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READING KRISTEVA WITH KRISTEVA

I even have the impression sometimes of returning to the same subjects, myself, like that “revolution” we discussed, but always modifying them and finding other angles. In considering fiction, the writing of novels, one might think that it is a totally different thing, but for me there are links, there are bridges; it is more a question of putting something into practice.

—Julia Kristeva, *Julia Kristeva* 222

The works of Julia Kristeva weave a web whose threads take into account constructions and interrogations of psychoanalysis, politics, belief, belonging, language, poetics, art, and literature, all of which resonate with each other to create a quintessentially twenty-first century vision of what it means to be human in world culture, world politics, and world history. In a talk on the future of European culture given at the British Academy in 2010, Kristeva diagnoses a shift in the constructions of the subject, becoming representative of the “kaleidoscopic individual”; the affectively engaging enunciating first person pronoun is “simultaneously itself and infinitely open to otherness: ego affectus est” (“Is There Such a Thing”). It is impossible not to read her four novels within this ongoing construction, placing them alongside her theoretical works, and, indeed, looking at her theoretical works, in turn, alongside her novels; she cites the importance of “a literary-philosophical coexistence” to French culture (*Plaisir* 60). And, Kristeva has said in an interview with Margaret Waller (interestingly in the same breath as denying the possibility of her writing novels), “if one identifies the novel with intertextuality, then every contemporary type of writing participates in it.... Intertextuality is perhaps the most global concept possible for signifying the modern experience of writing” (*Julia Kristeva* 192). This emphasis on intertextuality continues in Kristeva’s novels; she wants to invite us to read transgenerically, mixing, for instance, her work on Anna Comnena, which forms a major part of the novel *Murder in Byzantium*, with her *Feminine Genius* trilogy and her recent meditation on the life and work of St. Theresa D’Avila in the context of the novel form: “I would therefore like to invite you to read Anna Comnena in addition to Arendt, Klein, and Colette”; “[I am writing] a

book, a mixture of a novel and an essay, about Theresa D'Avila" (*Hatred* 6; *Incredible Need* 47).

The driving force of this essay is intertextual, reaching across many different texts by one and many authors, building upon and resonating across subject-matter, style, genre, place, and time. As a starting point we will take the lesser-discussed fictions of Kristeva and read them alongside some of her other adventures in thought, discovering the possibilities of reading the revolutions, the links, and the bridges across her work as passages which lead back to the polyvalent artistic-analytical-critical personality of Kristeva herself. Woven into the structure of the novels we discover an abiding concern with the formations, deconstructions, and processes of the subject. As Kristeva herself writes in a reflection upon her early work on intertextuality, "the speaking subject is a carnival, a polyphony, forever contradictory and rebellious": *ego affectus est* (*Hatred* 10, "Is There Such a Thing").

POLYMATH

Whence do you speak? This is what distrustful people always ask, and they are not wrong in doing so. It is rightful that I introduce myself. The one writing here is a representative of what is today a rare species, perhaps even on the verge of extinction in a time of renewed nationalism: I am a cosmopolitan ... this means I have, against origins and starting from them, chosen a transnational or international position situated at the crossing of boundaries.

—Kristeva, *Nations* 15–16

In *The Future of Revolt*, Kristeva writes "I am a monster of the crossroads," echoing Kafka, but in the context of Marcel Proust (*Intimate Revolt* 244). Existing at the crossroads, the thinker is between boundaries, at once stationary (the sphinx) and a traveller (Oedipus), both of whom were foreign to the space in which they existed at the point of encounter and intimately connected to humanity itself through the Sphinx's riddle. Just as she frequently figures her self as between boundaries (or possibilities) and in monstrous (or exceptional) form, Kristeva's own work also oscillates between the possibilities offered by this symbolic crossroads, not least between the problems of genre and articulation, resulting in an always-dynamic discourse of self de- and re-construction through, with, and alongside the text, and in multiple languages and forms. Thinkers espouse her work across the world in fields as diverse as political and social science, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and literary and cultural criti-

cism; Kristeva is figured over and again as psychoanalyst, feminist, literary, cultural, or political critic, and internationalist *par excellence*. It is in her novels that we can observe the dynamic breakdown of these various theoretical and textual constructions, and it is in the novels that we, the readers, are positioned at the crossroads of Kristeva's thought; each marker of character and of place is positioned carefully on the web of the novels' construction, and will resonate with an other. Each character in whichever novel will connect in some way with various elements of Kristeva's life and work. Writing trans-generically, trans-historically, and intertextually (all in all, polyphonically) is perhaps easier in novel form, as is a free exploration of the many facets of the self. Indeed, Kristeva speaks of *Murder in Byzantium* as "at once a metaphysical detective novel, a historical novel, a lyrical narrative, and a social satire: the ego is broken down into multiple facets" (*Hatred* 275).

Speaking of her first and most obviously semi-autobiographical novel, *The Samurai*, Kristeva figures the characters of the novel as "markers along the polyphonic web, which weaves, by crossing and mingling them, three narrative threads" (*Nations* 88). The metaphor of the polyphonic web adapts itself almost infinitely to the different resonances that we can find within and across Kristeva's work. It is through an exploration of various characters in her novels that we can observe the effects of these textual layerings and resonances. There are theoretical precedents for these layerings in Kristeva's investigations of the importance of naming in the works of Proust (in particular the "metaphorical and metamorphic series of madeleines," which underpin what is perhaps the most famous passage of *In Search of Lost Time*), in her own polymathematic thought, and her work against the stasis of the "unitary subject" (*Proust and the Sense* 43; *Desire* 158). Through an act as simple as an act of naming, each character represents a point of social observation as well as a reflection of Kristeva's own diverse interests, resonating, too, with other characters and observations, fictional and real.

Taking Proust as a starting point alongside Kristeva's first novel, *The Samurai*, we are immediately drawn to the character of Sinteuil (or Hervé de Montlaur), the lover of the novel's protagonist, Olga Morena. A quick search yields the fact that Sinteuil in *The Samurai* is a lightly fictionalized portrait of Philippe Sollers. Indeed, there exist lists of the many fictional-real life parallels in this novel; these lists are online and are provided in Niilo Kauppi's and Josiane Leclerc Riboni's studies of *The Samurai*. However, these lists of congruencies between Kristeva's fictional world of *The Samurai* and the intellectual communities in Paris in the years

surrounding 1968 more often than not go no further than this. Kristeva herself points out that the bridging of the consciously autobiographical and the consciously fictional yields the metamorphosis of the characters of the novel into metaphorical constructions or “prototypes,” and, indeed, it is the untangling of similar constructions—the “subjective creatures” or “phantasmic projections” indicated by the names used by the narrator with which her studies of Proust are concerned (*Nations* 79; *Proust: Questions* 11). We must therefore pay closer attention to the structures of naming in Kristeva’s own novels, which echo, in their cascading and multiple signifying possibilities, the construction *in perpetuum* of the subject in process that concerns much of Kristeva’s early work, and which underpins her oeuvre as a whole.

Moving back to the congruence between Sollers and Sinteuil, there are various elements from which this web begins to be constructed. If we take Sollers-Sinteuil as a given congruence, we immediately come up against a set of four possible names. The fictional Sinteuil and Hervé de Montlaur, and the “real” Philippe Sollers and Phillippe Joyaux (the former names of each pair are pen-names, and the latter given names), already create a constellation of what Sollers calls “des Identités Rapprochées Multiples (I. R. M.),” which is a technique of the layering of and playing between names that he identifies in his own fiction (*Fugues* 793). Sollers provides a direct link back to Kristeva, but in fact there are many more subtle links to tease out of this single naming act.

Sinteuil, as Niilo Kauppi points out in his investigation of this “pseudo-pseudonym,” alludes to Proust’s early work *Jean Santeuil* (461n145). The name also resonates with a different Proustian character—Vinteuil of *In Search of Lost Time*. Through this train of allusions, and via *Jean Santeuil*, we reach the prodigious split personality of Jean-Baptiste Santeuil, who, in La Bruyère’s *Caractères*, is figured as Théodas, and whose personality confuses the writer of the sketch to the extent that he is concerned for the singularity of both his portrait and Santeuil himself: “I begin to imagine I have drawn the portraits of two wholly different persons; and yet to find a third in Theodas is not quite impossible” (II. 353–54). Kristeva points us towards the connection between Proust and La Bruyère (and thence to Sinteuil and Santeuil) by noting in *Time and Sense* that Proust is able to quote sections from *Caractères* from memory (125); the connection is not just a homophonic one. Via a combination of Vinteuil and *Jean Santeuil*, we also come to Camille Saint-Saëns’s own polymathematical nature as it is his first violin sonata that provides a prototype in Proust’s earlier work for that of Vinteuil in *In Search for Lost Time*.

The name de Montlaur yields similar archaeological cascades, leading us back to the Universities of Paris (which provides much of the *mise-en-scène* of *The Samurai*), but to the 1930s rather than the 1960s, when Guy de Villardi (de Montlaur) first studied philosophy at the Sorbonne and subsequently (after the Second World War) became a painter, the dominant style of his *oeuvre* progressing from cubism to expressionism. Sollers and de Montlaur are linked through geography (by both Paris and Aquitaine), but it is in de Montlaur's embattled art forms that we can find yet another analogy for this cascading process of naming developed by Kristeva. Delving deeper into this archaeology of naming, we return again to Kristeva, as she comments on the genesis of the divided characters in Proust as "a network of partitioned differences and adjacent incompatibilities (a 'Vinteuil' side, a 'hideous' side)" where "in the final analysis this 'whole' person does not exist. He is nothing but features" (*Time* 73). We find echoes here with Sollers's I. R. M., which situates any named character (fictional or real) as a figure at the limits, crossing a, or many boundaries, and which he applies to himself: "one is never too doubled, or tripled, to escape others ... Jekyll Joyaux, Sollers-Hyde ... I'm Joyaux pronounced Sollers" (*Memoires* 17–18, my translation).

Yet these boundary-transgressing characters are not limited to single novels, or, indeed, to the naming-function alone; we have seen the manner in which "Sinteuil" creates resonances across Kristeva's *oeuvre* from the space of *The Samurai*. We can also find traces of these resonances in Kristeva's other novels. To do so, it is necessary for the moment to take Sollers as a new point from which to start. After all, echoing earlier concerns with the subject in process, Kristeva has recently written that "literature, writing, constitute an experience of language that cuts across identities (sexual—gender—national, ethnic, religious, ideological, etc.)," and we may find in all her novels this cross-cutting and multi-layering of character-as-prototype, which operates in a similar way to Sollers's I. R. M. (*This Incredible Need* 27). Each of these cascades of signification lead us back, of course, to Kristeva herself, and what Pierre Louis Fort recognizes, in a poetic way, as Kristeva's polymorphism, which translates into and across her works as we develop "the image of their author: daring, inventive, kaleidoscopic, iridescent" (x). Kristeva also writes of *Murder in Byzantium's* structure as a kaleidoscopic one, and one which returns always to herself:

The subject's intimacy [which] pierces through to that of others (characters are split, twinned, there are doubles, projections, there is

a loss of self in crime but also in serenity)... Oblique, cubist, plural, an intermingled intimacy at the crossroads of my encounters, the languages I speak and write, the various times inhabiting them and inhabiting me, and my irreconcilable identities. (*Hatred* 274)

In *Murder in Byzantium* we meet the detective inspector Northrop Rilsky for a second time (we are first introduced to this character in *Possessions*). As Sinteuil (linked pseudonymously to Sollers) becomes the lover of Olga Morena (linked pseudonymously to Kristeva), so *Murder in Byzantium* sees Rilsky become the lover of Stephanie Delacour (who is linked, again, to Kristeva). Rilsky, perhaps because his creation is further removed from the directly autobiographical than Sinteuil's, is also a richer prototype. Like Sinteuil, Rilsky comes from an aristocratic lineage (Sinteuil is a de Montlaur, and French, Rilsky is a Chrest, and Santavarvarios). Taste in music—the strains of Scarlatti and Bach, the playing of Scott Ross and Yehudi Menuhin—links both Sinteuil and Rilsky to Sollers, as does physical appearance (all are broad, blond).

One of the most obvious doublings in *Murder in Byzantium* is that of Northrop Rilsky and his uncle, Sebastian Chrest-Jones. There is not only a physical likeness (and a blood relationship), but the novel itself uses this doubling (between detective and academic, upholder of the law and criminal, secret aesthete and secret historian) as a vehicle through which attention is drawn to other doublings and triplings of character. Rilsky's affective relationship with crime through his position as a police detective is mirrored in Chrest-Jones's and Xiao Chang's affective relationship with the law through their perpetrations of murders. Where Rilsky's relationship with Chrest-Jones exists in the main through their uneasy and unacknowledged physical resemblance, the link with the serial killer and Daoist fundamentalist Chang is extended to the realm of affects (*Murder* 44):

Rilsky ... was no longer sure of anything.... Something led him to believe that he could very well be the purifier, that he could have been, or may have been, because he sensed this serial killer in his skin, his muscles, his head ... was he his unconscious twin, the dark double of Northrop who killed after midnight without remembering a thing? (32–33)

In a later meditation on the divided character of Rilsky, we find a resonance with Sollers's identification of himself with Robert Louis Stevenson's

most famous exploration of split personality: “a dangerous doubling of the personality of the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde type” (105). But, unlike Sollers, Rilsky is never subjected to a nominative I. R. M.: he is Rilsky, or Northrop, or Northrop Rilsky, only. In contrast, in undertaking his Byzantine crusade, Chrest-Jones assumes the pseudonym *C/J*, and Chang has an almost infinite accretion of associated names, or symbolic markers.

POLYLOGUE

We first meet Chang in the preface to *Murder in Byzantium*, “Mystery at the Whale Lighthouse,” in the guise of an anonymous killer whose sign is 8 or ∞ who is nicknamed by the press “Number Eight” (viii). Through the sideways manifestation of the numerical sign, we return again to Sollers, many of whose intellectual projects are grouped under the title “*l’infini*” (or “ ∞ ”). Further into *Murder in Byzantium*, Chang leaves a note, a clue which is instrumental in the turning of the detective plot of the novel towards an identification of a previously unidentified criminal, and which is instrumental to a further fragmentation of character on a metaphysical or kaleidoscopic level. This note is left in Chinese script, and its significations are “explained” by a university professor over the space of three pages, leading us to a further connection with Chang himself (155–57). A part of Chang’s note reads 無限, which, the professor of Chinese explains, “means ‘not to have any limits’ or ‘never to be exhausted’” (157). These characters are wu xian (in Mandarin transliteration) where wu (無) translates as “without,” and xian (限) as “limits” (particularly in the context of a numerical count or a power-structure); we encounter the infinite again.

Where, with the toppled over 8, Chang, or “the infinite” becomes connected to a symbol which can signify two quite different things at once (8/ ∞), through a connection with 無限, the infinite (or Number Eight) is laid open to a multiplicity of possible readings through the different inflexions of poetic meaning each of the Chinese characters is given according to the radical and the structure of strokes. The prototype character of Chang becomes associated with a different type of character entirely, but one which is a site of no less kaleidoscopic possibilities. Wu (無) leads us back to Chang himself, who is characterized in the novel as suffering from a congenital illness, as it combines with one of the many characters transliterated to “xiao” (效) to form the character for “invalid” (無效), just as xian’s (限) radical (“fu,” 冫), although not a character on its own, is linked to the dagger that Chang uses in the preface to carve the signature ∞ into the body of his victim, since it is a radical associated with “blade.”

Through this turn in the accretion of character-symbolism in the novel, we are also reminded of the “brilliant student of philosophy turned sinologist, then extreme structuralist ... [turned] globetrotting investigative reporter-detective” (Kristeva, *Murder* 75). Delacour, the Chinese character-studies of Olga Morena, and Kristeva’s own studies in and on Chinese also find expression in an early work, *About Chinese Women*, a book which also contains translations of Chinese poetry by Philippe Sollers, and, through the fact of biography, links us to the journey to China depicted in *The Samurai* and its real-life counterpart.

Although the detectives Rilsky and Popov use Chang’s note to uncover his identity, they are annoyed by the Chinese professor’s philological ramblings (a poetic philology which points toward the killer and also the novelist), using instead the note’s physical material rather than its language to advance their quest for the murderer through the process of “DNA electrophoresis” (Kristeva, *Murder* 157). Writing becomes a space of improvisation between characters, languages, and forms, but is infinitely changeable in accordance with the character of the reader and the angle of approach. As Kristeva writes, “an other language consists of creating a mobile space where the reader, the other, is not seduced in a trivial way ... but invited to take part in the possibility of improvisation: he enters the game, plays his own game, the game exists for several people” (*Hatred* 255).

Chrest-Jones’s naming (and also, indirectly, the heritage of Rilsky) also work across different languages, providing a further multiple cascade of events which mirrors that provoked by Chang. The poly- or translinguistic manner in which these naming acts resonate mirrors both Chang’s existence between languages and cultures (Chinese, Santavarvarian, and mathematical), and also the polylingual no-man’s land in which Chrest-Jones exists and which informs the subject of his official academic research in migration studies. It is partly the fact of this naming that inspires Chrest-Jones’s Byzantine quest and his writing a historical novel, which comprises the central section of *Murder in Byzantium*. Chrest-Jones shares etymologically with Kristeva a patronymic in “Chrest,” via the Slavic *крѣст* (“Krist”), that forms the root of Kristeva’s name. This translational homophony, and the relation between real life and fiction is alluded to in the fictional world of *Murder in Byzantium*—“the pronunciation gets altered, you understand, from Latin to this magma of Slavic languages and then finally to Santa Varvarois” (46). “Chrest” and “Krist” share a meaning-ground in the words “cross” and “Christ,” which return us to Chrest-Jones’s quest in *Murder in Byzantium*. This is a quest to write an affective history of the Byzantine princess and historian Comnena, and to prove that a possible crusader-

ancestor of the Chrests, Ebrard Pagan, met Comnena, and founded a branch of the Chrest family. Chrest-Jones is linked affectively to Pagan, and thence, in a loop, to his own research on Comnena: “Sebastian was in love with Anna Comnena; but he loved her as though he were Ebrard Pagan” (157). Through reference to the crusades we meet “chrest” again, this time via the “*crucesingnati*,” or cross-signed garments of the crusaders or “*milites Christi*, ‘soldiers of God,’” to which there is a neat counterpoint in the specific figure of Pagan through his irreligious surname, “Pagan” (*Murder* 100, 46).

Where Chrest-Jones and Kristeva share the roots of their patronymic, Chrest-Jones’s Byzantium-questing alter-ego, *C/J*, also shares the initials of his surname mirrored and homophonic with those of Kristeva: *C/J* becomes *J/K*. As Miglena Nikolchina points out, this reverses the initials of Kristeva’s name, and Kristeva states “The initials of the last name Chrest-Jones echo my own, Kristeva-Joyaux, and Stephanie Delacour is her father’s daughter, as am I,” widening the arc to include an allusion to Sollers (and thence to I. R. M.), as well as to the textual interrelationships between these characters, Kristeva’s own father, the father of Delacour, and thence to the old man of *The Old Man and the Wolves*, whose own initials, written on an almost illegible telegram to Delacour, are “an S and a C” (Nikolchina 148 n24; Kristeva, *Hatred* 291; *Old Man* 161).

None of these identities is stable. Each character is at once the same as the other, resonates against the other, and is completely separate from the other. The end of *The Old Man and the Wolves* sees Delacour separate, link, and blur completely the erstwhile separate characters of her father (the French ambassador to Santa Varvara) and the Old Man, Scholasticus/Septicius Clarus (professor of Latin): “Which should I write about?: the Old Man or Papa?”; “my father, though, would linger with the Professor amid old churches and Roman ruins.... The two men grew so inseperable that people often mixed them up”; “they’re so muddled and blurred and foreshortened—what do my memories of the Old Man really amount to? Initials merging into the memory of my father. Death mingles the ghosts of the two accomplices as in a dream”; “Of course.... It’s Septicius Clarus.... The hidden face of Santa Varvara.... My Father.... A sweet man” (130, 153, 157; 172, ellipses in original). In this web of similarities, congruences, differences, and divisions, it is only natural that any given character should exist in some ways at a crossroads, between boundaries, and in exile, “never completely true or completely false” (*Strangers* 8). And it is the marginal power invested in the exiled, border-crossing journeyman that fuels the discoveries of *C/J*, Delacour, and Kristeva herself.

The impulse of Delacour to travel and to detect is connected to the influence of the father and the Old Man: “I went on, through my father, to foreign languages ... with the result that Delacour can travel the world in every language,” and “It’s a well known fact that Stephanie Delacour is a confirmed traveller; the Old Man himself knew that” (*Old Man* 166, 175). As this state of journeying is connected to language and habit, it is also intimately connected to the passage of the self, and through the multiple possibilities of character, to a position of exile which is marked by a linguistic as well as a geographical absentedness and a state of flux. *Murder in Byzantium* sees Chrest-Jones, “in his element” when in transit, as a “homeless” traveller between twenty-first century Europe and eleventh-century Byzantium whose “voyage is his prison,” contrasted with Delacour, who is “overcome with conviction of belonging to a long line of travellers ... only feel[s] really at home on airplanes—far from roots and surrounded by strangers, not borders” (a return to the infinite—無限, “without borders”—again), and who finds her residence in the “in-between” of the state of voyaging (7, 175, 63, 63). It is in the uncertainty of these states and these characters that Kristeva finds room for possibility, for strangeness, and for optimism, an antidote to the image- and ego-obsessed globalized society of the spectacle against which she so often writes:

Is joy an encounter between unrest and serenity? The central theme, the voyage—the voyage to the time of the crusades taken by Sebastian Chrest-Jones; the voyages between Santa Varvara and Byzantium, between police enquiry and romantic quest, which Stephanie is writing—keeps the question open, exposes the reader to the impossibility of an answer... This seems to be the only optimism possible at the present time. (*Hatred* 305)

It is through an acceptance of the simultaneously necessary possibility of the voyage and the impossibility of an answer, or stasis of character, that we reach a new international, without borders, a site, or many sites, of infinite possibility.

POLYTOPIA

[The United States, Israel, a polyphony of places, Paris, China ...] The French Atlantic Coast, the Paris of Intellectuals, the childish and pleasant, humdrum Paris of the Luxembourg gardens, all those places change the

space of the novel into a kind of kaleidoscope one cannot unify and whose different elements reverberate and contaminate one another.

—Kristeva, *Nations* 90

It is not only the speaking subject in the novels of Kristeva that resonates, through something as simple as an act of naming, with the broader concerns of her work. The kaleidoscopic or divided subject, existing in and travelling through an increasingly globalized world, must also move through spaces (and times) which are equally divided and kaleidoscopic. Indeed, the end of *The Old Man and the Wolves* sees the narrator Delacour announce: “Santa Varvara is everywhere” (183). *Possessions* expands this portrait of the shifting metropolis, and in *Murder in Byzantium*, Delacour poses the shifting topography of the novel as a riddle, and a riddle inextricable from the shifting significations of the subject at the crossroads:

Santa Varvara expands in all directions. Everywhere? But where exactly? You want to locate Santa Varvara on a map? But it's impossible, you know. How can one locate the global village? Santa Varvara is in Paris, New York, Moscow, Sofia, London, Plovdiv, and in Santa Varvara too, of course—it's everywhere, I tell you, everywhere where foreigners like you and I try to survive. (64)

Speaking in an interview about the planetary effects of globalization, Kristeva says that Santa Varvara also becomes a theoretical construction for her, its name simply a referent: “the planetary village I refer to generally as ‘Santa Varvara’” (*Hatred* 175). In one name (Santa Varvara) we encounter a prototype or a polyphony of places which mirrors the polyphony of selves we have seen develop from “Santeuil” or from “無限.”

In the original French versions of *The Old Man and the Wolves*, *Possessions*, and *Murder in Byzantium*, Santa Varvara is in fact “Santa Barbara” (the construction has very little connection to the Californian city of the same name), which returns us directly to Kristeva's theoretical concerns with strangeness and foreignness, as, in *Strangers to Ourselves*, she traces the genesis of the term “barbarian” (from which Santa Barbara/Varvara's name comes) from Homeric times onwards:

[“barbarian” was coined] on the basis of such onomatopoeia as bla-bla, bara-bara, inarticulate or incomprehensible mumbblings. As late as the fifth century the term is applied to both Greeks and non-Greeks having a slow, thick, or improper speech. [For Sophocles,

Euripides, and Aeschylus] “barbarian” meant “incomprehensible,” “non-Greek,” and finally “eccentric” or “inferior.” The meaning “cruel” ... would have to wait until the barbarian invasions of Rome. (51)

Santa Varvara, global city of sainted barbarism and a fictional exploration of barbarism by Kristeva, encompasses all of these meanings, which are explored in her last three novels. Elements of *The Old Man and the Wolves* investigate the cruelty of invasion by incomprehensible beings (the “wolves” of the title), mapped onto a pseudohistory not only of the barbarian invasion of Rome but also of the communist coup d'état and rule in early twentieth-century Bulgaria. Elements of *Possessions* investigate the possibilities of communication between different foreignnesses, the borders between language, speech, and non-speech. Elements of *Murder In Byzantium* are concerned with the international ramifications of travel and thus foreignness.

If Santa Varvara can be, as Delacour diagnoses above, in all cities, other cities, too, can relate to Santa Varvara. *Murder in Byzantium* sees Byzantium itself as Santa Varvara's double. Byzantium, like Santa Varvara, is filled with cruelty, with foreignness, and yet, while Santa Varvara “expands in all directions,” Byzantium “is what remains most precious, refined, and painful about Europe”: “Santa Varvara, the opposite of Byzantium” (64, 64, 67). But, as we have seen in the multiple manner in which Kristeva constructs character—opposition, radical difference, and mirroring also imply superimposition, or radical similarity, building a point of affective engagement between otherwise divided elements.

Signaled by a breakdown of languages and an affective understanding with an other, Byzantium is also a constituent part of the construction of self in the novel, and only ever personal. Delacour writes, “I've told you, my own Byzantium is only a way of being styled after the colours of time. Past, present and future fused in the written form of the Attic language that was then breaking down ... Anna, my Byzantium” (*Murder* 86). Space becomes time, and temporality is spatialized in order for Byzantium to operate polyphonically between the eleventh and twenty-first centuries. Bridging this divide the citizens of Byzantium (or of the world) travel, conscious of their own progress (or *procès*), detectives on a metaphysical quest: “the best Byzantines, like the best citizens of Santa Varvara, can be found among detectives, children, and journalists” (65). Byzantium, breaking out of the space of the novel, is inhabited by the prototypical characters of Delacour,

Chrest-Jones, 無限, and Rilsky, and formed out of the mosaic of their encounters.

In *The Samurai* Kristeva constructs a similarly Santavarvarian or Byzantine space or transit out of Huxian. Olga narrates: “you could go on journeying towards other Huxians, to show all the extraterrestrials around you what you already know and they seem not to: that like Huxian the whole world is made up of unfathomable solitudes” (214). Like these other global cities, Huxian exists intralinguistically, and is linked again and intimately to the possibilities of the subject and to many of Kristeva’s other works. 西安 (Xi’an, or Hsian), one of China’s ancient cities, and Huxian, a nearby village developed into an artisanal town in the 1950s, were visited by a French cultural delegation in the 1960s that included both Kristeva and Sollers. Out of this visit Kristeva was to write *About Chinese Women* and parts of *The Samurai*. In the former, Kristeva writes of her experience in Huxian as a wordless encounter with the other, “unaggressive, but on the far side of the abyss of time and space” (11). Huxian is a place of silent encounter but also of peace (安 can mean both “quiet” and “peaceful,” as well as “safety” and “contentment”), concepts which are explored in *About Chinese Women* and *The Samurai*, by Kristeva and Olga respectively. Huxian triples Byzantium and Santa Varvara: it is the peaceful, homebound side of the coin of which the other side is the criminal nomad.

From the fictional Huxian of *The Samurai*, homophony adds to the cascade of resonances. Since Huxian is only ever spelt in a western transliteration in the novel, it could imply a number of different possible namings in Chinese which depart from its association with 西安, the peaceful city of the West. Perhaps the most pertinent of these is 戶限, “huxian” as “household limit,” which not only emphasizes Huxian’s (and indeed Santa Varvara’s and Byzantium’s) paradoxically mobile stasis, but also brings up the questions of belonging and strangeness investigated in Kristeva’s theoretical work, and returns us to *Murder in Byzantium*’s ∞, or 無限, with whom it shares a character, and of which it means the opposite. Infinity and boundedness oppose and mirror each other, but each state is as resonant and as strange as the other, existing simultaneously within and outside of the possibilities of language, and bound up in the construction and de-construction processes of the subject. After all, for Kristeva the Byzantine is as “a crossing, a dialectic, a ruse”: we are between boundaries, between states, and are invited to “take part in the possibility of improvisation,” to continue participating in the game or detective novel of identity, in spaces which are at once inside and outside of language, fact, and form (Kristeva and Clément, *The Feminine* 135; *Hatred* 255).

Another space that resonates throughout Kristeva's oeuvre and which links the writing and reading of theoretical prose and of fictions with process or subject or character, and with concerns of language and silence, the semiotic and the symbolic, and form, is the figure of the island. In *Nations without Nationalism* Kristeva speaks of her fiction writing thus:

I have attempted to construct discontinuity, fragments, fleeting connections, reciprocal reverberations between men, women, space, and discourse, so that the book's emblem would not be a mountain but an *island*. A secret island where characters come together, and island to the four winds, the winds of other chapters as well as the winds of interpretation that readers might insert into the white space, the caesura between sequences. (81–82)

The figure, emblem, or prototype of the secret island is like the characters and places we have already seen kaleidoscopically refract the dominant interests in the work of Kristeva as a whole. In *The Samurai*, on a voyage to the novel's island, Hervé explains to Olga, "No one knows about it except me. It's the Secret Island. I make you a present of it" (5); "I love this place because when you're alone you're alone with the light" (50). The island represents at once everything and nothing, it is an affective gift, intimately connected to the subject's existence outside of language, in a world of sensation.

The fictional island of Olga and Hervé in *The Samurai* is also a space where sensation takes over from language, a space of different temporality:

Daisies dotted the grass, geraniums in their urns stood out against the gray and pale blue background; an immense sky streaked with scarlet contrasted with the pallor of earth and sea. The sun had started to set, and soon its blaze would make men, houses, and plants all invisible. There was nothing; you were alone on a thin film floating on a dark red orange and indigo sky. (48–49)

This secret island-space of sensation finds a further mirror in the island which Kristeva associates with the fictions of Proust, and his cascading, metaphorical, specialized, temporality:

If you expose yourself to the elements found in the island—the scent of seaweed, the cries of seagulls, the wind that supports the sun—time expands until it makes your head spin, until you experi-

ence a brief flash from your childhood, a dream, a state of delirium filled only with sensations. In the end, you experience nothing at all. Staggered time, which never ceases to mirror my days on the island, is the most concrete perception and the dearest image I can offer the logical time in which I observe my dreams. Staggered time is neither timeless nor strictly linear, but something between the two: an intersection, a structure, a hypertrophy. (*Time* 330–31)

But this is also a real island—Sollers's Ile-de-Ré—where, at the bottom of the garden, between sky and horizon, the writer is “amazed by the simple act of being-there [être-là], in the bounded-boundedness of space,” and which, in a letter to Catherine Clément, Kristeva writes of as a refuge from language into a world of sensation (Sollers, *Un Vrai Roman* 218):

I see only the geranium on the low wall in front of me, bathing its red clusters of petals in the blue of the Fier River, the pyramidal salt crystals lined up in the marshes, the landmark of the steeple in the distance, and an oyster light, the dazzle of midday blurring into mist. It is the auspicious hour for waves, fine sand, the language of skin, and the silence of eyes. No “signifier,” “prescribed” or not. (Kristeva and Clément, *Feminine* 153)

The spirit of the island allows the language-bound subject of Byzantium and the image-obsessed subject of Santa Varvara to move into a space beyond language, into a new space which is at once real and fictional, philosophical and novelistic, limited and unlimited by its many forms; we return to perhaps the most polylogical of Kristeva's prototypes, 無限, the “limited-unlimited,” which finds a resonance with all and no subjects, places, and temporalities. Each new configuration of subject or space allows for a sort of rebirth which is at once a link to Kristeva's construction of the possibilities of optimism in the twenty-first century and her work as an analyst. The construction of a polylogical, polyphonic, and polytopic subject is an inherently generous one, whose giftedness exists on the borders of language, sensation, and thought: “the possibility of this new beginning, made possible by transference and interpretation, that I can *par-don* [*by-gift*]: to give and give oneself a new time, another self, unforeseen bonds ... the complexity of the inner experience” (*This Incredible Need* 25). In reading Kristeva with Kristeva, we are privileged witnesses of the articulation of the multiple complexities of her many subjects, an

ultimate sort of intertextuality, a window into the putting-into-practice of the many irreconcilable selves of a twenty-first century polymath.

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