
Simple Symbols Indicate Index to Diverse Cultures

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Abstract – Advanced English constitutes the key course among all others for English majors inside China. It features classic works with a large vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and profound themes. Therefore, it is designed to comprehend the full meaning, style, and taste of the original text. If we take a whole view of these two books, the number of texts with symbolism amounts to a certain proportion (1/6), that is, (1) *Everyday Use*; (2) *Three Cups of Tea*; (3) *The Way to Rainy Mountain*; (4) *No Signpost in the Sea (Book I)*; and (5) *The Loons (Book II)*. Seemingly scattered and separated, these essays have one thing in common: symbolism. They all employ ultimate symbolism to highlight cultural messages and emphasize themes of each story. Consequently, this thesis attempts to detail the use of symbolism and its profound meaning in each text; further illustrate relative cultural messages delivered by authors and enhance these exotic cultural awareness in matters of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords – *Everyday Use*, *Three Cups of Tea*, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *No Signpost in the Sea*, *The Loons*.

I. INTRODUCTION

When refers to symbolism, someone may think it's one of the most often-used writing skills in English. It usually characterizes symbols, hints and metaphors. “Symbolists believed that art should aim to capture more absolute truths which could only be accessed by indirect methods. Thus, they wrote in a highly metaphorical and suggestive manner, endowing particular images or objects with symbolic meaning. In this art, scenes from nature, human activities, and all other real world phenomena will not be described for their own sake; here, they are perceptible surfaces created to represent their esoteric affinities with the primordial ideals.” Symbolism (art) Commentator Nan Fan also said^[13]: “symbol is a specific image to express or hint some ideas, philosophies and emotions.” As a matter of fact, all these things exist in the real world, and the depiction of them is nothing less than creation but its mere imitation and recreation^[7]. Literature, as a form of art, its value lies in its creation and the manifestation of a certain mindset. In addition, literary symbolism, in the way of its expression, lays great emphasis on hints, and reflects its motifs through the rich connotations of characters and events in the text. Besides, hints cannot do without the strong, expressive and powerful signals. This thesis attempts to delineate and detect the rich, colorful and significant symbolism expressive of these five selected works. Consequently, it is a compact recreation and appreciation of the selected works in question.

1. *Everyday Use: Actually a Family Gathering Marred by Unpleasant Dividing of Familial Heritage*

As one of the masterpieces of Alice Walker, *Everyday Use* is considered to be the natural outcome of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s of the US. This excerpt takes the first point of view and revolves around the diverse attitudes of three characters towards their family heritage. In this text, Mrs Johnson, the owner of the heritage, all of a sudden, comes to realize that inheriting the Black's cultural heritage does not lie in the glamorous and false appearance, but instead, in the deep and profound appreciation and cherishing of them, and in addition, passes them down from generation to generation.

A. Mrs Johnson, the Narrator and Mother in the Novel, is the Inheritor and Protector of the Black Culture.

At the beginning, she impresses the readers with being a large, big-boned, strong as a bull, manlike-working but uneducated regular black woman. Although she lives in the civilized white society, she is born being timid, and never dare to look at the white folks directly in the eye; her temperament is straight-forward and dumb as soup, she turns away right at the sight of them. However, she masters exquisite workmanship of traditional ethnic culture and harbors a unique and special understanding of them so much so that she has a certain complex towards them and goes all out to positively protect and defend against them. Dee, the elder daughter, sends a letter to them saying that she misses them terribly as an adult. Nevertheless, she also goes on to say that she would tear this house into pieces for the sake of its being like the burned house in which they once lived before. This makes the mother very uneasy. She takes great pride in Dee's beautiful looks and her remarkable achievements. Simultaneously, she feels helpless and disappointing and could do nothing about her indifference, bully and mercilessness toward them, to say nothing of the Black's cultural heritage. Despite her active participation in the Civil Rights Movement, her understanding of the Black's heritage remains rather shallow, superficial and frivolous; therefore, it's a bit of a thing to say she is somewhat like being a treasure in appearance but foul inside. And her disdain and contempt for her younger sister and her mother stays even more obvious. This family reunion ends up abruptly in an unpleasant, if not complete, breakup. After dinner, she simply “snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands and dumped into Maggie's lap ^{[4] 144}” in order that these two quilts can serve as her dowry as arranged, which clearly indicates Mrs Johnson's strong will, determination and responsibility, as the defender of the property. It also manifests her determination to defend Maggie - the weak side - as well as the traditional rural life style of the average Blacks in the south. This is in stark contrast to the urban life style of Dee's: beautiful, intelligent, and fashionable.

B. Dee, the Elder Daughter, also the “Avant-Garde” of the Black Cultural Movement, is nothing but a Blind Fetishist.

One of a kind and a bit lighter in skin, “with nicer hair and a fuller figure ^{[4]135}”, Dee bears herself civilly, with an elegant style of conversation, a graceful disposition and a meaningful inner world, but she is sometimes mean and has “scalding humor that erupted like bubbles in lye ^{[4]137}.” She demonstrates a rather superficial understanding towards Black's heritage. She naively thinks that, to achieve ethnic independence, all the Blacks need to do is to get a brand-new name; dress in the old Black's costumes and use the furniture featuring Black cultural heritage. However, she doesn't know even a bit about the connotations of her name. It is said that her name derives from eastern Africa; while the long gown belongs to West African style. This manner suggests nothing but her self-contradiction and being neither fish nor fowl. Meanwhile, this exposes her blind worship, following the general trend in like manner. When the Civil Rights Movement comes to rise, it suddenly dawns on her that what she used to despise now turns out to be priceless treasures with rich and colorful ethnic heritage. Therefore, this time when she comes back home, she will surely take those precious things away with her.

As a matter of fact, being a failure in the Civil Rights Movement, Dee conforms to the current, so she does not have a clear view of this movement. She proves nothing but the marginalized being sandwiched between the Black and the White: dressed like an African and named a brand-new name, in addition, using the daily utensils of the Blacks. If all these mean that she would touch the root of the Blacks, she would be totally wrong and in fact just proved otherwise: rootless. Instead, what she needs to focus on is the essence of the Black culture whi-

-ch symbolizes their unity, family friendship and sisterhood hidden behind these quilts.

C. *Maggie, the Little Daughter, Comes to become the real Inheritor of Black Culture Heritage.*

In the eyes of her mother, Maggie cannot be compared with Dee in the same breath both in terms of look and intelligence. She is born timid, especially after the conflagration, her skin is scarred all over, and looks stinkingly horny to the eye, and just as uneducated as her mother. However, praiseworthy for her golden heart and excellent conduct, she has such a remarkable memory that she is being humiliated and mocked as being like an elephant: “Maggie's brain is like an elephant's ^{[4]141}.” She is also magnanimous and generous and very tolerant of her sister's rudeness and bullying behavior. She cherishes these daily utensils, and of course knows how to sew them if need be, and deeply respects them and accompanys them day and night. They give her immense delight and incomparable joy. She stands aloof from worldly strife and learns to accept her sister's overbearing style as God's will. When Dee wants to take away the quilts, she simply said “She can have them, Mama.” “I can remember Grandma Dee without the quilts ^{[4]143}.” This deeply touches her mother's heart, so she comes to realize that Maggie is the real one who can have these utensils of the house, let alone, become the real inheritor of heritage.

D. *The Symbolic Meaning of Everyday Use*

In this excerpt, *Everyday Use* covers these utensils actually - some benches, churn top, dasher and two hand-stitched quilts. One may wonder what to do with them? First, to Dee, who is fond of being in the swim, they symbolize the Blacks' cultural heritage, therefore, priceless. But she considers that both her mother and sister could not see their significance and only use them daily till they are worn out. So it can be said that they don't have the eye for appreciating these quilts. Consequently, they are unsuitable for possessing these treasures. It is only she who knows how to put these things into proper usage: and she will “think of something artistic to do with the dasher. ^{[4]141}” “What would you do with them?” “Hang them ^{[4]143}.” ; “I can use the churn top as a centerpiece for the alcove table ^{[4]141}”, etc. Quite the contrary, in the mind's-eye of Mrs Johnson and Maggie, these daily use signals the union of family, their sisterhood, and their friendship as well as familial heritage for the sake of their ancestral prints and stories, thereby, deserving their biggest prize and cherishment. In a word, the value of these utensils goes far beyond their aesthetics art and may become damaged while using them. Yet they know at their finger's tip how to quilt and how to mend them, turn trash into treasure and hand them down.

II. *Three Cups of Tea: Never forget why you Started, and your Mission can be Accomplished*

“If you want to thrive in Baltistan, you must respect our ways.” Haji Ali said, blowing on his bowl. “The first time you share tea with a Balti, you are a stranger. The second time you take tea, you are an honored guest. The third time you share a cup of tea, you become family, and for our family, we are prepared to do anything, even die ^{[4]171}.” On that day, Dr Greg Mortenson, the American Mountain-climber, learned the most important lesson in his life from Haji Ali - the village leader in Balti region, Pakistan.

In 1993, to honor his young sister Christa who suffered meningitis in childhood and died from a massive seizure, Mortenson joined an expedition to climb K2 (Qogir Feng, 8611 meters, and the world's 2nd highest, but the most difficult to climb) so as to place her necklace on its summit to commemorate her. But he got lost and exhausted and subsequently rescued by the remote and poor villagers in the Korphe. To repay their utmost generosity for his feeling appalled by the sight: “He was appalled to see eighty-two children, seventy-eight boys,

and the four girls who had the pluck to join them, kneeling on the frosty ground, in the open ^{[4]177}.” “I’m going to build you a school,” He said: “I promise.” To fulfill his promise, he started to raise funds in the US. This endeavor unknowingly and fundamentally transformed him and changed his direction in life. He launched and headed the non-profit organization Central Asia Institute (CAI for short). It is said that, by 2010, under the supervision and finance of this institute, more than 171 schools and other humanitarian projects beyond Pakistan, across the multitude of “Stans” that spilled across the unravelling routes of the Silk Road, have been set up, thereby enabled 64,000 to go to school, among whom 54,000 are girls ^[16].

A. *Teaching or Gaining?*

With regard to his management style, Nicholas D. Kristof, formerly a supporter, commented thus: “utterly disorganized.” And Jonathan Foreman, a British journalist, said in a 2008 *Daily Telegraph* story that “CAI’s success, in large part due to Mortenson’s use of intuition and that he always makes decisions at the last minute, and habitually late for meetings ^[16].” In the meantime, he was immensely transfixed by the beautiful landscape there: “The air had the fresh-scrubbed clarity that only comes with altitude. Beyond K2, the ice peaks of the inner Karakoran knifed relentlessly into a defenseless blue sky. A thousand feet below, Korphe, green with ripening barley fields, looked small and vulnerable, a life raft adrift on a sea of a stone ^{[4]170}.” In his journal (dated as 2014, 3/13), he remarks that “this is the world of glaciers and kurtosis. The incredible scenery not only brings shock to mountaineers but also amazed the artists.” and “To go all over the mountains of the world, it is difficult to find those who can match them ^[14].” In this numerous pilgrimage, what he gained far surpassed what he intended to teach them. He firmly practiced this doctrine of teaching and learning promote each other.

As a generation of the early 21st century, we are the so-called “aborigines of the internet age”, shouldn’t we must learn to listen to and gain from others? Just as an American professor puts it right: Chinese students are not good at thinking and expressing ideas, which is the essence of American education. Can’t we get some inspirations and illuminations from this?

B. *Condescending Attitude or Horizontal View*

As we all know, real equality means looking at each other rather seriously and sincerely and treating each other on equal footing. The US, as the world’s super hegemony, has always been a “good teacher” of promoting its systems and values across the globe. Such a perverse act has always been opposed by the rest of the world. The way of doing things that derives from this system is the “Snack Culture.” Just as Mortenson stated thus: “We Americans think you have to accomplish everything quickly. We are the country of thirty-minute power lunches and two-minute football drills. Our leaders thought their ‘shock and awe’ campaign could end the war in Iraq before it even started. Haji Ali taught me to share three cups of tea, to slow down and make building relationships as important as building projects. He taught me that I had more to learn from the people I work with than I could ever hope to teach them ^{[4]172}.” This is undoubtedly a loud slap in the face of the hegemony of the US government. What’s more, Mortenson explained his reasoning in a lecture delivered in Fairfield, Connecticut: “If you just fight terrorism, it’s based in fear. If you promote peace, it’s based in hope ^[16].” In fact, if we look at the problem in a different way, would it be otherwise? But American are simply Americans, what deeply imbedded in their brains is the notion that “I am the way!” It persists in its’ old ways all the time (no matter what others may say), do things on one’s own and indulge in self-admiration.

C. *Love Rolled into the Spring Tide of Building Stone Schools*

Ever since his sincere and serious promise, he began his difficult and tortuous adventure - “hope trip” of building schools for those mountaineers. He was to encounter considerable odds home and abroad. Back home, what awaited him was the departure of his girlfriend who could not bear the long separation with him as well as his loss of his job in the medical center. Fortunately, he met another girl named Tara who fully understood him and rendered him unreserved support, and struck up a friendship immediately, and later on, quickly got married. Abroad, he faced death threats from the Islamic mullah: “I will speak in the open, so you all can hear me.” “I have heard that an infidel has come to poison Muslim children, boys as well as girls, with his teachings”. “Allah forbids the education of girls. And I forbid the construction of this school ^{[4]174}”. And even kidnapped by the Taliban sympathizers and other daunting challenges. At the same time, he encountered American politicians, senators, and even Afghanistan president on a plane; besides these, he also met some drunk bandits, revered tribe chiefs, and those simple, hospitable, dedicated villagers. They were all like cartoon characters and heroic figures. After he became famous, he still shuttled frequently back and forth between the turbulent mountain areas of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United States. Starting with the first pot of gold donated to him by cancer industrialists, he kept on calling all to donate dollars, he even went all out to ask those school kids to give out their pocket money, thus dollars streamed into CAI. He resisted all kinds of pressures at home and abroad and walked on and on alone one person, because of a mere commitment, inadvertently opened a long and hard journey. As a result, schools sprang up from stones like mushrooms. What is the height and persistence of an impoverished person who meets a group of lovable people? In the Central Asian mountains, which are full of wars, cliffs and ravines, what unattainable heights he reached indeed! There is a Persian saying: “the darker the sky is, the more stars you can see.” One man transformed the whole world. He turned the myth and tale into reality and brought hope and promises to the kids in the remotest part of the world, particularly, those girl students.

D. *The True Meaning of Three Cups of Tea*

The selected part describes how the very first school was built. It also illustrates the meaning of *Three Cups of Tea*, i.e. the title of the book. It is generally believed that Westerners either tend to romanticize villages in Asia's remote areas as Shangri-las or are disgusted with their poverty and despise the local people as being primitive but do nothing about it. However, Mortenson acts otherwise. He treats them as true friends and learned an invaluable lesson by working with them. It is “important to listen and learn from the local communities served, rather than impose external evaluations or judgments of what is best from an outsider's perspective ^{[4]179}”. Accordingly, in essence, this true story reflects the mutual harmony between the East and the West culture, mutual prosperity and civilization, as well as the transposition thinking in cross-cultural communication. The perspective is novel and unique, giving the world a brand-new way and face to see the United States. Meanwhile, he also illuminates and inspires many people with lofty ideals to devote themselves to doing good deeds, and to mark their names on the scroll of fame in history.

III. *The Way to Rainy Mountain: A Prism that Illuminates the Traditional Oral Heritage of American Native Culture*

N. Scott Momaday (1934 - ?) is one of the most famous contemporary native writers. In his heritage, 1/8 is

Cherokee and 7/8 European American blends. He was born in 1934 in Lawton, Oklahoma. Since childhood, he was in close contact with Natives, Hispanic and Anglo children. Later on, after studying in a Virginian military academy, he attended the University of New Mexico (B.A. in politics) and Stanford (M.A. and Ph.D. in English). In addition to teaching and writing, he is also a distinguished painter. He received a Pulitzer for his *House Made of Down*. His other works include the book *The Way to Rainy Mountain (1969)*, *The Names: A Memoir (1976)*, *The Man Made of Words (1997)*, etc. In 2007, George W. Bush, the former US president, awarded him the National Medal of Arts.

A. The Unique Creation Story and World Outlook

In the lonely and ancient landmarks of the Kiowas - The Rainy Mountain, here was the worst weather, and the most loathsome and the most barren. While looking at the earth at sunrise, you would feel that it was almost out of proportion and you would certainly think that God created the world just from here with your imagination. Upon the ridges of the Black Hills, the Devil's Tower upthrust against the gray sky. It seems that the core of the earth had broken through its crust and the motion of the world began right here. Based on the origin myth, they entered the world through a mere hollow log. In a sense, their migration turned to be the fruit of an old prophecy. This is the creation story of the Native Americans and their unique world view of the scheme of things in the universe.

B. Harmony between the Heaven and Human Mythology

Bear is the primitive image among the Kiowas, and it is considered to be the most powerful and wonderful creature. Momaday once said that bear is the most wonderful creature: sensitive to human, adventurous, powerful, curious, and full of elements of confidence. His grandma also once uttered to him: “Eight children were there at play, seven sisters and their brother. Suddenly the boy was struck dumb; he trembled and began to run upon his hands and feet. His fingers became claws, and his body was covered with fur. Directly there was a bear where the boy had been. The sisters were terrified; they ran, and the bear after them. They came to the stump of a great tree, and the tree spoke to them. It bade them climb upon it, and as they did so, it began to rise into the air. The bear came to kill them, but they were just beyond its reach. It reared against the tree and scored the bark all around with its claws. The seven sisters were borne into the sky, and they become the stars of the Big Dipper ^{[4]251}”. Ever since this legend came into being, the Kiowas builds a special kinship with the night sky. However hard their life becomes, they found a way of living for themselves on the plain. Such imaginative thinking combined with the unique geographical features of their dwelling place endowed them lively and picturesque myth and above all constituted their spiritual pillar, just similar to our legend of “the Cowboy and the Weaving Girl” as well as “Chang'e Flying to the Moon”, and we cherish them so dear.

C. The True Meaning of the Sun Dance

Sun Dance refers to the religious ceremony they accepted while they moved to the east from the mountains and befriended by the Crows who give them the culture and religion of the Plains. Horses they acquired and thus their ancient nomadic spirit suddenly became free of ground. They also acquired Tai-me, which was the sacred Sun Dance doll and also their object and symbol of worship from that moment onward. On this point they were like other tribes that worship the Sun. In addition, they had courage, pride, and destiny, too. While enjoying the life on the Plains, they had already turned into lordly and dangerous warriors, thieves, hunters and pious priests

of the annual Sun Dances, unlike before when they could move almost from Canada to Mexico being warlike - their sacred responsibility which was out of habit, not out of survival. His grandma knew that in this course, her ancestors got recovered. In 1887, when the last Sun Dance was held, Buffalo was gone, and to fulfill the ceremony they hung a hide. And from then on, they were forbidden to hold this ceremony. It was not until quite recently that the Whites seemed to have discovered their conscience and permit the natives to do the ceremony. Story goes that they originated from a sunless world that is why they remain saints to worship the sun.

D. The Significance of the Image of the Cricket Living on the Moon

The moon always brings us nostalgia as well as homesickness, whereas the cricket symbolizes the untold suffering of existence by the Kiowas. In the meantime, it also signals death as well as the unavoidable sense of frustration in the process of seeking the meaning of death. “My line of vision was such that the creature filled the moon like a fossil. It had gone there, I thought, to live and die, for there, of all places, was its small definition made whole and eternal. A warm wind rose up and purred like the longing within me ^{[4]254} ”. In the writer's opinion, the author here deliberately visualizes the image of the cricket implanting on the bright moon, so riveting, so impressive, thus bring this prose into a full climax. Then one may wonder about the true significance of this lively illusion? Different readers will interpret it from diverse angles. Yet a commonly-held understanding is that it symbolizes the Kiowas' culture: seemingly insignificant, but it depends on how you approach it. And most important of all, from what dimension? No doubt, for the natives, just like the Easterners, place much emphasis on intuition and feelings, unlike the Whites, who stress reason and rational thinking, thereby unable to come up with such artistic conception and values it so much.

IV. No Signpost in the Sea: Indeed, there was no Signpost there but he has his Own Moral Compass and Romantic Bliss

“No Signpost in the Sea” is a 144-page-long novel by British novelist Victoria Mary Sackville-West (1892-1962). It relates to the sea journal of a bachelor named Edmund Carr who is an influential political leader. This excerpt deals with his brief encounter with the beauty named Laura, experiencing a romantic legend nearing the end of his life due to an acute health problem: freed from any pressure whatsoever; imbued with a lackadaisical life rhythms; engrossed with the shifting panorama of magnificent sea, sky seashores; infrequent calls of ports, and his growing knowledge of Laura, so on and so forth. All these made him acquire a strange kind of serenity and peace, besides his deeper increasing love with Laura. His ever-growing love made him dying for her. Although he clearly knows that she is beyond his reach. Just at this moment, a handsome, tall and unpredictable colonel come up to make a third. This act makes him feel somewhat sour in his heart and jealous, mean and depressed. No matter what, he finally concludes that he really enjoys this trip and sincerely hopes it would last forever. “Geographically, I do not care and scarcely know where I am There are no signpost in the sea ^{[4]303} ”. In a word, he feels temporarily leisurely and carefree.

A. Edmund Carr is an Unstable, Emotional type of Person who is Nearing the End of his Life but Still Suffers the Pain of Calf Love.

Thanks to his vacation, he remains haunted by the “hard news” of political figures all his life, meanwhile he misses all the soft and tender sides of life. Now he is going towards the end, and feeling somewhat not himself and a bit regrettable: “I observed with amusement how totally the concerns of the world, which once absorbed

me to the exclusion of all else except an occasional relaxation with poetry or music, have lost interest for me even to the extent of bored distaste. Doubtless some instinct impels me gluttonously to cram these the last weeks of my life with the gentler things I never had time for, releasing some suppressed inclination which in fact was always latent ^{[4]302} ”. What's more, "Dismissive as a Pharisee, ^{[4]302} ”. I disguise others and tend to be practical and strongly believe in progress. But "now see how I stand, as sentimental and sensitive as any old maid doing water colors of sunsets! I once flatters myself that I was an adult man; I now perceive that I am gloriously and adolescently silly. A new Clovis, loving what I have despised, and suffering from calf love into the bargain ^{[4]303} ”. Sometimes, he admires the moon and bathe himself in the swimming pool: “The young moon lies on her back tonight as is her habit in the tropics, and as I think, is suitable if not seemly for a virgin. Not a star but might not shoot down and accept the invitation to become her lover... I ... slip into the swimming pool and float, no longer what people believe me to be, a middle-aged journalist taking a holiday on an ocean-going liner, but a liberated being, bathed in mythological waters, an Endymion young and strong ... I am one with the night ... How my friends would laugh if they knew that I had come down to this! ... to enjoy this purification ... the pious feel cleansed on leaving the confessional after the solemnity of absolution ^{[4]303-30} ”. Other times, I let my mind play freely: “What I like best are the stern cliffs, with ranges of mountains soaring behind them, full of possibilities, peaks to be scaled only by the most daring. What plants of the high altitude grow unravished among the crags and valleys? So do I let my imagination play over the recesses of Laura's character, so austere in the fore ground but nurturing what treasures of tenderness, like delicate flowers, for the discovery of the venturesome ^{[4]304-305} ”. Still other times, he harbors mixed feelings: “Well, the islands. I divert myself by inventing the life upon them, and am amused to find my imagination always turning towards the idyllic. This is the new Edmund Carr with a vengeance. If we have seen a skiff sailing close in shore, I follow the fisherman as he beaches his craft in the little cove and gives a cry like a sea-bird to announce his coming. His woman meets him; they are young, and their skins of a golden-brown; she takes his catch from him. In their plaited hut there is nothing but health and love ^{[4]307} ”. So, it can be seen that although he is a bachelor, he thoroughly understands what it means for a man and a woman to be together, this enhances his yearning and longing for love with Laura. To sum up, he will not live without love. This fully reflects the mental torture and psychic suffering of being sacked between loving Laura but unable to love her. This makes readers come to realize the emotional depth of lovers and teaches them a deep and instructive lesson: “I explain myself badly, and it is not a sensation I could expect anyone save Laura to understand, but of such incommunicable quirks is the private mind made up ^{[4]307} ”.

B. *Laura is an Elegant and Attractive Woman of Noble Bearing and Well-Mannered Demeanor.*

The image of being slim and graceful, looking like lotus painting and dancing like a butterfly is the real reflection of her life, to be more exact. Firstly, her presence is outstanding and truly remarkable: “I can observe her without her knowing, and this gives me pleasure, for it is as in a moving picture that I can note the grace of her gestures, whether she raises a glass of wine to her lips or turns with a remark to one of her neighbour or makes a cigarette from her case with those slender fingers ^{[4]301-302} ”. Secondly, when it comes to her luxurious clothes, the author describes thus: “I have never had much of an eye for noticing the clothes of women, but I get the impression that Laura is always in grey and white by day, looking cool when other people are flushed and shiny in the tropical heat; in the evening she wears soft rich colors, dark red, olive green, midnight blue, always of the most supple flowing texture ^{[4]302} ”. This is the portrait of a rich lady for all readers. Thirdly, when

clumsily complimenting Laura, the author is laughed at, and is suggested to take to writing fashion articles instead of political leaders. This fully manifests that this lady is as chaste as Holy Maria, and stylish to the best possible degree, thereby making people feel itchy in heart and cannot help it. “Doubtless some instinct impels me gluttonously to cram these the last weeks of my life with the gentler things I never had time for, releasing some suppressed inclination which in fact was always latent. Or maybe Laura's unwitting influence has called it out ^{[4]302-303}”.

Another moving picture occurs when they appreciate the scene of unity between heaven and humans: sometimes, he and Laura lean against the handrail of the boat, and that is happiness. In the daytime, the sea appears to be rippled with white waves, other times, it looks like blue satin, and only when the ship passes by, there was ripples of blue marble. At dusk, looking up at the sky, he finds that the night sky seems to be darker than that of London, and the stars are much brighter accordingly: “The stars seemed little cuts in the black cover, through which a brilliant beyond was seen ^{[4]304}”. The most moving panorama comes the way they amuse themselves: looking at the gleam of greenlight when the sun descends over the horizon. This does not happen every day. Only when there is not a single cloud in the sky, and only on condition that the cloud seemed to gather along the path of the setting sun does it happen. “But we are as pleased as children when our game succeeds. Laura claps her hands. Only a second does it last, that streak of green light; we wait for it while the red ball, cut in half as though by knife, sinks to the daily doom... , and the sky a tender palette of pink and blue. But the green flash is our chief delight ^{[4]307-308}”. The following dialogue between them indicates their teasing of each other as well as their tender love felt for each other: “Creme de menthe,” says Laura. “Jade,” I say. “Emerald,” says Laura, “Jade is too opaque.” “Vicious viridian,” I say not to be outdone. “You always did lose yourself in the pleasure of words, Edmund. Say green as jealousy and be done with it.” “I have never known the meaning of jealousy ^{[4]308}”.

From above, it is very obvious that these two are very intimate and harmonious, even to the degree of devoting to each other when both are in humble circumstances. The more heated they argue, the more closer their relationship becomes. Obviously, the noble and fashionable Laura is much superior in differentiating color than him. Who cannot be moved by such nice and elegant beauty? Happiness is brimming with sweet sweetness. Who wants to give up? He would rather be drunk than wake up. “I want my fill of beauty before I go ^{[4]303}”. To a certain extent, this simply shows Laura's popularity and tolerance and resilience as well. She is stern and cold on the outside but nurtured somewhat tender and soft feelings inside her heart, simply put, an aloof and cold beauty.

C. Dalrymple is a Handsome, Pompous and Unpredictable Third Party.

The Colonel is a typical “This- killer- isn't -so- cold” man who is tall, easy-going and not so undesirable empire-builder. He always talks about world affairs and reads many of my essays before. He is often very polite and genteel and says with a pet phrase “Of course, it's not for me to suggest to you...”^{[4]302}. He is neither stupid nor ill-informed. He is a little inclined to the right in terms of politics. Yet I tend to feel like him.

The second time when the three persons together were talking about the weird Italian who stayed there watching the lighthouse for years and years and refused to leave. The Colonel: “How would you care for that man's job?” “I suppose he gets relieved every so often?” “On the contrary, he refuses to leave ... with a native woman for his only company ... still a few odd fish left in the world ^{[4]305}”. This kind of remarks made me

surprised and like him all the more. He is kind of a rough poet, and often told us some strange anecdotes. Consequently, “Laura likes him too. And although I prefer having her to myself I don't really resent it when he lounges up to make a third ^{[4]305-306}”.

D. *The Symbolic Meaning of Albatross*

While the three were talking among themselves, the well informed Colonel attempts to implant some knowledge about seabirds to us. He said very politely that one of the birds is not an albatross. For it is impossible to find it here in this part of the sea. The albatross appears to follow a ship only to a certain altitude and then it turns back because it knows clearly how far it should go and no further. From this the author admires how wise the albatross is and then he should get a lesson from this bird knowing "the latitude" he can permit himself to love Laura. He uses the albatross as a symbol to utter his own limitations; to express his helplessness and undoing for his life is too short and can be counted down. Just as the saying goes "Hate gains late, and divides blame." Upon seeing the beauty, he suddenly come to realize that most of his life has been spent in vain (for his inspiration feeds aspiration). He hopes very strongly that life would stay so forever, which also suggests the impassable blockade between himself and Laura.

V. *The Loons: the Symbol of the “In-between Subsistence” and Embarrassment of the Canadian Aborigines is Ultimately Exemplified*

Margaret Laurence (1926-1987) is a famous contemporary Canadian writer who started writing at a very early age. After her marriage, she spends eight years in Africa with her husband. It was during this time that she got to know how hard it was for the local people there to make a living and she showed deep concern over them and worried about them constantly. Then, this strongly suggested her to turn her attention to the natives there in her hometown in Canada. She figures out a fictional town named Manawaka in the Canadian Province of Manitoba, which is frequently used as a setting for all her novels. The town was based on Laurence's real-life home town of Neepawa. This story chronicles the life of Piquet Tonnerre and depicts the cultural and racial alienation felt by this Metis girl.

A. *Unhappy Childhood: “Bat Like” Characters Born in Cracks, She is an Autistic and Lonely, Indifferent and Arrogant, Dirty and Disgusting Tweener.*

Right from the start, the story was told by old grandmother. As a member of the Metis (half-breeds between the Indian and Anglos), Piguette was the mixture of Indians and French. “Among themselves they spoke a patois that was neither Cree nor French. Their English was broken and full of obscenities.”... “They were, as my Grandmother Macleod would have put it, neither flesh, fowl, nor good slat herring ^{[5]186}”. i.e. “bat-like figure”. She was older than Vanessa, failed several grades, attended classes sporadically. So she has a negligible interest in schoolwork for the reason of tuberculosis of the bone, and hospitalized for several months. Vanessa's father-Piguette's doctor-revealed all this to her. She thought of Piguette as a vaguely embarrassing, hoarse-voiced, clumsily limping, with her grimy cotton dresses being too long. She lived and moved somewhere within my scope of vision but not actually noticed her very much until the summer when she was 11. Piguette's mother left the house, so she had to cook for the house at the age of 13. Consequently, how could she take good care of herself? Under such circumstances, Vanessa's father proposed to take Piguette with them for summer break in the cottage of Diamond Lake so that she can recover quickly. But, Vanessa's mother claimed that “I bet anything

she had nits in her hair ^{[5]187-188}. In the kingdom of lakeside, Vanessa tried many times in vain to invite her and play with her. Nevertheless, she was always rebuffed. As the following dialogue manifests crystal clear the minds of these two characters: “Want to come and play?” “I ain't a kid,” “Do you like this place?” “So what?” “Do you want to come for a walk?” “Your dad said I ain't supposed to do no more walking than I got to.” After Vanessa's feelings were hurt, she didn't get discouraged and simply carried on, and come straight to the point: “I bet you know a lot about the woods and all that, eh?” “I don't know what in hell you're talkin' about” “You nuts or somethin'? If you mean where my old man, and me and all them live, you better shout up, by Jesus, you hear?” She had a kind of dogged perseverance and ignored her rebuff. “You know something, Piguette? There's loons on this lake...” “Who gives a good goddamn!” “You should have come along,”... in fact I was glad she had not. “Not me”, “You wouldn't catch me walkin' way down therejus' for a bunch of squawkin' birds ^{[5]189-193}”.

Obviously, through these dialogues, Vanessa's wish to please Piguette and her desire to know the myth and legends of Indians fall flat. They were “neither friendly nor unfriendly ^{[5]187}”. But all through that summer, Piguette remained as both a reproach and a mystery to Vanessa. This, if seen from another perspective, reveals Piguette's cold, insular and smelly features. What a poor marginalized creature!

B. *Her Fleeting Adolescence: Impulsive, Lost and Altogether Different.*

Four years later, Vanessa met the 17-year old Piguette who looked about 20 years of age. Her drastic change really surprised Vanessa: her face was so stolid and expressionless before but now become animated with a violent gaiety. Besides, she talked and laughed wildly with boys around her. Her dressing was very fashionable with lipsticks bright carmine and her hair cut short and frizzily permed. She had never been pretty and her features heavy and blunt. Yet her dark and slightly slanted eyes were beautiful, her skin-tight skirt and orange sweater displayed her soft and slender body to an enviable advantage. In addition, her lame was almost gone. She wore a harsh over sweetness of perfume. And it is she who took the initiative this time.

“Hi, Vanessa! Long time no see, eh?” “Where've you been keeping yourself, Piguette?” “Oh, I been around ... Been all over the place ... but I ain't stayin'. You kids go in to the dance?” “I don't give a shit about this place. It stinks.” “You dad was the only person in Manawaka that ever done anything good to me.” “I'll tell you something else.” She said: “... I'm gettin' married this fall - my boy friend, he's an English fella,... Gee is he ever handsome. Got this real classy name... They call him AI.” “that's swell. That's really wonderful... I hope you will be happy...” ^{[5]194-195}.

Right at this moment, Vanessa saw through who Piguette really was: under the cover and mask was her defiant face instantly becoming unguarded and unmasked. And a terrifying hope of light shining in her eyes. She was forced to seek the very things which she rejected so bitterly. This unmistakably sends the strong message that she longs to be accepted by the Whites and change her skin and identity, thereby building a beautiful and colorful and enviable life of her own. Nevertheless, all these pretense and mask proves rather contrary to her nature and turned her into an entirely different person which would not last long, only for a while at most. So the result is that she was played against momentarily and then abandoned eternally. So transient was her puberty.

C. *The Tragic Denouement: Disillusion and Disappearance.*

Vanessa learned from her mother the end of Piguette upon coming home during the first summer break in her college. The dialogue between Vanessa and her mother eloquently summarizes: “She's dead.” she said at last.

“What happened?” I asked. “Either her husband left her, or she left him.” “... Anyway, she came back here with two youngsters, both only babies - they must have been born very close together ^{[5]196-197}”. She gained a lot of weight and looked quite a mess. A real slattern. She got drunk and for safety concerns was summoned for several times by the police. Later, one winter, the shack they lived in caught fire, neither of them got out.

Subsequently, when Vanessa visited her kingdom of Diamond lake again, she had very much mixed feelings. The lake had turned into a flourishing resort: hotels, dance-hall, cafes with neon signs, plus the ever drifting penetrating odors of potatoes chips and hot dogs, and renamed as Lake Wapakata for the Indian name would appeal much more to the tourists. Therefore, the loons no longer lived here, so she cannot hear again the long-drawn piercing, and sad half-mocking and half plaintive sing of the native birds. Maybe they have flown to a faraway place, or died out entirely. To Vanessa, it seems that “Piquette might have been the only one, after all, who had heard the crying of the loons” and “in some unconscious and totally unrecognized way ^{[5]198}”.

Such consequence didn't seem strange at all, to the writer's mind. In the novels of native Americans, the end of a fire seemed quite commonplace. A case in point is that of Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, in which his old sister ended up in similar disaster. To the Whites, only the Indians are daughters of forest who knows the harmony between human and heaven, thus both mysterious and reproachable. In Vanessa's view, they might know “where the whippoorwill made her nest, how the coyote reared her young, or whatever it was that it said in Hiawatha.” To sum up, parallel to the loons, Piquette proved to be mysterious and fragile, and vulnerable to the dramatic changes in the environment, so gone are they forever and never more, which would become the tragedy of human beings.

D. *The Symbolic Meaning of the Loons*

This realistic piece gives an objective description of the harsh and cruel reality of the isolated and marginalized race of the Metis. While describing the environment, he employs the lyrical language whereas he uses plenty of colloquialism and slang in conversation so as to lead the readers into the psych of the narrators. Symbolism seamlessly connects the loons and Piquette. First of all, the loons only sing at night while Piquette hides away her feelings and emotions without letting anybody knowing them. Secondly, the destruction of the natural habitat of the loons runs exactly parallel to the White's intrusion of the Indian's land. Thirdly, when the loons learn to adapt into the new environment, at the same time, Piquette married a white - her hope of new life. However, the hard and fast fact is both of them failed in their attempt and their bubble of hope busted. The newcomers intrude into their life and destroyed their original life style: the loons became extinct and Piquette cannot find her proper place and disappeared too. This article seems to describe the loons but in fact it hints at the destiny of Piquette, thus the plight and awkwardness of the minority. Piquette hopes her identity and cultural values would be recognized by the mainstream, however, she faced only the cruel estrangement and marginalization. Lastly, the death of the loons implies the fate of Piquette who seemed to be the only one who understand the sing of the birds, brimming with loneliness and sadness from birth to death, isn't it?

II. CONCLUSION

The reason why *Advanced English* is termed as “advanced” is, to the writer's mind, precisely due to the following features: (1) its vocabulary is huge; (2) its sentence structure is complex; and (3) its theme is complicated with styles being classical and rather lengthy. These five masterpieces use simple yet delicate

symbolism as its common denominator to express the diverse dimensions of cultures from distinct ethnic groups and different regions of the globe, particularly the west. Therefore, readers may judge of Hercules from his foot to update the dynamic developments of diverse cultures. This, in return, can pave a solid way for readers' appreciation for other works in get a glimpse of such diverse cultures as Blacks (everyday use and traditional cultural heritage), Indians (disappearance of the loons and marginalization of the Metis; pilgrimage to grandma's grave and Commemoration of the Kiowas), Whites (no signpost on the sea and his emotional dilemma with Laura) and Muslims (three cups of tea and total dedication to helping friends, even dying) so as to avoid ethnocentrism, pride and prejudice as well as discrimination in doing intercultural communication; enrich the knowledge buildup for further probing into broader scope of global literature; broaden their horizon, and further enhance their awareness and recognition of using symbolism in communication in their foreseeable future to facilitate the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

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