnated in involuntary memory" (*PS* 39-40) when we have "the madeleine with its flavor, Combray with its qualities of color and temperature; it [essence/virtuality/internalized difference/the immanent] envelops the one in the other, and makes their relation into something internal" (*PS* 39). Ironically, Williams' aesthetic thought says one thing, his verse says another. Such corresponding points between memory and objects seem absent in his works.

Williams' explanation of "no ideas but in things"—"only connect"—seems a reconfirmation of the applicability of our distancing-channeling approach whose practice relies on the overall connection between objects through intensity. However, in Williams' poems, we hardly have corresponding signs in action or in static pairing. We often have one main sign with everything else reduced to background. One may immediately think of the red wheelbarrow, or of the plums in "This Is Just to Say." By comparison, Wallace Stevens is a friendlier, more accessible poet in food poetics.

Stevens is more accessible through the distancing-channeling approach of food poetics for two reasons: his corresponding signs or contrasting objects and his own

poetics—“not ideas about the thing but the thing itself.”[24] As we have seen in the previous chapter, Stevens’ poems are full of foods and colors in obvious pairing or obscure juxtaposition. They are recurrent, connected, and inter-referent, without one of them being especially outstanding and the rest somehow slighted. Richard Adams, explaining Stevens’ poetics of “the thing itself,” asserts that Stevens by his poetics means "the living reality of our experience in the world, as distinguished from and opposed to the dead abstractions which are our ideas about it," and "the thing itself" is "the actual concrete experience" (135-36). In dealing with the poem “Not Ideas about the Thing But the Thing Itself”—the poem Stevens himself decides on to conclude his collected poems—Miller, as if alluding to the entire poetic art of Stevens, says "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself" is ...“a poem about the appearance of something out of hiddenness, out of occultation...These [all objects in the poem] are all said to be like one another, metaphors for one another”(Miller 255). These two scholars notice exactly the two food-poetics-friendly characteristics of Stevens’—(1) his emphasis on solid, physical contacts with things supplies us with a great number of objects in his poems and, again, (2) his emphasis on solid, physical contacts with things leaves us with a great number of possibilities in the interpretation of his poems. He emphasizes objects, contacts, and affects. He is open to all conceivable meanings and he is also open to our distancing-channeling approach.

This is how Williams is different from Stevens. From an analyst’s point of view, Stevens practices what he says—experiencing things. For the same analyst, Williams lies—he is not about “no ideas but in things” at all. His experience with things is always an act of magnifying something and ignoring anything else. If not lying, he is at least concentrating, so concentrating that an intended idea seems to overflow the object that first contained it. The idea tends to stand out from one object in the poem,

[24] This is actually the title of a late poem by Stevens; see below. Capitalization adjusted.

leaving the reader with an abstract idea and nothing else in the poem to connect it to or identify it with. The distancing-channeling method will not apply to Williams.

The respective poetics of Stevens and Williams—"not ideas of the thing but the thing itself" and "no ideas but in things"—invite a lot of interpretations and reinterpretations because of their similar wording and the mention of things. For poetic analysis, their literal nuance is of great help. While "not ideas of the thing but the thing itself" means "it is all about the thing," "no ideas but in things" means "all ideas come from things" and therefore "it is about ideas after all, but let's not forget they came from things." The former embraces objects whereas the latter leaves objects behind. So, interpretation of Williams' food-in-poems should be conducted through the understanding of food as a sign instead of as a thing. Where a distancing-channeling approach might not get far before being shipwrecked on Williams' absence of related things or objects in the poem, the four-sign reading strategy will apply instead. Reading in terms of the four types of signs can deal with a single food object in an obscure context or no context at all.

Plums

When we think of poetic works by Williams, the abruptness of "The Red Wheelbarrow" and the abstractness of "This Is Just to Say" are normally the two things that first come to mind. Since we are focusing on food, here is the latter:

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which

you were probably

saving

for breakfast

Forgive me

they were delicious

so sweet

and so cold (*CPI* 372)

The most obvious sign that stands out first is the worldly sign of "breakfast." A worldly sign is an empty sign—a ritual or routine sign without reference to a significant content. What makes this breakfast different is the plums, because plums reveal the content of breakfast and the breakfast is no longer an empty sign of a morning ritual but a function of the plums. Yet the interference of "I" disrupts this possibility.

The plums here are a sensuous sign, a sign that interacts with another object ("I") through physical contact. The first stanza reads like a mini-theater in which "I" and "plums" are staged and performing. The icebox is also part of the play, though passive. In this stanza, the beginning "I" and the ending "icebox" are two other objects that the leading actor "plums" belongs in. The eating act of "I" has changed the spatiality of the plums. A previous plums-in-icebox relation has been displaced by the present plums-in-me relation. The change of relation is a mutual performance of "plums" and "I." As Phillip Vannini points out, "objects perform" and "of course they do not perform alone. But neither do people; people and things perform together" (77). Through the mutual performance with "I," "plums" become a sensuous sign.

From a perfunctory location ("icebox"), the plums are removed and, before they have a chance to become part of the ritual of breakfast, they directly become a

sensuous sign. The plums, never having a chance to be worldly, start to take on "sensuous impressions or qualities" of "the third world [the world of sensuous signs]" (*PS* 8). From this point onward, we witness the same procedures over and over again in other food objects. First, from the sensuous qualities comes a prodigious joy. Second, the joy then leads on to an obligation. Third, the obligation drives us to seek the meaning of the sign (In Deleuze's definition, the meaning is not a definition of the original object but another object revealed, as Combray is the meaning of the madeleine) (ibid).

"Delicious," "sweet," and "cold" are obviously the sensuous qualities of the plums, in other words the very beginning of the entire process of meaning production. However, the plums were already different from most food objects in the first place. They were never mundane, mediocre, or ordinary for they are the stolen breakfast. The act of stealing becomes their saving grace. It makes possible a skipping over of worldliness in favor of meaning production. A plums-in-icebox relation was arranged for a would-be plan of plums-in-you relation. The plan did not work out and the result is a plums-in-me relation. A tension of jealousy is there between "I" and "you," and "Forgive me" is almost too obviously spoken in a tone of triumph. The plums are also a sign of love, a sign of attempt, effort, and jealousy, but they do not remain a sign of love that spells confusion and a failed attempt at meaning.

"Forgive me" is articulated because of the stealing act "I" conducted. "They were delicious, so sweet, so cold." This expression seems to tell of an embellishment or addition that the stealer cannot fight. Under such circumstances, the plums-in-you spatiality is displaced by the plums-in-me spatiality. This helps us to conclude: "I steal what can be part of you to be part of me, because I yearn for it." The meaning is sought and another object is revealed—"you." "I" saw sensuous qualities of "you" in "plums," some sensuous qualities too subtle to name but they can be reflected by

"your" breakfast, your ritual, routine intake that becomes part of you. Stealing must be conducted during the absence of the owner of an object. The plums must be stolen during "your" absence. Yes, because what quenches my yearning for you must have your qualities. "I" ate the plums during the absence of "you," because "I" missed "you." Of course, sensuousness represented through certain fruits can sometimes be associated with carnal pleasure, but for the search for the meaning of a sensuous sign, it suffices to rest upon the revealing of "you."

As this example shows, to read Williams via food poetics we should resort to the approach of the food-as-sign interpretation, on the premise that we are usually given no equally outstanding objects for interpretation. The easy way to this elusive food poet runs on an extremely principle as Paul Schmitt summarizes: "When we think and write about food we are often thinking and writing about something else. Food always means something beyond the fact of what we put into our mouths" (103). We can read what Schmitt says later as implying promotion of the plums as a sensuous sign into plums as a sign of art, which creates even newer meaning on a dematerialized level.

This is Schmitt's follow-up statement: "Eating, like making love, is a sign [that] we will not die. But food and death are inseparable. To prepare food is to destroy one thing in order to preserve something else" (ibid). In this poem, the plums are destroyed to preserve the sensuous qualities of a person when another person longs for that person's presence. Or, by missing you and tasting something like you I am in a sense consuming you and this is nothing different from sex—two people consuming each other as meaning and new life are created. The plums do not remain plums, nor do they rest upon a person. They instead refer to all creation in a general sense, i.e., life or art. The plums are ultimately a dematerialized sign of art.

Another plum poem by Williams is "To A Poor Old Woman," in which the human being appears passive and the food object appears active, comforting, and

prevailing:

munching a plum on
the street a paper bag
of them in her hand

They taste good to her
They taste good
to her. They taste
good to her

You can see it by
the way she gives herself
to the one half
sucked out in her hand

Comforted
a solace of ripe plums
seeming to fill the air
They taste good to her (*CPI* 383)

The title of the poem is actually the first line of the poem. It is an important title and first line simply because this is our only evidence that the "she" in this poem is "a poor old woman." It is not that a person is simply eating plums in the poem so there is no way for us to tell who the consumer might be. The person who is "munching a plum" appears so passive and forceless that in the end she seems to be completely under the influence of the plums and could be any feeble person.

The repetition of lines in the second stanza is not a cycle of sheer redundancy.

Note that when the seemingly unvaried line runs itself down to the third line—"to her, They taste"—the human subject appears so passive as if in the interactive relation between the human and the food the woman is a recipient of some action done to her by food. This of course reminds us of the school of new materialism alongside other newly founded academic schools. In fact, Tibor Machan points out that denial of the efficacy of the human subject has been around among certain schools of thinkers and in some fields of study like economics (178). Reading this poem, we may conclude that in literature, the helplessness of failed human agency may have existed even longer.

"Poor," "street," and "paper bag"—words like these make us visualize the woman as a waste picker or garbage scavenger. As Michael Whitworth says, it may be that the plums taste good, or it may be that the woman is poor and old so they taste good (81). Maybe she is homeless, living on whatever she can find, and this is one of her lucky days. The plums are her lucky find. In the poetic plainness of Williams, the bag of plums become the center of the poem. While "munching a plum," the poor old woman appeared an active person who eats, thus the plums were functional objects for her mundane need. In the line "to her, They taste," the plums are an active agent of sensuous quality, they become sensuous signs. The lines "she gives herself/ to the one half/ sucked out in her hand" clearly describe to us her passiveness and its influence over her.

But how are the plums here a sign of art? Because a prodigious joy is tasted, felt, and shared. When the woman munches on the plums or when the plums trap the woman in their taste, it is a private experience with visceral feelings. But when a woman walking with plums becomes a bag of plums transported by a woman, the plums in a sense come to life and come into their own agency. Like people walking on their feet, the plums are walking on their woman. They travel on the street with the

woman tasting and attesting the comforting power of the plums. The woman is now at the service of the plums, spreading their influence of solace in the air.

The lines "a solace of ripe plums/ seeming to fill the air/" are an announcement of a visceral sense of joy becoming a shared atmosphere. What was first in the plums is now in the air. What was first known to one person is now filling the air and permeating the street. Not only does the poor woman gain a day's sustenance, she is also transformed from a garbage scavenger into a joy-spreading angel. In the world of this poem, all scenes center around the plums. When the woman yields herself to the plums, she becomes a vessel for the plums. The solace of the plums fuels her to go.

From a good taste to a solace, the materiality of the plums is then removed. This is how one person's sensuous pleasure becomes dematerialized joy for all people around her. Being part of the enticing power of the plums, the woman is now doing to people the same thing the plums did to her—to include, attract, and influence more people in the spreading sphere of the plums. The object-oriented point of view of the poem reconfirms the comfort and solace a food object can bring to people.

Even for a looker-on like the poet, an observation at a distance shares the already-dematerialized "good" without tasting the plums. The word "ripe" here seems to indicate how much the poet or the reader as a looker-on is entranced and knows that taste, rather than the quality of the plums, caters to human preference. The poor woman is poor as a woman, but she is not poor as part of the sphere of the walking plums. In addition, she is not even old. She is being ripe, appreciably ripe. The repetitious and simple "good" also suggests that the plums "mediate the relation between human beings and their world not in a linguistic but in a material way" (Verbeek 209) and therefore the language here is particularly kept simple. "They [things] fulfill their functions as material objects, and by this functioning they shape human actions and experiences" (ibid)—for this statement by Peter-Paul Verbeek, this

poem by Williams provides a supreme example in poetic form.

Potatoes

For some reason, when Williams writes about the potato, it is never elusive. Its image is vivid, its reference is obvious, and its meaning is crystal-clear. Potatoes are never a veiled sign in Williams' poems. They are the sign of death and decay. In "The Mind's Games," Williams questions Wordsworth's Romantic view of life and nature, putting some of his doubts into words. He turns to the potato for an image:

> The world is too much with us? Rot!
> the world is not half enough with us—
> the rot of potato with
> a healthy skin, a rot that is
> never revealed till we are about to
> eat—and it revolts us. Beauty?
> Beauty should make us paupers,
> should blind us, rob us—for it
> does not feed the sufferer but makes
> his suffering a fly-blown putrescence
> And ourselves decay—unless
> the ecstasy be general. (*CPII* 160)

Words like "rot," "skin," "feed," "fly-blown," and "putrescence" are immediately joined together by the potato as a hub. All descriptions point to the potato. Strikingly, except for "skin" and "feed," every other word is a decay-related word. The image of the potato being a promising food but with a rotten inside and the "rot" ensuing right after "the world" divulge that the potato is a reference to the decaying world.

According to our food-as-sign approach and the sensuous signs in *Proust and*

Signs, the meaning of a genuine sign (i.e., sensuous sign) is sought when one object is revealed as another. In that case, the potato here is a ready sensuous sign that comes with a salient meaning. With a twist in the understanding of the line from Wordsworth—"The world is too much with us"—Williams refutes it with "the world is not half enough with us." It is of course not said in the sense that the world is not torturing us enough, but the world, as a deceptively decaying potato, is not giving us, feeding us enough. The choice of the potato instead of another food object is significant here.

The earth breeds humans, feeds humans, and accommodates humans. Almost no other food object is as close as the potato to the earth in its symbolic shape, color, and function. Therefore it takes on all those "rot" words on behalf of the earth. Its skin stands for the beautiful façade of a decaying world. Its function serves as a contrast to the Romantic beauty that starves people instead of feeing them. What is more, the potato is a unique food object that smells of social class. According to Christine Kinealy, in the early 19th century, even in a poverty-stricken country like Ireland, "surplus potatoes were used to feed pigs" (51). This cheap, easily available food speaks for a certain social class—the lower class. In reference to social class on campus, Will Barratt says, "Food preferences are basic to our social class of origin" (176). Focusing on sociology and nutrition, William McIntosh points out that "Food consumption and nutritional status are substantially affected by social class background" (102). Anthropologist Mary Douglas in her book *Food in the Social Order* quotes two anthropologists before her: Marshall Sahlins and Pierre Bourdieu, to again stress the connection between food choice and class structure (9). The potato reflects such a connection.[25]

[25] For a thorough account of the history of the potato in human history, see Salaman and Reader.

In another poem by Williams, "Death" (*CPI* 346), potatoes are again associated with death: "He's dead/ the dog won't have to/sleep on his potatoes/ any more to keep them/ from freezing." Whether directly or indirectly, it is an unusual practice to have a food object that nourishes life refer to death. But then, if the potato decays too, what else is left in the world for us to live on? The potato, plain and unattractive as it is, is the last hope for human survival. To use the lowest variety of human sustenance to contrast with over-idealist Romanticism helps bring home the reality of human suffering.

In the Deleuzean category of signs there is no category for social-class signs, and signs of death are not really subsumed under the sign system, being relegated to the time system instead. The characteristics of social class place social-class signs somewhere between the first world of worldly signs and the second world of signs of love. The third world of sensuous signs is a world where meanings are produced. The fourth world of signs of art is a world where objects are transcended into art. Social class, being an ungrounded abstract concept of approved oppression and discrimination, has nothing to do with sensuous experience. It is certainly not art either. It is more like a constituted ritual or social practice. Worldly signs are signs of empty rituals or routine. They are signs of absurdity practiced without being questioning. Social-class signs should belong in the category of worldly signs.

However, social class is also a practice of jealousy and confusion. It has no meaning but always tries to justify itself. Efforts are always made to defend its legitimacy. From this point of view, social-class signs are no different from signs of love—full of confusion, jealousy, and failed attempt to seek meanings. Therefore, while social class is practiced, it serves as a worldly sign. While social class tries to justify itself, it becomes a sign of love, in terms of its confusion and failure. Back in Williams' poem "The Mind's Games," the potato, if taken as a social-class sign, is

more of a sign of love, because it speaks for the poet's confusion about the Romantic worldview and the world's failure to feed its people. The potato then is one of the saddest food objects in food poetics. It spells hunger and death.

Other lower-class foods than the potato do not seem to be avoided by Williams in his poems. In "A Goodnight," we even have animals' intestines and other bits and guts—offal. "A Goodnight" is a disguised lullaby in form and a description of restless human life and the human condition in content. In the first stanza, we have loud shouts of "Food! Food!/ Offal! Offal!" In the penultimate stanza, we have a scene with breakfast set on the table:

> The maid waking you in the morning
> when you are up and dressing
> the rustle of your clothes as you raise them—
> It is the same tune.
> At the table the cold, greenish, split grapefruit, its juice
> on the tongue, the clink of the spoon in
> your coffee, the toast odors say it over and over. (*CPI* 145)

The two stanzas seem to be contrasting with each other, but it is crucial to note that the penultimate scene is an imagination set in the future. Although this is supposed to take place the following morning, there is no guarantee, especially as the speaker in the poem seems to pray for a breakfast to regulate the crazy pace of life. Barry Ahearn holds a similar opinion of the breakfast scene: "The fourth [penultimate] stanza offers the possibility that some order—and therefore the potential for peace—can be found in one's daily routine" (84).

As Ahearn points out, all the foods here are presented as ritual signs. They are not of any meaning, but they are employed to calm people through a sense of ceremony. The bell is sounded first thing in the morning. The act of dressing oneself

is depicted like that of readying oneself for morning prayer. Meanwhile, a mild, monotonous holy chant seems to be repeating itself in the background ("the same tune…over and over"). Then the grapefruit is prepared on the table and later placed upon the tongue while the spoon makes its sound while turning around in the cup of refreshing coffee, the way a rosary is chanted to stir the morning, and the smell of the toast comes from the bread, the flesh of the Son of God. Breakfast is as good as religion, and both are worldly and routine in the Deleuzean category of signs. Of course, the poet never forgets to let us know that a recourse to worldly signs for redemption is a guaranteed failure.

Yet, this is not what is special about food objects in "A Goodnight." What is special is its use of "offal" in the opening of the poem. The celebrated British anthropologist Mary Douglas once focused her scholarship on the structure of food choice, and this is her understanding of offal:

> The construction of the given makes room for the constitution of the subject. As far as food is concerned, the contrasting principles that he [Pierre Bourdieu] abstracts--such as formality/informality, exotic/homely, traditional/experimental--are valuable guides to understanding the process of social ranking. Sahlins adds another factor, the metaphors of inner/outer social dimension which are projected upon food, inner being closer to nature and outer being more civilized. In such a symbolic structure, no wonder that intestines are reckoned inferior to steak and no wonder that offal is regarded as uncivilized, low-class food. (9)

Thus in the poem, the pairing of the cries of "Food! Food!" and "Offal! Offal!" besides telling us "The Food is awful!" by a trick of homophonous humor, also tells us that the cries are from the lower class to whom food and offal make no difference. Then a cry for food disposal by the upper class tells us of their dire situation. Even

when they ask for other people's waste for sustenance, they suffer shortage.

For that matter, offal in this poem should be categorized as a sign of love, for it is about confusion, effort or attempt, and jealousy. Its confusion lies in the ill distribution of food among fellow creatures, and effort and attempt are invested to seek survival. Jealousy is hidden in the question never asked in the poem: why are some of us satiated but some are starved? Why arevmost of us are restless while the world is still lean and mean? The offal exists as a failed attempt at meaning, and the only failed sign unable to seek meaning is love. In the sign system, the Deleuzean love is bitter. The offal is stuck between search and meaning, between the edible and the inedible, between others' inside and our inside. It is an eminent sign of trapped effort and suffering in food poetics. Williams' preference for lower-class food objects in his poems allows us a peep into different food objects and their poetic function through the reading of the food-as-sign approach.

Oranges

We may well say Williams is always fascinated with the orange. The word "orange" appears in his collected earlier poems 27 times, with 21 times referring to the orange color and 6 times referring to the fruit in 5 poems. For Williams, a poet who mentions dinner once and cheese once in 30 years' time, this is many.

The five poems are listed as follows:

Poem title	lines	Associated with
Sicilian Emigrant's Song	And dost thou remember the orange and fig,/ The lively sun and the sea-breeze at evening?	a lady named Donna
Della Primavera Transportata Al Morale	Orange Ice .70	a shopping list where the poet places his trust in a devastated world
Item	This, with a face/ like a mashed blood orange/ that suddenly/ would get eyes/ and look up and scream	war
A Celebration	And these the orange-trees, in blossom—no need/ to tell with this weight of perfume in the air.	two lovers sauntering in a garden, among various flowers
Berket and the Stars	Berket in high spirits—"Ha, oranges! Let's have one!"	a student named Berket

Tab.1

Except for "Item" in which the blood orange is the eerie face of War personified, the orange appears fairly feminine in other poetic works. The other four poems almost all provide us with corresponding points to the orange. There is a parallel structure between the orange and the loved one, or the lady the poet is longing for. The only exception is "Berket and the Stars." Since one of the main purposes of this

dissertation is to establish a food poetics that is competent enough to read into esoteric, sporadic, and diasporic poems, we will try to read into "Berket and the Stars," but before we delve into it, we can still look at Williams' orange from another aspect.

In reading poems, in general it is too author-oriented and anecdote-based to seek biographical interpretation for a food object. In reading prose, it is understandable to read into the poet's life experience because in prose, where the poet's life and work becomes one, food is as significant a sign in work as an object in life. Before we read the orange in Williams' poem, let's have a peep at the orange in his narrative record of his mother:

> There is a kind of orange in Puerto Rico that I have never seen here. I don't think they send it away. It is half orange, half grapefruit, sort of bitter sweet. The natives say that if you drink the juice of it and then take a cup of coffee it is good for the fever. It has a rough kind of skin, like big pores. They call it *torongha*.
>
> And there is another orange, like an orange only much smaller and it is always green. Green, green, green. It never gets yellow. The taste is just sugar and water, no taste at all, but very sweet. Or perhaps just the least taste of orange. They call it *lima*. The same as Lima in South America. (*Yes, Mrs. Williams* 119)

This account is immediately followed by another account of his aunt, and if this happens to remind us of something, it would probably be Proust and his aunt and the madeleine. Partly because of his childhood in a tropical country full of fruits, partly because of its association with his mother and aunt, the loving figures in the family, the poet, outside his poems, speaks in detail about the fruit that epitomizes his life in another space and time. All other food objects in Williams' poems seem neutral. They

are there because of the poet's design. The orange in Williams' poems seems less controlled, less restrained, and hinting to say more.

In "Sicilian Emigrant's Song," the orange is by default already something from a nostalgic Italy. The orange is further juxtaposed with fig, the forbidden fruit, in the lively sun and breeze--all in a question asked by the poet of a lady: "Do you remember?" In "*Della Primavera Transportata Al Morale*," while facing a shattered world, the poet says he believes in his shopping list. In an allegorical and apocalyptic context, as if this is not extreme enough, there appears an entry "Orange Ice" on the list, and suddenly the unstable world seems even more unstable in comparison to the rock-solid quality of the Orange Ice at hand. (In "Item," the orange is the face of war and an angry god. Not only does it seem to speak more, it seems to spit blood.) In "A Celebration," the orange trees are heavy and solid with fragrance, which is something the two lovers are fully acquainted with and connected by. The orange blossoms, among other flowers, become a secret language between the two. They appear able to communicate with each other through the flowers. However, at the first read, the most abstract among them all is "Berket and the Stars."

In "Berket and the Stars," we do not have as rich a context or specific surroundings for the orange to refer to:

> A day on the boulevards chosen out of ten years of
> student poverty! One best day out of ten good ones.
> Berket in high spirits—"Ha, oranges! Let's have one!"
> And he made to snatch an orange from the vender's
> cart.
>
> Now so clever was the deception, so nicely timed
> To the full sweep of certain wave summits,

That the rumor of the thing has come down through
Three generations—which is relatively forever! (*CPI* 141)

The act of snatching tells us that this is not part of daily routine or something Berket does often on his way to or back from school. In addition, expressions like "a day…chosen out of ten years," "one best day out of ten good ones," and the occasional "day on the boulevards," suggest the once-off event of snatching an orange. The orange is by no means a worldly sign. The act of snatching also guarantees a physical contact and proves the orange a sensuous sign. In an abstract poem where the food object is obvious in presence and obscure in representation, the food is mostly a sensuous sign to decipher.

From the first stanza, we see Berket is taking his orange almost the same way the poor old woman is taking her plums in her hand. This is Berket's lucky find. This find is an affective encounter joyful enough to cheer up "ten years of student poverty" for a moment, to make this day a "best day out of ten good ones," and to put Berket "in high spirits." In other words, to Berket the orange means a luxury. However, a student's definition of luxury may be different from a scavenger's. The luxury here may not be a financial challenge but a social embarrassment.

In the second stanza, since joy always entails obligation to seek meaning, the orange leads us to a completely different scenario to seek possible interpretation. Deception is praised as clever in this stanza because it helps avoid the "full sweep of certain wave" when the heat is really on ("summits"). Consequently, "the rumor of the thing has come down through three generations," but there is all in all only one thing in the poem—the orange. The rumor of the orange has come down? If so, then the orange must be something secretly enjoyed and the enjoyment has been known in the Berket family through three generations. In the end, the poem tells us, in the forgetful world a secretive enjoyment kept unknown for three generations is as good as a secret

forever.

We have nothing specific to guide us further to a meaning of the orange, but we know that the orange is a find during the formatting years of a boy as a student. The same discovery might have taken place in Berket's father's school years and in his grandfather's—thus amounting to three generations. Such a discovery is always made during school years in poverty—a time when one has less to do with social expectation and image. But later in life, this orange calls for the need of clever deception, because there are waves to duck and heat to avoid.

There is one more thing—the title of the poem. While the orange necessitates deception, "the stars" remain all the while invisible in the poem. In terms of a wish for something to be unseen, the stars are in the same league as the orange. One contradiction we may find between the stars and the orange is that the stars promise no physical contact, but the orange is always within reach. Or, maybe in a time far from school, the orange may be as unreachable as the stars and both belong to the category of signs of love? Or, are the stars symbolic of the Berket men, who wish part of their lives to be invisible to the public, keeping the orange a secret as a wish-fulfillment?

In this poem, we see the mobility of signs. The categorization of food objects is not a fixed system but a flexible system that allows development back and forth. The orange is a sensuous sign in the first stanza and a sign of love at the end. In reading this poem through food, we see the secret is successfully kept and the orange as a sign of love is rich of meanings belonging in individual memory and open to personal interpretation. From the point of view of keeping a secret, the orange is more a successful sign of love than a sign of failed attempt at seeking meaning.

In the end, it seems the food-as-sign approach is the best approach to Williams. We see that again in our reading of "Berket and Stars," which has claimed no

publication entry nor on-line entry for any specific interpretation up till the writing of this dissertation. Williams always leaves a lot of blanks in his poems, leaves few objects in his poems and thus forces his reader to dwell on them and feel them through language. Maybe because Williams makes it easier for us to dwell on his food signs as signs of love, with a hint of pleasantly teasing ambiguity but without a naked, clear-cut meaning...other poetic possibilities are eclipsed. In other poets, we seldom see the regression of a sign, but in this last poem by Williams under discussion, we have a sensuous sign that goes back in development and turns into a sign of love that offers just the right amount of joy in the veil.

Chapter Five: "Before the Salted Winter Vegetable Is Sliced": Making Sense of Ethnic Food in Li-Young Lee's Poems

The perceived quality presupposes intensity, because it expresses only a resemblance to a 'band of isolatable intensities', within the limits of which a permanent object is constituted - the qualified object which affirms its identity across variable distances. Intensity, which envelops distances, is explicated in extensity, while extensity develops, exteriorises and homogenises these very distances.

—Gilles Deleuze (*Difference and Repetition* 230)

As specified by the opening quote, it is always a perceived and presupposed quality in an object that gives the object, on behalf of other objects, an identity. The perceived or recognized quality that stands for a period of time or a space, say, someone's childhood or original country, may be quite limited, but once such perception or recognition makes the object stand apart from all other objects, similar or not, the object is then constituted as a permanent symbol of that identity seen in the eye of the perceiver. The intensity here is then the recognition of, the longing for such an identity that travels through time and space and leaves traces all over the time and space it travels through. It is the power that fuels the distancing effect. It is nostalgia and *chinoiserie* in Li-Young Lee's food poems.

Unlike Wallace Stevens who focuses so much on things instead of meanings, and unlike William Carlos Williams who emphasizes hidden ideas in usually one thing in one poem, Li-Young Lee is a relatively accessible poet whose use of language is at a proper distance between aesthetic abstractness and friendly communication with the reader. We read Stevens with the distancing-channeling approach (i.e., the food-as-thing approach) to figure out the pairing of objects and the production of their meaning. We read Williams with the food-as-sign approach to seek possible meanings

for his seemingly isolated objects. In reading Li-Young Lee, we also have to adopt a different approach. We have to resort to the three syntheses of time.

In reading poems, none of the three approaches (food-as-thing, food-as-sign, food-as-time) stands and works completely alone. They share a common foundation of Deleuzean ideas and they do work with each other from time to time. Nevertheless, it is obvious that while reading a certain poet we tend to rely more on one of the three approaches, as we have seen in the previous two chapters. What necessitates our resort to the three syntheses of time is that Lee's food poems usually smack of his family background in Chinese culture and his family memory within Chinese history. Time, in understanding Lee's poems, becomes the eminent element.

In reading food poems, it is of course impossible for the interpretation of a culture's past to operate on an abstract concept of time alone. Food in Lee's poems is still a memory machine. It has to be a sign, especially a genuine sensuous sign that produces meaning. To facilitate the reading of Lee's poems, we take food as a sign and see the sign in a synthesis of time. The food-as-time approach is actually a synthesized approach to see food objects as signs in time. We have to use an approach that combines both the sign system (worldly signs, signs of love, sensuous signs, and signs of art) and the time system (the synthesis of Habitus, the synthesis of Eros-Mnemosyne, and the synthesis of the New). The most important connection will be built between the sensuous sign and the synthesis of Eros-Mnemosyne, or memory.

At a closer look, we will understand right away that the combination of the two systems of signs and times is not a laborious work for they are matching more or less by nature. We have been more than once informed that worldly signs are empty signs of rituals and routines that operate almost automatically, certainly without thinking. The corresponding first synthesis of time is the synthesis of Habitus, in which everything operates on habits and the passing present also passes over habits. The

fourth signs of art are dematerialized signs of new meaning. The corresponding synthesis of time is the third synthesis of the New, which transcends all materiality into the future and is sometimes called by Deleuze the "desexualized libido" (*DR* 114).

Signs of love match **displacement** and sensuous signs match **disguise**. These are the **second and third signs** and the **second synthesis of time** we previously skipped in our discussion. In other words, the (second) signs of love and the following sensuous signs both belong in the second time synthesis of Eros-Mnemosyne. This second synthesis of time is the most crucial one for memory production. The Deleuzean mechanism of involuntary memory is all subsumed under the discussion of the second synthesis of the pure past. The production of memory depends on repetition (*PS* 40), and the two powers of repetition are displacement and disguise (*DR* 288). When observed under the second synthesis of time, displacement and disguise are respectively signs of love and sensuous signs. Signs of love emulate the power of displacement in that they are aware of the displacement of an object trapped in another. Sensuous signs emulate the power of disguise in that they have joy in the disguise of other objects and have an obligation-guiding way to seek meanings in disguise.

Furthermore, signs of love and sensuous signs are appropriate to the Eros-Mnemosyne synthesis by nature and by function. Sensuous signs are signs of memory. In fact, the production of involuntary memory entirely depends on sensuous signs. Love-Memory is exactly what Eros-Mnemosyne stands for. Literally speaking, Eros stands for love and Mnemosyne stands for memory. The naming may only tell us something about their nature, but their similar functioning principles are as follows. In the second synthesis of time, the time is the pure past. The pure past is the foundation of memory production and memory is the foundation of meaning production (*DR* 80).

In the system of sensuous signs, the affective encounter, a sensuous contact, produces memory. This memory, also understood as joy, produces a sense of obligation and the obligation triggers the search for meaning. In other words, in the system of sensuous signs, meaning is also based on memory, because it is memory that leads to the production of meaning,

In Deleuze's design, these two systems of **signs** and **times** seem to be working synergistically instead of as hard-and-fast alternatives. The matching qualities between them make us feel they are rather different perspectives in the same dimension than similar perspectives in different dimensions. Accordingly, the application of the two systems in reading poems only involves simultaneous attention to both signs and times, which are equally concerned with memory and meaning.

Li-Young Lee, as a poet, stands at and speaks from a very particular point, as Wenying Xu points out in her celebrated collection of published researches on food and literature, *Eating Identities: Reading Food in Asian American Literature*:

> Li-Young Lee is an ethnic Chinese without an upbringing in an ancestral culture, without a grounding knowledge of the Chinese language, and without the community of a Chinatown or a suburban Chinese American community. (94)[26]

This is to say the poet is writing with a memory passed on to him from his parents. The poet, instead of living a past and forming a memory of it, is actually living a

[26] Here is a short profile of Li-Young Lee from The New: "Lee was born in Jakarta, Indonesia, the son of Chinese parents who had fled from Communist rule in China. After his father was imprisoned for nineteen months as a target of the anti-Chinese sentiment of Indonesian President Sukarno, the family fled again, to Hong Kong and Japan. The family ultimately settled in rural Pennsylvania, where Lee's father, who had been a physician in China, became a Presbyterian minister. Lee received his B.A. from the University of Pittsburgh, where he discovered his passion for poetry. Now married, with two children, he lives in Chicago" (507). Lee was in fact brought up with enough exposure to Chinese culture, but not outside his family.

memory and allowing himself to travel back in time. In discussing virtuality as a production of memory and meaning, Deleuze quotes Bergson to the effect that the real meaning of virtuality is not re-establishing a past into the present but to allow oneself to be sucked in by the past. Virtuality is about a memory and meaning produced by the past from within (*PS* 38). The Bergson-Deleuzean virtuality/memory/meaning production is Lee's way of memory production. Lee first lives a memory into life and then from the memory extracts poetry. He feels an intensity passed on to him and carries out that intensity in his poems.

Speaking of Li-Young Lee and his use of food in his poems, Jennifer Ho points out that "food illuminates the variety and depth of Asian American life, affirming both the Asian-ethnic heritage of these characters as well as their American identities" (145). Ho's statement coincides with Lee's words in an interview recorded in *Breaking the Alabaster Jar*:

> In those years growing up, we were out there. You know, running around, playing with the white kids, playing at their houses and just being normal American kids, then we'd come home and speak Mandarin and eat Chinese food. There was never any, at least for me, feeling of conflict. (60-61)

Xu may be right that Lee did not grow up in a community that the Chinese culture is native to, but it is not quite correct to say Lee grew up in an environment free from any influence of Chinese culture. Most correct is to say that a poet like Lee writes with more than one single identity.

One thing special about Lee's food poems is that his choices of food, especially in his early poems collected in *Rose*, are often charged with culture. From persimmons, the Winter Vegetable (Chinese pickled cabbage), to rice and duck brains, every one of them speaks of Chinese culture from his parents' lineage. These are foods from the culture he grew up in and this culture is passed on to him from his

parents. The reason why we focus on how he is influenced by Chinese culture is because he is treated as a diasporic poet in this dissertation, and indirect acquisition of a culture is one of the many definitions of diaspora:

> [I]n recent usage diaspora often lacks the pathos of exile, a term that is never without a deep sense of woe. Like exile, diaspora can be elective or imposed; ...the key contrast with exile lies in diaspora's emphasis on lateral and decentered relationships among the dispersed. Exile suggests pining for home; diaspora suggests networks among compatriots. Exile may be solitary, but diaspora is always collective. (20)[27]

Because his cultural background was constituted by parenting and because Lee is free to go between two cultures, he is more of a diasporic poet than an exile poet. In his food poems, we often see him enjoying himself in a particular ambience rather than pining for lost time and discontinued cultural heritage. His "Chineseness" is always situated in food that people share, mostly by his own family. The Chinese food objects in his poems are usually a symbol of family intimacy. Food objects in Lee's poems are often charged with love and affection, and the memory in them is often warm.

His admiration for Chinese culture is fully reflected in the food objects in his poems. It is exactly because his feeling for his culture is admiration rather than lamentation that we find more warmth than hurt in his poems dealing with food. His diaspora is then understood in the poem as an artistic form of admiration for a culture which he possesses through vicarious experience but also through solid, materialized, sensuous contact. In a Deleuzean sense, he has the first affective encounter with objects indwelled by intensity, and such an encounter triggers the process of memory/

[27] With the same statement by Peters, Xu inserts her understanding in asserting that Lee is an exile poet instead of a diasporic poet (95). Xu is one of the many established scholars who draw attention to Asian-American writers and poets. With all due respect, this dissertation finds it necessary to disagree with her from time to time.

meaning production. Because of his particular choice and treatment of food, our interpretation of Lee's food objects will tend to focus on the food objects as sensuous signs, seeing how they make sense in the synthesis of memory.

Persimmons

"Persimmons" may be one of Lee's most noted poems, and certainly it is the most noted food poem. The persimmons are from the very beginning a sensuous sign, but a sensuous sign with varying meaning and reference. However, the persimmons remain a sensuous sign in the synthesis of pure past. Although signs of love and sensuous signs coexist in the second synthesis of memory/pure past, because of Lee's choice of culture-embedded food objects, the food objects are hardly signs of love, hardly representative of a failed attempt at seeking meaning.

The first presence of the persimmons is in the sixth grade, when the little boy has trouble telling one word from another: "persimmon" and "precision." Then the second stanza follows fast, giving detailed instruction on how to eat a persimmon. The experience of having a persimmon becomes not only sensuous but also sensual. The act of having a persimmon is obviously joy in the meaning production. Meaning is established upon memory (*DR* 80), and this is the joy in the sixth grade. The taste of the persimmon is then a consolation for the punishment. While one's own indigenous culture offers the persimmon, the other culture demands precision and offers punishment when such a demand is not met. The persimmon means a pleasure that heals the punished body.

So does Donna. The intensity was first sensuality and is now sexuality. From the sensuality of having a persimmon to the sexuality of having Donna, the boy is accompanied by struggles with language. Yet the pleasures appear to have strong and sweet healing powers that belittle such minor struggle. The poem, as pointed out by

Jahan Ramazani in his *A Transnational Poetics*, "explores the possibilities of reconciliation at the aesthetic level that were unavailable in the schoolboy's lived experience" (18). The boy knows more about the persimmon than pronouncing it in a foreign tongue (in comparison to Mrs. Walker's "Chinese apple"[28]). He later sees in Donna the comfort he seeks in the persimmon. Both provide genuine comfort, unavailable in school life.

Besides the connection between the persimmon and the sexual experience, Victoria Chang points to the use of language as a struggle: "Lee uses the complexities of language and the difficulties of translating, both linguistically and culturally, to portray the cultural duality of his childhood" (xvi). Such complexities and difficulties make sense in food poetics when a sign triggers a process to produce meaning. It is always an affective joy followed by a felt obligation. The language learning is the search for meaning. As stated above, the persimmon in this poem is a sensuous sign with meaning that varies. It means a healing power, a sexual adventure, and the texture of language which the schoolboy tastes.

The persimmon's qualities are circumscribed, yet the poet sees in it his indigenous culture and makes it "a permanent object of identity," as shown in the opening quote. It then varies its meaning along with the multifarious Chinese culture in the boy's mind. Still in the second synthesis of memory, something has been told by the boy's mother about the persimmon: "every persimmon has a sun inside," and so the persimmon has warmth, and so his mother sees his glowing face in it, and so he is in it. So multiplex a culture of an antique land and so warm a relation between the mother and the son are epitomized in the tiny fruit that a single hand can hold. Its meaning goes on varying in the memory. Hence the search of meaning has not yet

[28] Brigitte Wallinger-Schorn shows in detail the comparison between the schoolboy and Mrs. Walker. See 86.

ceased.

Meaning is established upon memory, and memory is the pure past. “Pure” in this sense is free from conditioning by the present, so that intensity is free to rest upon an object by which it can reveal itself. The fruit valued in his fatherland finally leads the grown-up boy to his father. Knowing that his father is becoming blind and shall live without light and sight, he hands the persimmon to his father. The persimmon is now a sun in the palm. The persimmon seems to ripen along with the years of the boy—“swelled, heavy as sadness,/ and sweet as love”—the persimmon now tastes of life experience and the sorrow of loss.

As if there were two searches in parallel, as the search for the meaning of the persimmon is carried on, the persona of the poem is looking for something he lost. He never says what he was looking for, but he found the company of his father, and his father found the company of him. In the last scene of the poem, the persimmon becomes art on a scroll of Chinese painting done by his father when blind. It is in the last scene that the persimmon as a sensuous sign is dematerialized[29] into a sign of art. Something particular about the transition is that the transition is still accomplished through a sensuous and materialized medium—the texture of the scroll felt to his father’s touch:

Oh, the feel of the wolftail on the silk,
the strength, the tense
precision in the wrist.
I painted them hundreds of times
eyes closed. These I painted blind.

[29] It is “dematerialized” in the sense that the fruit quality in the persimmon is completely removed, but not all materialized media of intensity are dispensed with. The same way, Jonathan Beller talks about cinema as "a dematerialized reality" (141). This film of a scene is a mere image of the scene, but it still relies on the visualized medium to convey the perception of the scene.

Some things never leave a person:

scent of the hair of one you love,

the texture of persimmons,

in your palm, the ripe weight. (*Rose* 19)

These are words of his father. What Mrs. Walker fails to tell him about precision is now taught by his father. After, precision is the persimmon, the boy has always been right in the first place. From class to sex, from the mother to the son, from the sun to the father, from the fruit to the painting, this is a quest in search for the meaning of the persimmon. The persimmon is a sensuous sign in disguise. Through the quest it meets its multiple meaning and its multiple meaning is established on its manifold memory of the pure past. "Some things never leave a person"—the persimmon and its intensity.

Winter Vegetable

Like the wolftail, the Chinese brush, the Winter Vegetable is a Chinese specialty. Like the persimmon, the Winter Vegetable is another delicacy of Lee's that binds family. This time, it mostly binds his parents. The poem "Early in the Morning" unfolds with a breakfast, but it is not entirely an empty sign of a worldly routine, because it is properly worded:

While the long grain is softening

in the water, gurgling

over a low stove flame, before

the salted Winter Vegetable is sliced

for breakfast, …(*Rose* 25)

It is rice ("long grain") softening, the boiling water, the love flame, and the slicing of the Winter Vegetable that wake one family, and all the activities in the kitchen

announce that it is time for breakfast. The agent of all these activities is known, but not seen. It is the mother, who becomes a worldly sign of routine in attending to her child, preparing her family for a day's needs. When the mother is seen in front of the dresser, we begin to have visual contact. She is readying herself for the father to see her tidy and attractive. Their child sees it otherwise:

> But I know
> it is because of the way
> my mother's hair falls
> when he pulls the pins out.
> Easily, like the curtains
> when they untie them in the evening. (*Rose* 25)

The mother appears a sensuous sign when she minds herself for her husband. The cooking only makes her motherly, whereas the grooming makes her wifely. When she does the combing, her husband does the watching. For half a century, they have done this. Their affection for each other endures. The wife is always attractive and the husband is always loving.

The Winter Vegetable endures more than a winter. It defies time and stays good for years. It is an appetizing dish. It is salted, and therefore it encourages more intake of rice. It is pickled, and therefore it stays good for a long time. It is home-made, and therefore every family has its own flavor. The Winter Vegetable endures through the years, like the cooking mother and the combing wife.

It is easy to identify that the Winter Vegetable is the mother of the family. But in reading Lee in the perspective of food poetics, it is never just about pinning down the meaning of a sign because we are always informed. It is about the change of meaning in the sign, because we are aware of time along with the change of meaning. Lapses of time are represented by changes in the meaning of the sign. The change is not

obscure, but the transition is subtle. One of the reasons for the subtle transition of meaning is Lee's language of silence.

Lee is using "a language of quiet grace" in his poems, says Victoria Chang (xxiii). This language is not just the voice of the poet, but is sometimes the voice of a character. In this poem, this is the language the mother and father speak—silence. Not only do we see no dialogue between them, we see no need. There is a lot being communicated between the wife and the husband through the combing and watching. Colum Kenny is also aware of Lee's use of silence in his poetic language. Speaking of the poem "A Story" by Lee, Kenny points out that in Lee's language, silence and need are matched (31).

In the poem "Early in the Morning," silence and need are matched and met in the mother. The terseness of lines and crispness of diction contribute to the development of Lee's poem in an almost imperceptible way. The mother says nothing and yet the tiny world in the poem revolves silently around her. She does a couple of things that make sounds, and then she remains silent. Thus the entire poem develops quietly. We only focus on the slow transformation of the mother to the wife along with the child in a space frozen in time, without registering the working of Lee's language of silence.

Lee's language of silence is actually the reason why reading him in a synthesis of time is necessary. Its influence is ubiquitous in his poems, but here in "Early in the Morning" where we have few characters, objects, and activities we can have a clearer view through a shorter analysis from the ground up. But before we come to Lee's language of silence, let's recapitulate food objects in Lee's poems in terms of their category of signs and synthesis of time.

Lee's choice of food is charged with culture and therefore also with embedded meaning. According to Deleuze, the only "true signs that immediately give us extraordinary joy" are sensuous signs (*PS* 9). Earlier also in *Proust and Signs*,

Deleuze tells us that once we have "prodigious joy," we will feel an obligation soon afterward, and the obligation will lead us to seek the meaning of the sign (8). It is also important to know that the meaning here simply means "yielding to us the concealed object" (ibid), which means that if we see something else in an object, we have sought its meaning or at least one of its many meanings. **In short, Lee's food objects are meaningful signs. Note that sensuous signs are the only meaningful signs. Lee's food objects are meaningful signs, in which we can see something else**.

Sensuous signs reveal to us the objects they conceal in them. The revealed objects are the meanings of the signs. In other words, sensuous signs are the disguise of meanings. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze points out that disguise is a power of repetition (288). In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze says that repetition is a power of involuntary memory (40). **In short, memory comes from sensuous signs which possess the power of disguise**. Therefore, the process of memory production is triggered by sensuous signs, but the process of meaning production also starts from sensuous signs (*PS* 8: "prodigious joy" → obligation → meaning= "yielding to us the concealed objects"). **As a result, the production of meaning is the production of memory**.

So far, we rest upon the temporary conclusion that memory comes from sensuous signs and memory comes from the power of disguise. We are still in the second sign system of the sensuous. From this point onward, we move on from the sign system into the time synthesis. From sensuous signs and disguise, memory is produced. Memory, according to Deleuze, defines the second synthesis of time (*DR* 113). He also points out that the second synthesis of time is a synthesis of memory (*DR* 94). Through the production of memory, sensuous signs enter into a temporal dimension—the second synthesis of Mnemosyne. "The second synthesis, that of memory, constituted time as a pure past" (ibid). **To conclude, sensuous signs belong**

in the second synthesis of time. Sensuous signs therefore belongs with memory and likewise belong in the pure past.

This is where Deleuze's philosophy drops off and Lee's poetics picks up. The pure past stays in the second synthesis of time, but Lee's language of silence works its power of transference to further the past into another temporal dimension and even into yet another. Silence, as Lee's poetic language, has already been pointed out in our previous discussion by Victoria Chang and Column Kenny. In creating a space sacred to a person, silence helps to set apart a place in time, and in this dimension set apart by silence, we offer our undivided attention. This is a time for resting upon what we believe, and also a time for allowing intimacy without any utilitarian purpose (Barton 37). This explains what we do unknowingly while reading Lee. His language of silence sets apart a place in time. Or, to be more precise, **Li-Young Lee uses silence as his poetic language to set apart a place out of the pure past**.

Keeping silence in the presence of an object of iconic or symbolic nature, that is to say a sign, will usher the object as a living presence into reality. The living presence of the object is of course tied up with our awareness of the living present. (McPherson 49).[30] In other words, the place in time set apart by silence out of the pure past is in fact a dimension created and placed in the living present with the living presence of the object or the scene which the object is in. **Silence, in a sense, furthers sensuous signs from the pure past into the living present**. This is why in the reading present, the reader of Lee's poems feel present in the scene of the object.

In *Immemorial Silence*, Kamen MacKendrick points out that "the temporality of

[30] McPherson gives an example we may find familiar: "The closest analogy today is the computer: It absorbs so much human mental activity, and transmits so much personal information, that, after a while, a plugged-in computer becomes anthropomorphic. We 'sense a living presence' in the room when the computer is on, even when it is not transmitting or receiving messages. The icon, after...silent practice, takes on much the same quality" (49).

silence is that of forgetting and returning, a temporal evocation of absence within every mode of time" (19). Among the three syntheses of time, there is only one that includes the forgotten, the returning, and every other mode of time—the third synthesis of time, the synthesis of the future. In MacKendrick's point of view, silence is what turns sensuous signs into signs of art and furthers them into the third synthesis of time. This is what Deleuze says about the third synthesis of time. There is a striking similarity between what MacKendrick says about silence and what Deleuze says about the third synthesis of the future: "The signs of art, finally give us a time regained, an original absolute time that includes all the others" (*PS* 17). **Silence**, after it furthers sensuous signs into the living present, **will ultimately take sensuous signs into the third synthesis of time, the synthesis of the future and of the New**.

Because of the particularity of Lee's poetic language, sensuous signs are free to travel through different syntheses of time instead of being trapped in the second synthesis. Skipping a few details and starting from the middle, the entire route of Lee's sensuous signs may be described as follows. Sensuous signs can place objects in disguise but also reveal objects in disguise. Such disguise is a power to produce memory. Memory defines the second synthesis of time, and the second synthesis of time belongs in the pure past. Sensuous signs thus enter alongside memory into the second synthesis of the pure past. Lee's poetic language of silence furthers sensuous signs into the living present. Lee's poetic language of silence again furthers sensuous signs into the future. Schematically:

sensuous signs → disguise revealed → memory formed → entering the second synthesis of Mnemosyne → into the pure past —and through silence→ into the living present → into the third synthesis of the future.

Again, when back in the kitchen of "Early in the Morning," we have the Winter

Vegetable as sensuous sign. It is salted and sliced. It is a sensuous sign invested twice with preparation before being served. The first preparation turns the cabbage into salted pickle. The second preparation turns the pickle into slices. The tediousness of such preparation only to make a dish stay good is the mother's job. Under the disguise of the sensuous sign of the Winter Vegetable, we sense the mother and her efforts contributed to her family. The mother is invisible. She is not heard either. The only sound we have is the gurgling of the boiling water.

The mother revealed from the disguise of the Winter Vegetable brings the child to the memory of his parents. The mother leaves the kitchen and enters the room, combing her hair, thick and black, reminding us of the Chinese calligrapher's ink. Again the mother is seen but not heard. She is watched by her husband. She is as vivid and tangible as a scroll of Chinese calligraphy and also as silent. The only sound we have is the comb against the hair.

The memory of the parents stays and develops. The wife keeps combing, in a perhaps lingering manner that suggests sensuality, with delicate moves of the fingers that make sensuality last for half a century. In the pure past, neither the wife nor the husband is heard. The poet holds everything in silence: "

> I think a really good poem can impart a stillness…The writing of poetry is writing that reveals, but doesn't just reveal a personal presence; it reveals a transpersonal presence and the dualities of that presence is silence, stillness, and the saturation of presence. (Breaking the Alabaster Jar 147)

The poet imparts silence and the scene of the husband and wife keeps still in time. We feel there is something more than merely the presence of the wife. We also feel the presence of the husband. We feel "a transpersonal presence" of both of them pervading the poem in silence. It does not stay in the past, though. A statement in a confirmed present tense brings the scene across time into the present: "My father likes

to see it like this." In the Winter Vegetable, we find more than the wife's sensuality that defies time. We find the time-defying affection between the wife and the husband.

Silence sets apart the time when they are remembered together. In addition, silence situates them in the present. In the end, silence presents them as a promise of the future. They love on into the future and their love evokes everything in all modes of time. In silence, they are seen but not heard. The only sound we have is the letting fall of the wife's hair. The husband likes it like this. When the husband pulls the pins out, the wife's hair, thick and black like calligrapher's ink, is thrown into a distraction of art in the third synthesis of time, in the future, where the child's memory still has them holding each other in the evening. This is the Winter Vegetable upon which the child feeds. It is also the ever-lasting love of his parents upon which the child feeds.

If "a poem," as Li-Young Lee says in an interview, is "the silence we hear after we finish reading the poem's words" (*Breaking the Alabaster Jar* 11), such silence may be a jar of the Winter Vegetable that defies time. Somewhere in the mind of the child, he pickles his parents' love and keeps on savoring it.

Rice

As Guiyou Huang points out, "Eating Alone" and "Eating Together," the two poems under our discussion of rice, are among many other poems "represented by the departed father figure" (196). In the very first stanza of "Eating Alone," we have "the last of the year's young onions" for the last harvest before the sight of the bare garden. This sensuous sign of the onions, for some reason, suddenly disappears.

In the second stanza, the sensuous sign of the onions is taken over by windfall pears. Among those windfall pears that the poet walked among beside his father there is one he remembers in particular. Again, everything is presented in time-freezing silence. "I can't recall/ our words. We may have strolled in silence." In Li-Young

Lee's poems of food and memory, there is hardly anyone who speaks. Silence is needed for a promise of temporal freedom for his sensuous signs and memory. The pear he remembers in particular is a rotten pear his father once lifted up to him. Inside the rotten pear, there is a hornet "spun crazily, glazed in slow, glistening juice." The second sensuous sign of pears is now reshaped and focused on one single rotten pear whose oozing juice before its decay nourishes a little creature in it.

So far, every sensuous sign seems still in disguise, and then one thing happens. It is another encounter of the poet and his father:

> It was my father I saw this morning
> waving to me from the trees. I almost
> called to him, until I am close enough
> to see the shovel, leaning where I had
> left it, in the flickering, deep green shade. (*Rose* 31)

It was not. The poet's father is dead. "The persona is granted a vision of what he at first believes is his departed father and then, coming closer, realizes is the dead man's shovel" (Citino 118). But it is so hard to tell, because of the language of silence. The poet almost "called out," but he did not. No silence was broken. No timeframe was ruptured. The company of the father seems to last. The poet seems to forget the death of his father. The waving gesture he makes is a gesture that greets the shovel and reaches its owner, his late father.

This is a scene of his memory after the decay of the pear, the glazing of the hornet. This memory makes him realize the death of his father in the presence of the shovel underneath the trees. With the memory of his father's death, we come to see sensuous signs in disguise. The onions are from last year and the rotten pear is from years back. The hornet is with the pear which is decaying, oozing, and losing its life. The dying pear is likened to the aging father. On the other hand, the hornet suckles

within the pear, but agitated and uneasy. The hornet shall be the son, the poet that lives with a sting of anxiety that suggests the dying of the pear. When the tension is built up high, the soothing scene of food cuts in and silences everything in the quiet of mealtime.

David Citino has a very keen observation of the scene: "The poem turns then to an appeal to our humanity, our mortal hungers" (118). It is always about humanity: the silent walk between the father and the son, the longing for and the lamentation of the late family, and the mealtime that soothes the mind. An unredeemable loss can at least deserve the solace of a little distraction. At this moment, the onions reappear. Through disguises of the pear and the hornet, the onions reappear with all the other sensuous signs which they help remember and internalize. The onions wrap within themselves a memory the poet tends to forget, and may invite tears now by awakening the poet to the poignancy and the sting of his father's death.

In the last scene, in the usual silence of Lee and in the frequent presence of the rice in Lee's dining scenes, the would-be poignancy of the onions seems to be mellowed down:

> White rice steaming, almost done. Sweet green peas
> fried in onions. Shrimp braised in sesame
> oil and garlic. And my own loneliness.
> What more could I, a young man, want. (*Rose* 33)

This scene is the entry of the pure past into the living present. The poignant onions are in this present scene sweetened by the green peas. "Shrimp braised in sesame oil and garlic," another Chinese dish, is also in sight to join "the white rice steaming." It is the white rice that opens the last scene and it is its steaming that hovers over all the scenes of the past and the present, blending everything in an edible and memorable helping of intake. The plain white rice seems to balance the poignant onions in the

silence of the mealtime.

Rice, the staple food of the East, counterpoises the poet's living present in the West in many of his poems. It is present in the previous "Early in the Morning," our current "Eating Alone," and the later "Eating Together." The plainness of its color and taste surprisingly soothe the mind and neutralize bitterness in life. Rice becomes the most conjoining sensuous sign among all Chinese foods. The plainness of rice is a sensuous silence. Silent but tangible, rice quietly claims its presence in its slow steaming and its slightly sweet taste. It is a taste of silence like that silence of Lee's poems after the words vanish. Lee's poetics of silence is successfully practiced in the silence of rice.

There is one more thing to be noted in the last stanza of the poem. After his realization of his father death in the past, his loneliness becomes a food material or a dish to go with rice. His loneliness is now edible, digestible, not something he forgot under the trees or something he avoided in his remembrance. This realization of death is now something ready to join the silent taste of rice, because the loneliness is beyond loneliness—it is an understanding and memory of his beloved father. With this absent presence of his father, the pure past brought into the living present, what more could the poet want?

In "Eating Together," the barely mentioned but always significant sensuous sign of rice is again recognized as the appropriate staple food:

> In the steamer is the trout
> Seasoned with slivers of ginger,
> Two sprigs of green onion, and sesame oil.
> We shall eat it with rice for lunch,
> Brothers, sister, my mother who will
> Taste the sweetest meat of the head,

Holding it between her fingers
Deftly, the way my father did
Weeks ago. Then he lay down
To sleep like a snow-covered road
Winding through pines older than him,
Without any travelers, and lonely for no one. (*Rose* 49)

The steamer, the ginger, the green onions, the sesame oil, and the rice, the utensil and the food materials in a Western space are themselves transtemporal and transspatial sensuous signs. The family is setting apart a space that exclusively belong to them. This space they construct defies the Western present. The intended choice of objects in the poem are not much in disguise. Everything speaks of its "Chineseness." The diasporic memory of a Chinese family is present immediately. It is diaspora, not exile, because we do not sense pain or lamentation. In fact, the presence of the entire family, although it is a mere visual image, seems to rid the poem of the usual silence we enjoy in Lee's poems. Nobody makes a sound here, but all the food materials and all the brothers and sisters tend to make the scene boisterous in a visual way.

All the family members are present and the mother is sucking on the head of the fish for the sweetest meat. All are present except one—the father. The mother's act of sucking on the fish may continue the visual boisterousness we felt in the kitchen preparation scene. The uneasy feeling of the reader who is used to Lee's poetics of silence is checked and eased at the turn of the second half of the line: "deftly, the way my father did/ weeks ago." The whole scene is quieted down. The objects in the opening scenes are deceptive signs rare in Lee's poems. This is not a joyful family get-together. The father is dead. The meal is set for those remaining. This may be a meal after the funeral. The family meets again to bid farewell to the father. The "eating together" is a deceptive poem title as well. The family is short of the father.

Eating together becomes remembering the loss.

The rice is then the food last served. The way the mother eats the fish is the last featured scene. Then comes the second half of the poem, which is dedicated to the description of the father. In front to begin a scene or at the end to twist a mindset, the rice in Lee's poems is situated in a pertinent place to serve its purposes of mitigating pain from the past or washing down factitious exaltation.[31] After the rice and after the mother's gesture which reminds the family of the father, the father is ushered into the poem. The whiteness of the rice is now replaced by the whiteness of the snow that paves the road for the father to travel to another place. The whiteness between the rice and the snow communicates between the living family and the late father. An extension of plain feeling is there in the air. The "eating together" now seems together, without anyone missing from the family. Something subtle is there to run through everyone in the family, late or alive.

The post-funeral meal leads to an understanding that the father is not really missing among them. When the absent presence of the father is felt, the pure past is brought into the present. This enables the poet to walk with his father again and to see him off once again. The poet sees his father off the road "winding through pines older

[31] Western understanding of the rice as a symbol is positive as well, although some ideas are comparatively rare or even absent in Asian communities. Here is an example from *A History of Food* by Maguelonne Toussain-Samat: "Like bread in the Christian liturgy, rice is a ritual food in the Shinto religion, and during great ceremonials the Emperor of Japan is said to share rice with the sun goddess. The sun and its light, which ripen the rice, make it symbolic of enlightenment and knowledge. The people of the East also associate it with the colour red, the colour of the life principle, the soul and the heart, denoting eternal youth through regeneration. The multitude of its grains symbolizes happiness and abundance, so handfuls of rice are thrown at weddings. In the Western world this custom, initially adopted in America, was probably imitated from the example of Asian immigrants" (149). In Chinese communities, white rice is hardly associated with the color red and the throwing of food is considered a profanity of communal efforts and a sign of disrespect. Lee's use of the rice as a sensuous sign and a poetic symbol seems closer to the cultural reality.

than him." This is the road traveled by countless people before his father, now by his father as it will be by countless people to come. That is a road apart from this space, and belongs in another space framed in silence. A thought of such space in silence offers an immediate intimacy with the departed. The intimacy warms us and nihilates the pain of our loved one wandering alone on a road elsewhere. This space is the ultimate synthesis of time that includes all time and thus brings back the lost past, eases the mourning present, and promises a hopeful future. All the possibilities, in Li-Young Lee's poems, are condensed in silence and in grains of rice.

The Cleaving

In the last section of our discussion of Li-Young Lee, we are going to talk about a couple of food themes rare among other poets. These two themes both happen to be present in the poem "The Cleaving" (*The City in Which I Love You* 77-87). Before we go into any detail, let's look at the idea of cleaving. The act or sight of cleaving is particular to the Chinese food culture. When cookbooks or books on food culture touch upon Chinese cuisine they always mention the use of a cleaver as a basic utensil in a Chinese kitchen. Rebekah Lin Jewell has a particular section in her *Art of Chinese Cooking* dedicated to the importance of cleaving and cleavers in Chinese cooking (10 et seq.) while Jacqueline M. Newman in her *Food Culture in China* tells us how cleaving before serving is an important custom to observe in the Chinese food culture (79).

Chinese culture certainly is not the only culture that makes use of a cleaver. One may see an Italian butcher wield a cleaver toward pork or a Persian chef waving a cleaver toward mutton. But neither uses a cleaver to cleave cooked food and chop off heads and limbs of fowls like a Chinese cook in a Cantonese restaurant in front of customers, making their mouths water without causing any fear. The cleaving is a

very exclusive theme for poetry. To be involved in the sight of cleaving is a self-assertion of ethnic identity. As stated earlier, reading Li-Young Lee is hardly about seeking the meaning of a food object, it is more about the effect of the already rich-in-meaning objects and their change of meaning during the unfolding of a poem.

"The Cleaving" is a poem which describes "an immigrant who works as a butcher in Chinatown," a poem in which Lee employs "the motif of eating as an active gesture of opening the self to what is new, painful, violent, and transformative" (Zhou 195). It is a poem full of butchering scenes, but for someone inside the culture, the butchering is part of the preparation that feeds people. This idea invites scenes like "amid hanging meats he/ chops: roast pork cut/ from a hog hung/ by nose and shoulders," "He lops the head off, chops/ the neck of the duck/ into six, slits/ the body/ open, groin/ to breast, and drains/ the scalding juices," and "then quarters the carcass/ with two fast hacks of the cleaver." These are exclusive appetizing scenes imaginable only to gourmets of Chinese cuisine. Any other person may have a strong aversion. From the scenes of cleaving, two themes emerge and come under our discussion: food as identity and endocannibalism, which we shall deal with under "duck brains" and "I eat my man" respectively.

duck brains

In "The Cleaving," the persona is a boy watching a cook do his cleaving job. He sees all the cleaving scenes and he eyes the head of the duck. There are brains in its skull, and he, like any other Chinese boy, knows they are food and wants them. The cook sees him and knows. The duck brains are handed to the boy in the skull. The boy enjoys the delicacy known and delicious only to his people:

those thick lips

to such the meat of animals

or recite 300 poems of the T'ang;
these teeth to bite my monosyllables;
these cheekbones to make
those syllables sing the soul. (*The City* 81)

The lips that suck on the skull are the lips that recite the Tang poems. The duck brains are food as identity. The duck brains may mean to the Chinese what *Balut* (half-incubated duck eggs) means to the Philippines, *Pacha* (dry-roasted whole sheep head) to the Iraqi people, or Haggis to the Scots.

They are not mere food. They are edible identities. They are tickets to one's ethnicity through the lips. What comes through the lips of the boy and his people are the duck brains, the monosyllables of the Chinese language, and the Tang poems. Savoring the duck brains is more than a personal preference or an event of connoisseurship. It is an "episode that helps to underwrite the ethnic credibility of the speaker through illustrating his familiarity with, and indeed enthusiasm for, a decidedly 'exotic' Chinese delicacy." The duck brains are directly associated with "the significance of ethnic identity itself as an abiding concern throughout 'The Cleaving' as a whole" (Yao 169). The act of eating can lead to membership in a community or to ethnic excommunication.

The duck brains as a food object is a very intense sign. Particular food choices are formed and allowed only under particular circumstances in particular history. (Food choice is another field of study. For compact information see Rozin 29.). The food object therefore means more than a food object. The butchering scene is therefore amoral, and the "appetite signaled by the relish for 'ethnic' food such as duck brains" is "not a negative marker of problematic difference from dominant American norms and gustatory habits" (Yao 169). The food object of ethnicity defies categorization. It is materialized and sensuous as a food object and yet it is

dematerialized and ideological as an identity. This common phenomenon is why food discourse is always based on the previous approaches of food cultural studies and anthropological studies of food. It is also why the literature review of this dissertation, even though there has not yet been a field of study by the name of food poetics, has had to start from food culture and anthropology. Human cultures invest more in food than feeding functionality. Food objects reveal multi-faceted human cultures. Food functions as identity and sometimes as power and more. When food is too human to be contained in a convenient definition, we always have to go back to anthropology. The following theme is yet another example.

"I eat my man."

When the little boy in "The Cleaving" takes the duck's head from the cook and eats, the boy makes an abrupt statement:

> I take it gingerly between my fingers
> And suck it down.
> I eat my man. (*The City* 80)

This is a scene of savoring a food native to your people, but the boy turns it into an idea of endocannibalism or familial cannibalism,[32] namely in-tribe or in-family cannibalism. The reason why the boy identifies the duck brains in the skull with his own kind is understandable, for the Chinese delicacy stands for a Chinese identity. But why does he identify the eating of duck brains with the eating of his people? How does such identification make sense? Why does a little boy think he is practicing endocannibalism?

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[32] Endocannibalism is comparatively common. It is used interchangeably by Beth A. Conklin with mortuary cannibalism, and funerary cannibalism (xxiv). Familial cannibalism is used mainly by Julia M. Wright alone (79 onward).

Julia M. Wright, in her unique perspective, proposes that cannibalism in literature usually reflects crisis:

> …such cannibalism [familial cannibalism] emerges, whether literally or figuratively, in the context of a crisis over property. …Jonathan Swift, whose "Modest Proposal" uses cannibalism to figure the economic violence of colonialism and so expose its concealed physical violence. (80)

This observation of cannibalism reflecting economic crisis hardly makes sense in the case of "The Cleaving." Wright is making a comment out of her literary research including "Modest Proposal," which supports her understanding of cannibalism in a particular case. Besides Wright, other scholars point in the same direction.

Anthropologist David Ezzo records in his research:

> In cases where endo-cannibalism was found, cannibalism was practiced as a sign of affection for loved ones (usually for the closest kin). Among those cultures that did practice endo-cannibalism, it was a commonly held belief that it was much better for a person to be eaten by his relatives than for a person's body to be allowed to "waste away and decompose." (3)

It makes sense then if endocannibalism is practiced through the identification of ethnicity and by affection. It is a means to stop further suffering inflicted on the body of the loved one. If the boy in the poem is practicing it for the same reason, he must have sensed a certain pain or affliction upon his people.

Later in the poem, after his eating of the duck brains, the little boy seems ready to consume and digest all deaths he encounters:

> The death at the sinks, those bodies prepared
> For eating, I would eat,
> And the standing deaths
> At the counters, in the aisles,

The walking deaths in the streets,

The death far-from-home, the death-

In-a-strange-land, these Chinatown

Deaths, these American deaths.

I would devour this race to sing it,…(*The City* 83)

Yes, there are pain and affliction. There are all kinds of deaths: animal death at the sinks, laboring deaths at the counters and in the aisle, wandering deaths in the streets, homesick deaths, deaths in exile, deaths confined in ghettos, deaths chasing dreams…all deaths are food to the boy and all sufferers are food to the boy. The entire suffering race is food to him. He is practicing endocannibalism out of love.

Richard Sugg's statement may further explain the endocannibalism of the boy:

> …this was a vital form of bereavement therapy. For all its spectacular violence, even the aggressive cannibalism … was at bottom highly ritualized—an essentially religious practice shaped by ideas of honour, courage, and social harmony. (15)

We find here an astonishing fact about endocannibalism: it is a form of bereavement therapy. Although Sugg's point of view is a point of view of the living, the idea of longing to be among your suffering kinsmen makes sense in the case of the boy who watches his people dying in different ways and in various places. If he becomes part of his suffering community, or he contains and feels his familial deaths within him, the pain imposed on his people may be eased somehow.

For the points of view of both the dead and the living, Beth Conklin asserts that there are three reasons for the practice of endocannibalism: compassion for the deceased, desire to save the corpse, and to lessen mourner's grief (xxix). For a boy aware of his identity and his people's suffering, his endocannibalism is done through

the ritual act of consuming the duck brains.[33] It is a ritual performed in compassion for the deceased or the dying. For a boy who is aware that the way his culture prepares food is similar to the way a foreign culture prepares his people for sacrifice, his endocannibalism is performed to save their deaths from sight and to save their dignity. By showing his compassion for the dead and saving dignity for the dead, the boy lessens his own grief as a mourner over his people through endocannibalism. He eats his people, in a good cause.

The last section leads us from the discussion of the duck brains as an exclusive delicacy to the practice of endocannibalism in anthropology as well as in poetics. Although there is a way to read into endocannibalism first as a ritual sign, a sign of love, a sensuous sign—a freely traveling sign that aspires to be a sign of art and transcend all materiality and pain, it is important to be aware of the anthropological level of food poetics. Thanks to the last discussion, we come back to where we started. As literature reflects human life at an aesthetic distance, anthropology suggests literary interpretation on a materialized basis. It is between aesthetics and materiality, poetics and food, that food poetics shall rest anchored.

[33] There is one coincidence shared between the actual endocannibalism and the literary endocannibalism here. In the Amazonian pattern of endocannibalism, only "small bits of flesh from specific body parts" are consumed. It is a symbolic act. See Conklin (2004) 2.

Conclusion

From **Chapter Three to Chapter Five**, food poetics is applied to three separate poets: Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Li-Young Lee. In each we find different characteristics of prosody and different representation of food objects. To each we adopt various approaches in interpretation, including the distancing-channeling (food-as-thing) interpretation, the four signs (food-as-sign) interpretation, and the three syntheses of time (food-as-time) interpretation. From each we receive different interpretative effects and persistent challenges. On some occasions, when poems tend to deny the reader any sensible meaning, we find that food interpretation depends heavily on food poetics. On other occasions, we find similar dependence on food poetics for interpretation, but the interpretation suggests possibilities rather than definitive references. At still other times, we can rely on food poetics less for basic interpretation than for clarifying transitions of time, reshapings of identity, and changes of mood.

Every poet presents a different universe. These three poets often reconfirm such an observation. Their characteristics cause differences as to how food poetics functions in interpretating their works. There are times of interpretative consistency and there are times of interpretative resistance. Each needs a separate critical perspective, and each needs a separate inductive approach. We will now recapitulate the three poets in our conclusion.

Wallace Stevens is among the most enigmatic poets. His famous, well-loved, and yet inscrutable poems often deny interpretation. In **Chapter Three**, we call that “an inevitable embarrassment” for his readers and scholars. Some of the most inscrutable poems happen to be his food poems. We make attempts at interpretation of some really challenging ones, because a theory of poetics applicable to Stevens seems more likely to be applicable to all others as well. The intention behind interpreting Stevens’

poems is to demonstrate the success of food poetics. If food poetics can help extract sensible meanings from poems by Wallace Stevens, it then achieves something other systems of poetics very often fail to do.

Scholars of Wallace Stevens often turn to two recourses: Stevens' letters and his contemporary social background. They turn to his letters for anecdotes that inspire poems and for explanations of expressions offered by Stevens himself. By this recourse to his letters, the afterlife of his poems is often murdered and the aesthetic scope of his art is often circumscribed. Their second recourse is Stevens' contemporary social background. In order to interpret his poems or to find a way to fit their interpretation into his poems, they focus on some details of the society of his time for sometimes dubious explanations. However, biographical interpretation ends up doing the same thing that records of personal correspondence do, and lands off the mark even more often. When necessary, we resort to food culture and previous anthropological methods to seek a common or typical response to food proved by history, i.e. the so-called foodways. But most of the time, we rely on the system of food poetics to obtain more specific interpretation through a critical approach.

From his enigmatic and enticing food we pick "*le pain*" and "the bitter aspic" from "Esthétique du Mal," "tea" and "bread" from "A Fading of the Sun," "cheese" and "the pineapple" from "Paisant Chronicle," and the notorious "chocolate" from "Sea Surface Full of Clouds." The cheese and the pineapple from "Paisant Chronicle" are not easy. In fact, it is unwise to speak of any of Stevens' food objects as easy. However, by comparison, the cheese and the pineapple appear more understandable than the rest.

These food objects are adopted for different moods on different occasions, but not all moods and occasions lie bare and crystal-clear to the reader. *Le pain*, or bread, is a hidden object for the human routine of lunch. In the context of "Esthétique du

Mal," the bread/pain becomes something that nourishes people and tortures people at the same time. In the bread, we see the how human beings survive on the nourishment of bread and the consciousness of pain. In the bitter aspic from the same poem, we see how feeble human beings are and how human beings keep inflicting ridiculousness upon their own lives.

In the ice cream from "The Emperor of Ice-Cream," we see the ice cream as three different things. We first see it as a complete sign by itself—it is the seemingly discordant sensuousness at a funeral, yet it is also a decent dessert prepared for the funeral reception. From this point of view, the ice cream is a sign of both sensuousness and rituality. We then see the ice cream as a combination of two signs—rigid ice and comforting cream. While focusing on the off-key nature of the enticing ice cream at a supposedly heart-rending funeral, we see the self-contradiction of social customs and human nature. We finally see the ice cream as a homophone in disguise—"I scream!"—a shout from a person who knows all the ridiculousness, self-contradiction, and factitious exaltation in the human condition.

In the tea and bread from "A Fading of the Sun," we see two opposite attitudes toward food taken by Stevens. Both attitudes are based on the same principle—food intake as the way the world treats people. The poet first places the blame for death on food, calling the tea and the bread "bad" because "the people die." In the description by the poet, the world seems to be an old but senile man that allows death and evil to happen. In the closing stanza, the poet shows his confidence and hope that the world will be old and wise enough one day when the tea and the bread are "good" and "sweet," with "wine" and "meat" coming along as well. In the tea and bread in this poem, we see Stevens using his food objects in a particular way that we find often in fairy tales but not in other poets. The result or the change of the human condition is caused by a certain intake like a magic potion.

The chocolate in “Sea Surface Full of Clouds” has its connotation intertwined with those of “umbrella” and “green.” These are the three recurrent elements in the poem that repeat themselves in a certain pattern. Through the reading offered by food poetics, we understand the chocolate as representative of the inner sensation of the complicated, bittersweet world. The umbrella, or the shadow (“umbra”), is the reflection of the human perception of the world. The green is the solid, materialized exteriority outside humans. For famously challenging poems like “The Emperor of Ice-Cream” and “Sea Surface Full of Clouds,” food poetics offers a sensible reading that previous approaches were denied.

In “Paisant Chronicle” the food objects, cheese and pineapple, come surprisingly with meanings accessible for the reader. They are signs of mediocrity that brings down the immortal image of a hero. With these two cheap and common, sometimes over-produced food objects, the poet reveals the fact that humanity invests its admiration on heroes who live on no better substances than ours.

The major difficulty in reading Stevens is that he often provides a multitude of objects rich in meaning. The number of objects and the possibilities of their meanings are overwhelmingly confusing and elusive. He is the most esoteric poet among our three. In addition, his diction is often based on paradox and the result is abrupt. “The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream,” “And in the morning summer hued the deck/ And made one think of rosy chocolate/ and gilt umbrellas” are both such examples.

We apply three approaches or subsystems of food poetics while dealing with interpretation of poetry, but different poets make different demands on the subsystems. With Wallace Stevens, we find the most effect approach is the distancing-channeling interpretation. For a lot of food objects that often escape the critical eye, we obtain fruitful interpretations by way of this approach. Vague interpretations and

generalizations based on his letters, for example that Stevens often chooses a word simply because he likes the sound, can finally be left on the shelf. The reading of the famously enigmatic line—"It was almost time for lunch. Pain is human"— is likewise fruitful. In short, the distancing-channeling approach seems best fit to read Stevens.

It is of course understandable that there is no perfect poetics. Food poetics, too, needs time to mature. Its contribution so far is to make a difference. In reading Stevens, we see concretely how it makes the difference. If a new poetics is feasible in theory but inapplicable in practice, it has no contribution to make. There is still difficulty in reading Stevens. This is because food poetics is still young, but it is also because poetry is enigmatic by nature, especially with Stevens and his "essential gaudiness of poetry" (*Letters* 263).

In **Chapter Four**, we examine another particular poet, William Carlos Williams. Like Stevens, Williams is a must for food poetics. If food poetics can be called successful only if it is competent to deal with Stevens, the esoteric poet, food poetics can be successful only when it is likewise competent to deal with Williams, the "sporadic" poet. By "sporadic," I mean two different aspects of the poet: (1) Williams is a influenced by Imagism and writes with as spare and focused images as possible. We often feel there are just a few things, left sporadically here and there. Hence everything seems detached and associations seem unavailable. (2) In comparison to other poets, Williams hardly mentions food in his poems. (In 30 years' time, he uses "cheese" once, "coffee" three times, making no mention of "steak" or "beef." See Chapter Four Note 22). But if being comprehensive and capable is the basic requirement a sound system of poetics must meet, food poetics must be competent to deal with Williams.

From his sporadic and meager food we pick "plums" from "This Is Just to Say" and "To A Poor Woman," "potatoes" from "The Mind's Games" with slight

mentioning of “Death,” “breakfast” (with food objects conveying biting or rough sensations: “grapefruit,” “coffee,” “toast”) from “A Goodnight,” and “the orange” from “Berket and the Stars.” In a separate table, we mention other orange poems including “Sicilian Emigrant’s Song,” “*Della Primavera Transportata Al Morale*,” “Item,” and “A Celebration.”

The plums we see in “This Is Just to Say” are a converted sign. They were first intended for breakfast, a routine and worldly sign, but it has actually been stolen as in a treasure hunt to feast the stealer’s sensation. The plums become a sensuous sign. They also suggest another topic concerning spatiality. The stealing of the plums becomes a spatial concern. It is the removal of the in-icebox belonging and the displacement of an in-me (the persona/the stealer) belonging. By reading food as a sign, we understand the plums bear with them what the persona sees[or seeks?] in the absent third person (the owner of the plums), his possible lover. The intake of the plums means to him a consummation.

The paper bag of plums we see in “To A Poor Old Woman” are a sensuous sign from the very beginning. During the repetition of “They taste good to her,” human agency disappears and food agency appears instead. It seems the plums are guiding the old woman to a joyous walk instead of the woman walking and eating. The plums include her in their ambience of sweet joy. They are a solace to the old woman, possibly a garbage scavenger, and they are a solace to all who see the old woman enjoy them. The plums are a sensuous sign and a materialized redemption in a world of hunger.

Williams has a darkened view on the potato. In two of his poems, we see death. They are respectively “The Mind’s Games” and “Death.” For detailed interpretation, we focus on the former. The potato is used as a sign of decay to ridicule the over-simplified, over-optimistic worldview of Romanticism—“The world is too much

with us? Rot!/ the world is not half enough with us—….” Thus the potato is preceded by Wordsworth and followed by a bitter complaint about the world as a rotten potato. The rotten potato, as a sign of ridicule, is limned in the poem with emphasis on its skin that hides decay, on its failed function to feed people, and on its similarity to Romanticism, which ignores hunger and advertises Beauty.

The breakfast scene in “A Goodnight” is not as comforting as the sensuous plums nor as bitter as the rotten potato. This is because the breakfast and the objects for breakfast are worldly signs instead of sensuous signs. “A Goodnight” is an anti-lullaby, a lullaby that keeps people anxious and wide-awake. Each time a cry of “Go to bed” is heard, anxiety increases. The poem depicts the restlessness of the world and the anxiety such restlessness entails. The grapefruit, coffee, and toast in the breakfast scene nearing the end are all food objects hard on the taste. They serve mere functionality, not enjoyment. However, in comparison with the restless world in a mess, they appear in order. They appear to be the only thing regular and reliable in the mundane world. The world is so depicted by the poet that a mundane breakfast seems a redemption to restore a slight sense of order. In the poem, we see for the first time worldly signs exceed their assigned function to calm people down.

In all, there are five orange poems in the table in Chapter Four. Each has its own association. In “Sicilian Emigrant’s Song,” the orange is associated with a lady named Donna. In “*Della Primavera Transportata Al Morale*,” the orange is associated with comfort in a devastated world. In “Item,” it is associated with war. In “A Celebration,” it is associated with two lovers enjoying themselves, and in “Berket and the Stars,” the orange is an obscure sign. We therefore focus on “Berket and the Stars” for detailed interpretation.

All characters associated with the orange poems are quite feminine, but Berket is a boy’s name. All femininity associated with the orange fits interpretation of every

other poem, but Berket is a boy's name. In "Berket and the Stars," we see that the orange, if not a sign of femininity, is a least a sign of enjoyable sensuality. In this poem the orange is a sign of secret enjoyment, an enjoyment known to the family and a secret kept by three generation. One peculiar thing about the title of the poem is that "the stars" never show. We understand the stars as we understand the orange—both are to be kept away. As the stars promise no possible physical contact, the orange promises no visual contact in the Berket family. Both deny the reader accessibility. Our interpretation does not go any further from here. We stop at the orange as a sensual enjoyment, as a find in college days, as a secret kept by the family, and as an association of femininity. All these have Berket, the boy, involved in them.

The approach we rely most heavily on in reading Williams is the food-as-sign approach, which makes use of the four Deleuzean signs—worldly signs, signs of love, sensuous signs, and signs of art. The reason for the adoption of this approach is that in Williams' poems, there are hardly obvious corresponding objects or relations between objects that we can base our interpretation upon. The food-as-sign system can operate alone in a literary context without corresponding relations available to the reader. It fits the sporadic poet well.

The application of food poetics to Williams makes its contribution to interpretation in that we seldom come back empty-handed. When we try to enter a world constituted by poems like "The Red Wheelbarrow" or "This Is Just to Say," we oftentimes feel confused by the few isolated objects and blurred background. By making judgment of an object and seeing how it turns from one sign to another, we come to see its function in the poem and its possible meaning. In the case of Williams, food poetics too makes a difference.

In **Chapter Four**, a particular section is devoted to the distinction between Stevens' "not ideas about the thing but the thing itself" and Williams' "no ideas but in

things." They are understood as emphasis on the object itself and as emphasis on the meaning materialized. Although their wordings are similar, their emphases are not at all. The intention is not to dwell on their poetics and ignore food poetics, but to understand their separate emphasis of poetic concerns as a point of departure.

In **Chapter Five**, after the esoteric Wallace Stevens and the sporadic William Carlos Williams, we take up the diasporic Li-Young Lee. The reading of Lee does not focus on his diaspora, but his diaspora comes with his poetry. Therefore John Peters is quoted to draw a distinction between diaspora and exile, lest misguided attention rests upon the suffering of exile instead of the sense of community of diaspora. It is important to point out that Lee's poems tend to constitute a particular space out of reality, making his culture and family accessible. There is hardly pain and suffering in that space (except for "The Cleaving"). There is almost always warmth and family love. The idea of any over-emphasized exile theme or diasporic longing does not serve the purpose of reading into Lee's theme of family affection.

Lee's food objects are very particular in three aspects: (1) They are always ethnic food, and are therefore also associated with his family, Chinese culture, and Chinese communities. (2) His food objects, from the very beginning of their appearance in the poems, are rich in meaning and therefore really demanding on the reader for explanation. It is their sensuous or material traits that give them away. It is the change of meaning we need to pay attention to. The meaning of an object may change from time to time or from space to space. (3) By focusing on the food object and Lee's description, we are often brought into the world of the poem with a sense of virtuality. Lee uses a special kind of language—the language of silence—to achieve this poetic effect. A space is created by setting apart a place in time, i.e., a space frozen in time. That also explains why characters in Lee's poems hardly speak or make noise.

Food objects we pick from the Asian-American poet are "persimmons" from

"Persimmons," "the Winter Vegetable" from "Early in the Morning," "rice" from "Eating Along" and "Eating Together." In addition, we read "The Cleaving," not for specific food objects in the poem but for two specific themes in Lee's poetry—exotic food as identity and eating as consumption of grief. In his poem "The Cleaving," these two themes are vividly presented: the first is brought up by duck brains and the second by endocannibalism, the statement of "I eat my man."

Lee's food signs are usually traveling signs. They are not static and contented with one fixed meaning. The persimmon too has its manifold meaning. It is sometimes a worldly sign in class for the pupil to learn, sometimes a sensuous sign to enjoy, another time sex, another time love, and finally a loss of love—the loss of his beloved father. The meaning of the persimmon changes along with the lapses of time it takes us through. We normally might not notice, because Lee's language of silence is based on word economy and daily conversation. He seldom allows his characters to "tell." Instead, he allows them to "show." During transition of movements or time, a symbolic stroke of Chinese calligraphy often shows up to rid the visual contact of its sense of time (e.g.: "Persimmons" and "Early in the Morning").

This is the major difficulty of reading Lee's poems. His food objects travel freely as different signs in different times. For this reason, we introduce the third approach of food poetics, the food-as-time approach. Food objects are still understood as one of the four signs, but with the understanding that signs may transform between categories. The three syntheses of time as specified by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* are added to the discussion of food objects. The first synthesis of time is the synthesis of habit and the living present. The second is the synthesis of memory and the pure past. The third is the synthesis of the New[34] and the future. Thus we can

[34] The New is coined by James Williams for the third synthesis of time, while the event is asserted by Ronald Bogue. Deleuze himself is very vague on this. He seems to lose his thread during discussion. In

trace his food signs in time.

Our approach in this case runs on a combined system of three subsystems: the sign system, the time system, and the language system. Lee's food object usually first shows up as a sensuous sign, and then it starts to travel. The sign will travel to a point where memory is constituted, and that is where a sensuous sign enters the second synthesis of memory (think of it as a worm hole where the two systems communicate as if through a hub). The memory will be carved out and saved in Lee's language of silence and his aesthetics is thereby achieved.

The application of this cross-referent approach of time and space is easy, but the principles are complicated. In Chapter Five, each step of the establishment of this system is explained in detail and in a solid mathematic-like manner. When a major procedure is explained, it is oftentimes bold-faced before we move on to the next step. Logical reasoning and Deleuzean principles are observed to make sure the system is watertight. This recapitulation is especially important to the reading of the Winter Vegetable and is therefore subsumed under the section in Chapter Five between "Persimmons" and "Rice."

The Winter Vegetable is known almost only in Chinese communities. It is a pickled cabbage that looks somehow like sauerkraut. It stays good for years. The Winter Vegetable transforms itself from a worldly sign for breakfast into a sensuous sign in the kitchen, salted and sliced by the mother. It traces off and we follow the mother to her bedroom where she readies herself for a day's beginning. The reader comes to a realization of the title when the poet says that while his mother is combing her hair, his father enjoys watching. This they have done for half a century. The Winter Vegetable suddenly cuts in from the breakfast table and then it becomes clear

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the end, he did not summarize the third synthesis with a single word the way he did the previous two. See Chapter Two Note 17.

that out of the space set apart in time, what endures through the years is not just the Winter Vegetable, but the love between his parents, and the love he feels in his family.

The rice we see in “Eating Alone” and “Eating Together” is another stress on Lee’s use of silence and plainness as poetic language. The plainness of the rice is understood as the silence in language. Lee uses it in both poems to mellow down the seemingly boisterous scene and the bitterness of bereavement. The white rice helps the poet and the family feel the absent presence of the father, and helps the reader realize that behind the family meal lies a funeral. The white rice is always introduced into the poem at the right moment before a silent yet significant understanding. The rice is the language of silence in the world of sensuous signs.

The last two themes of Lee lead us back to the conventional track of food culture and foodways, the anthropological studies of food. “The Cleaving” is always a popular poem among diaspora and Asian-American scholars. The cleaving act visible in a Chinese (most likely Cantonese) restaurant is ethnic. The heads and torsos on the hooks are ethnic. The butchering scene that makes the mouth water is ethnic. They are exclusive. People outside Chinese communities find them repulsive, but the boy in the poem is attracted by the scene and eventually finds the duck brains a delicacy. By this, we are reminded why this dissertation in the first place values and dedicates its literature review to the old notion of foodways. Food as identity has always been a research subject in anthropology.

Another follow-up anthropological research subject is also brought up by the poem “The Cleaving”—endocannibalism, or familial cannibalism. In this poem, the boy makes an announcement when he eats the duck brains—“I eat my man.” For the interpretation of this line and related concepts in the context, we again resort to anthropology. This is the margin of food discourse. It is cannibalism, and it is kinsman-eating cannibalism.

Researches by David Ezzo, Ricard Sugg, and Beth Conklin all point to the same conclusion: endocannibalism (with endo-, or inside, meaning inside the family, tribe, or race) is highly ritualized as an act of affection, in order to protect the body of the dead and to relieve the grief of the mourner, in the form of physical reunion and internalization through consumption. This anthropological stance helps us realize why the boy sees his people labor, suffer, and die in a foreign land and wishes to eat every sufferer of his race. Eating becomes a ritual to lessen pain and share death.

Although we make use of different approaches in reading different poets, the basic principles of food agency, food intensity, and memory mechanism remain the same. In practice, we find the distancing-channeling approach best serves abundant food objects in the poem with numerous related objects. The distancing process recognizes that the perceived environment is a constituted phenomenon. The channeling process extracts from the constituted space corresponding relations by sensing messages channeled and shared in. By the two processes, meanings of things are produced. That is to say, memory is produced. This is the way we read Stevens

Recognizing a food object as one of the four Deleuzean signs, we will have a first foothold on solid interpretative ground: a worldly sign stands for a habit, a ritual, or a routine. A sign of love stands for confusion, effort, or jealousy. A sensuous sign is a promise of meaning because it triggers the process of joy → obligation → meaning. A sign of art stands for art, newness, and all dematerialized meanings. This is how we read Williams.

Upon the system of signs, we add a temporal dimension and find them integrated seamlessly: worldly signs find their temporal dimension in the first synthesis of the living present, signs of love find their temporal dimension in the second synthesis of love and memory (Eros-Mnemosyne synthesis). Likewise, sensuous signs find their temporal dimension in the second synthesis of love and memory and coexist with

signs of love. Signs of art find their temporal dimension in the third synthesis of the New to create dematerialized meaning and to achieve dematerialized newness. This is how we read Li-Young Lee. His ethnicity also encourages us to resort to anthropology from time to time.

Starting from an object-oriented point of view, focusing on the materiality of humanity, and establishing a new poetics that demonstrably works in reading poems for new interpretations, food poetics has now only taken its first steps. In time, hopefully it will do much more.

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