## G.E. Gerini’s ‘Tales of Rhizomatic Errantry’: Multilingually Spoken

Kanokwan Gerini[[1]](#footnote-1)

### Errantry and relation

The tale of errantry is the tale of Relation.[[2]](#footnote-2) In contrast to discovery, conquest or exile, the trajectory and intent of errantry as interpreted by Édouard Glissant is very much the image of rhizome[[3]](#footnote-3) that is relational and dialectical. Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind Glissant's Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other.[[4]](#footnote-4) Relation is spoken multilingually and rightfully opposes the totalitarianism of any monolingual intent.[[5]](#footnote-5) In the tale of rhizomatic errantry, as opposed to that of rooted errantry, the author's word continuously forms a rhizome by itself and in itself with everything possible on the basis of equality and respect. It leads from periphery to periphery, It makes every periphery into a centre.[[6]](#footnote-6) This literary formation fosters connections between a field of reality (the world), a field of subjectivity (the author) and a field of representation (the work) which result in literature in which multi-culture, multidiscipline, multi-genres and multilingualism are at play. In the Oriental *métissage* of Asia, it beautifully links, among others, with the works on Orientalism by Victor Segalen.[[7]](#footnote-7) However, in terms of literary multilingualism, it is very rare to find authors of Orientalism who also use a new mother tongue, apart from their own mother tongue, in their writing or wholeheartedly turn other tongues into his own mother tongue and the tongue of all humanity. To advance the notion of literary multilingualism in the literary Orientalism, this paper proposes a synthesis of a corpus of tales of rhizomatic errantry by Colonel Gerolamo Emilio Gerini[[8]](#footnote-8) as multilingually-spoken literary Orientalism in the late-nineteenth- and-early-twentieth-century Asia.

The corpus of Colonel Gerolamo Emilio Gerini's literary Orientalism about Siam and neighboring countries or the so-called 'tales of rhizomatic errantry' in this paper is a multi-genre and multi-disciplinary body consisting of poems, custom-related literature, Buddhist literature, Siāmese poetic tales, poetry, drama, travelogue, diary, humor, riddles, essays, textbooks, researches which are written mostly in Thai and English languages and fewer in French and Italian, Gerini's mother tongue, from 1881-1913. This corpus represents a reality of errantry and Relation within the identity of the author, the work and the context. The conception as well as the writing process exemplify a Relation as built on the realities of multilingualism and multiculturalism in Siam, which may be held up as a ‘métissage’ or a place of encounter and connivance of the differences, the multiplicities and the diversities of Asian and European identities. Gerini's ‘tales of Relation’ are conveyed in such a way that was hardly ever practiced by his contemporaneous European writers, that is to say, developing from within intuitions of relation, not the intuition of the One or the thought of the West. This relation, in turn, produces tales after tales, which, simultaneously, multiply by itself and in itself into a dynamic rhizome of multi-genre, multilingual, multicultural and multidisciplinary bodies. His writing is the most visible mark of a Relation identity that form a rhizome with the world, protecting, relaying and relating the identity of every single language in South, Southeast and East Asia.

Behind Colonel Gerini’s multilingual ‘tales of rhizomatic errantry’ is multilayer and multiplicity of relations that are hardly ever found in any writing by his contemporaneous Orientalists. Unlike the first Orientalists in the nineteenth century in the view of Edward Said whose scholarship involves the discovery, recovery, compilation, and translation of Oriental texts into English, that is, limits themselves in some reduced universal monolingualism, Gerini acquires a dozen of local languages in a quarter of the century's residence in Siam from 1881-1905 and expresses the thoughts of the Orient from the Oriental multilingual point of view in both Oriental language (Siāmese and other local languages) and in Occidental languages (English, French and Italian). Unlike the Orientalists, seeing the Orient in the light of Said's interconnectivity of knowledge as power, whose Oriental scholarship provides the means through which the European could grasps the Oriental land, Gerini thinks of the land as a place to give-on-and-with. Unlike the Orientalist scholars whose powerful accomplishment is the depiction of a single prototypical image of the Orient as 'the Other', Gerini's accomplishment is to establish connections with every single Oriental multilingual, multicultural, multi-social identity to depict the 'Other of Us'.

### Siam: the métissage of multilingual and multicultural identity

The Kingdom of Siam in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century represents Glissant’s *métissage* of Southeast Asia.[[9]](#footnote-9) It is a place of the differences, the internal diversities and the multiplicities, a place of encounter and connivance and, at the same time, a passageway between the east and the west. The reality of Siam which is, in Glissant’s words, 'a new and original dimension allowing each other to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open, lost in mountains and free beneath the sea, in harmony and in errantry'[[10]](#footnote-10) is reflected in Gerini's works in the genre of custom-related literature and travelogue.

The image of customs in the *métissage* Siam as depicted by Gerini in *Chulakantamangala or the Tonsure Ceremony as Performed in Siam* (1895), *A Retrospective View and Account of the Origin of the Thet Mâha Chat Ceremony (Mahâ Jâti Desanâ) or Exposition of the Tale of the Great* (1893), *Una Cremazione*, unpublished Italian manuscript volume (1888) is not the ethnocentric representation of the Siāmese root but the rhizome of Siāmese culture as connected to many other cultures - Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Burmese, Cambodian, Laos, Brahmanical, Buddhist, Christian, Karen, Stieng, etc. His interpretation of the symbolical ship in *Thet Mâha Chat Ceremony,* for example,involves the myths and beliefs in Buddhist, Christian, Hindu cultures. His finding of the origin of the topknot-cutting rite and its meaning is deduced from the point of views of Greek, Roman, Indian, Siāmese, Cambodian, indigenous group and many cultures while his judgment about the burial and cremation derives its rational thinking from the cult of the Sun, Indian, Greek, Siāmese and Indo-Chinese cultures. For Gerini, the identity of Siāmese customs and ceremonies is 'no longer completely within the root but also in Relation'[[11]](#footnote-11), as described by Glissant.

Similarly, the tale of errantry to the *métissage of* Cambodia in “A Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja”[[12]](#footnote-12) is told multilingually in the Oriental manner. In his narrative, he interweaves voices of the Orients as recorded in the original annals of Siāmese, Cambodian, Annamese, Chinese cultures such as the *Chinese story of the 1296-1297 Embassy to Kamboja* and *Siāmese Annals of Ayuthia* and voices of living people who he is directly in contact with such as Khmer boatmen who know all about the myths of the great lake *Thalē Sāb,* Anamese fishermen who can precisely forecast the weather, *Lùang Song*, a local official who speaks Siāmese as frequently as Khmer which is his native- tongue and is remarkably skillful in the art of taking squeezes of inscriptions and moulding of bas-reliefs and especially the history of ancient monuments. For Gerini, their orality is more reliable, authentical and essential than writing by some of the monolingual and imperial Orientalists he knows. For this reason, Gerini interweave their orality with his to depict the *métissage,* rerouting from Said's view of the Orient as incapable of defining itself. This results in the new image of the multi-facets of the Oriental *métissage*.

### G.E. Gerini : Relation identity

Gerini's identity is not rooted. Nor is his travel to Siam in 1881 an exile. His errantry from Italy to Siam is not resolute act of rejection or an uncontrolled impulse of abandonment of Italy. It does not proceed from renunciation or frustration. On the contrary, his decision to come to Siam is driven by the thought of errantry, that is, the thinking that his identity can also be found in Relation.

Gerini's authorship was born out of his multilayer and multiplicity of relations with his local and international contacts that he ceaselessly established.[[13]](#footnote-13) Hence, it is rhizomatic and continuously multiplied through the relationship with the Other. His work is representative of Glissant’s poetics of duration because it is created through 'the accumulation of sediments' of Relation rather than 'the lightning flashes of the poetics of the moment.'[[14]](#footnote-14) One of a good examples is when Gerini, as an editor of *Yuddhakosa ,* a military journal in Siāmese language,opened a section entitled 'Military Chronicle', he started with his own writing in Siāmese language about the four Siāmese war heroines[[15]](#footnote-15) followed by his narratives with no boundary about a northern African leader Hannibal, the King of Lan Chang Phraya Fa Ngum, a French army leader Mirat, etc. At the same time, he was forming a rhizome with his readers by inviting learned readers to contribute story about war strategies practiced by either Siāmese, Chinese, Mon, Indian or western army. Amazingly, there were many military officers of diversified origins roaming to form a rhizome with his narratives, contributing more stories, making Garini's narrative a tale of their own and other readers’ tales their own tales. In this sense, the readers became the author, the author the readers and Gerini’s tale became their own tales as much as their tales became everyone’s own tales. A rhizomatic tale is born out of Relative identity.

### Tales of errantry: the thought of multilingualism

##### 1. Gerini's multilingual features

The tale of Gerini's errantry is loaded with the intent of multilingualism in the way that Glissant puts it, “It would be more beautiful to live in a symphony of languages than in some reduced universal monolingualism– neutral and standardized.”[[16]](#footnote-16) His literary multilingualism can be featured as, first, the relational synthesis of Oriental and Occidental sayings and idioms, secondly, the multiplicity of heterogeneous semiotic signs and, finally, the defense of the identity of every single language.

To begin with, Gerini's works represent a synthesizing of Oriental and Occidental sayings, idioms and thoughts. An outstanding example is his work written in English and Siāmese languages in 1904, “On Siāmese Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions.”[[17]](#footnote-17)In this work, Gerini synthesizes not only Siāmese proverbs and idiomatic expressions but also the relative Laos, Mōn ones and European equivalents. Gerini's intent is to abolish the notion of centre and periphery, as repeated by Glissant that it opposes the thought of errantry. Gerini proposes that all languages are relational. Although they may be different in manner but have the same or similar thoughts. Gerini believes that through the investigation of proverbial lore, one can arrive at 'adequate knowledge of the people's character, gain an insight into their modes of thought and peculiar ways of life, and acquire a better understanding of certain of their manner and customs, of which proverbs often present so life-like a picture not to be found elsewhere'[[18]](#footnote-18) Hence, the multilingual intent secure the relation of multilingual identity and thought represented in proverbs possess all that is multilingual intent.

Next, Gerini's definitive work is a multiplicity that combines various semiotic signs*,* polyglot quotations of different speaking tongues in it. The outstanding example of this feature is his multilingual work “A Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja” which is written in English interwoven with many Chinese ideograms of names of places, *Siāmese* and *Khmër* authentic accents through precise Romanization system throughout the story, Italian idiom – 'our party now numbered some eight members of various nationalities, but all, alas! Of the *sesso forte*, and mostly confirmed bachelors in the bargain, Latin expressions- 'The process is, naturally, carried on *bonâ fide'* and *'*The dreaded Greater Lake had, like all things great, this time been caught nodding – *aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus-* and its crossing, accordingly, was successfully accomplished.*',* a conversation inPāli *- “*I began by putting a very simple question *: “Bhantē ayya! Mayham anukampaya tumhakam aramassa saca namam kathēhi?”* ( Would you kindly tell me, venerable sir, what is the real name of this monsatery of yours?),poem in French by Casimir Delavigne - “Ces débris ont pour moi d'invincibles appas, Ils parlent à mes yeax, ils enchaînent mes pas.”, Shakespear's Otthello – anyone whose web of life has been interwoven with thread – to put it Othello-like, “Of most disastrous chances, Of moving accidents by flood and field, of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the' imminent deadly breach,” These multilingual features represent voices of many tongues in telling, describing and defining themselves in his tale about in Kamboja. Another example of this feature is a dramatic play in Siāmese language entitled *Khun Chang Khun Phaen*:the episode of *Thet Mâha Chat* composed by Gerinifor the performance in celebration of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn ’s birthday in the Dushita Garden in 1903. Throughout the play, Gerini inserts multilingual and linguistic puns that render laughs – the *'tho'* and *'to'* in *Attho Akkhara Sanyato* which means 'poetics of compound words' in Pāli are misused as 'finding a big bowl (*tho* in Siāmese language means bowl and *to* means big ), *Ruk-kho* which means tree in Pāli is misread as a 'chess' (*mak ruk*- in Siāmese langauge), *No* in English is misread as *swell* *out* (*no*- in Siāmese language). The Siāmese-English-Pāli puns expressed by the Abbot (Gerini) who speaks Siāmese mixed Pāli as opposed to his monk and novice who always speak Siāmese mixed with English is an amusing feature for all. This signifies that Gerini is able to turn all the tongues into the mother tongue of all readers. The multilingual tongues in the play – Siāmese, English and Pāli- with the humorous interlinguistic puns reflects pleasant atmosphere of the diversity in society.

Finally, a number of Gerini's works are representatives of defense of the identity of every single Oriental languages from the semantic deformation and pronunciation distortion by ignorant and rooted foreigners and half-ignorant natives. As a defender of Siāmese and Pāli and Sanskrit languages, he established *Proposal Scheme of Transliteration for the consonants of the Siāmese Language* and *Phonetics of Siāmese Pronunciation* and *System of Romanization of Pāli and Sanskrit Names* and used in all publications to insure a correct transliteration and to preserve the original scripts and pronunciation. Gerini knew well that “in the eyes of average reader, diacritical marks and other conventional signs intended to insure a correct transliteration and pronunciation are, as a rule, peculiarly irritating, but when such scientific and historical interests are at stake, the ocular irritation of highly sensitive people becomes an entirely secondary question.”[[19]](#footnote-19) In '*A Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja*', Gerini proposes that “and in maps, directions, etc. referring to these countries, the same rational system should be strictly adhered to” and “authentically enjoining on both native and European officials to conform to them in writing, and also, as much as possible in speech.”[[20]](#footnote-20) Besides, Gerini emphasizes the great importance of rudiments of the classical tongues *Pāli* and *Sanskrit* , 'it is not only a religious but a laical one. Indo-Chinese languages, especially Siāmese, Khmër, Mon (Paguan or Talaing) Burmese, etc. are so indissolubly bound up with *Pāli –* and to a certain extent with its sister tongue, *Sanskrit*- their vocabularies, that no proficiently in these languages can be attained unless accompanied by some fair knowledge of either of the two classical tongues of India” [[21]](#footnote-21) Gerini, himself, created many volumes of *Siāmese-Pāli g*lossary of words that were commonly used in his own writing. He also had a manuscript of *Si*ā*mese-Pāli* dictionary copied for his own reference.Apart from *Pāli,* Gerini gives importance to other unknown and rare speaking tongues in Southeast Asia, as evident in his self-created manuscript *English and sixteen-Asiatic- languages Dictionary* that consists of words listed from A to Z and *Siāmese-Mōn* glossary of Mōn proverbs and idiomatic expressions. The multilingual *Siāmese-English, German, Italian, French Dictionary of Geographics* is another of his important works of this kind, although it is unfinished. In any case, the making of all multilingual dictionaries and scheme of multilingual transliteration and romanization of languages are evidences of Gerini's recognition of the equivalence and equality of Oriental and Occidental languages and his attempt to make them visible.

##### 2. Gerini's choice of literary languages

A literary language is where languages enter into multiple relations with each other and each enriches the other in varying degree of complexity. Gerini’s choice of languages for his tales of rhizomatic errantry is not ‘fixed’ but varies in relation to the text, the audience and the purposes.

Gerini writes in English whenever he finds it essential to reroute western scholars and English readers, who are the mainstream of the world, from the incorrect, misled and obscured information preconceived and predetermined by ‘rooted’ scholars and to replace with the accurate and more updated one. Although English is not his mother tongue, he finds it important to communicate his tales in English language for cultural and political purposes. Luckily enough, at the beginning, he entrusts a native speaker to revise his English manuscript. *Chulakantamangala* that he intended to publish in Europe in order to spread the high-culture and custom of Siam was edited by Mr Charles Thorne, the Editor of the *Bangkok Times*. For Gerini, whatever language he uses, it has to be done properly. In fact, the English language in his ‘tales of errantry’ is spotless. Learned readers of his articles in such journals as *Royal Asiatic Society* Journal and alike recognized him as, in Renato Novelli’s words, an English colonel with Italian name. He is also a reliable English-Siāmese translator of Siāmese government and all Siāmese princes[[22]](#footnote-22).

On the other hand, he writes a lot of ‘tales of errantry’ about Siam and neighboring countries in Siāmese language for Siāmese readers. The purpose is to form a rhizome with the Orient of the past and the future. The subjects related to the past are all the aspects of Siam and neighboring countries that most Siāmese may not recognize or simply overlook, for instance, the origin of Siāmese scripts[[23]](#footnote-23), chronicle of the four Siāmese war heroines[[24]](#footnote-24), archaeology in Siam[[25]](#footnote-25), history and ancient monuments in Cambodia[[26]](#footnote-26), diplomatic relation between Siam and Java.[[27]](#footnote-27) The subjects of the future, written under the pen name 'Sarasasana” in *Yuddhakasa,* incorporate all modern western military education, movements, technology and inventions such as wireless telegram, telephone, radiophone, X-ray, lighting and electricity, photography, spaceship and world news. When Gerini uses Siāmese language, he is well aware of the register and is able to use it properly, especially royal vocabularies, classic and popular idiomatic expressions. For this reason, his Siāmese wordings are always as official, formal, solemn, humorous and poetic as ones used by Siāmese intellectuals, or even incredibly better. In fact, this is a result of a recognition and feeling for the registers of Siāmese language and his industry and his love to learn it. On top of that, when he has to describe English or western concept which is very new to Siāmese community, such as subject about a new ideology, innovation, he will coin new Siāmese terms based on Pāli root in the same manner as the royal institute does today. This is a creation of relational language.

Apart from English and Siāmese languages, Gerini chooses to write in a rhizomatic language, that is to say, the language through which his rhizome is extended to, for instance, he writes a catalogue of the ancient Siāmese coins in French for the presentation at the Congress of Oriental Studies in Hanoi wherein French is an official language. He writes a catalogue of the Siāmese Pavilion in Turin and a catalogue of the collection of Siāmese Coins as presented to H.M. Vittorio Emanuel of Italy by H.M the King of Siam in Italian language.

Written in either Siāmese, English, French or Italian, Gerini’s writings are relationally and dialectically multilingual with extended heteroglot quotations and the correct pronunciation and transliteration of local toponomies. In “A Recent Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja”, Gerini criticized ‘rooted’ scholars who shuffled the pronunciation of the local toponomies “partly through in ability to correctly pronounce the native sounds, but for more through carelessness”.[[28]](#footnote-28) The new pronunciation applied by Europeans to toponomies causes “the national toponomy of all these countries to be gradually getting changed and will soon have become so altered as to be quite past recognition.”[[29]](#footnote-29) At the same time, he regrets that ‘local people, accustomed to regard the European as their master and superior in intellectual attainments, believe him also to be infallible in the orthoepy of place-names; an although accustomed to hear the latter pronounced by their elders and see them spelled in old books in the normal traditional way, by dint of listening to the novel pronunciation ascribed to them by Europeans, they come to the conclusion that these must know better, and their version must be the right one. Sometimes, again, they do this through mere spirits of aspish imitation of the ways and idiosyncrasies - whether good, bad, or indifferent - of the ruling race [[30]](#footnote-30). As local people are too weak to protect their own phonogram, Gerini plays the role of the defender of local toponomies for all. He takes every opportunity possible to make people be aware of this problem and proposes that the steps should be taken before it is too late, that is, ‘to put a check on it through the publication of official lists of local place-names accompanied by a careful transliteration of them in European characters, and authoritatively enjoining on both native and European officials to conform to them in writing, and also, as much as possible in speech. And in maps, directories, etc referring to these countries the same rational system should be strictly adhere to. [[31]](#footnote-31) Being multilingual, for Gerini, is not only to use the language but to recognize and feel other mother tongue his own tongue and the tongue of all humanity. The recognition of and engagement with their languages is the defining factor in clarifying Gerini’s genuine poetics of Relation.

### Gerini's literary Orientalism: dialectics of Becoming

Heretofore, it is quite evident that Gerini’s literary Orientalism about Siam does not follow the structure of the western rootstock that considers itself totality or the Being. Rather, it is conceived by dialectic of Becoming that takes pleasure in rerouting, researching and relating.

##### 1. Rerouting

Gerini’s tale of errantry always reroutes and revises the poetics of root that relies on binary logic. In 'On Siāmese Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions,’ Gerini argues against La Loubère who depicts Siam as 'the Other', “ I could not get a Siāmese Song well translated, so different is their way of thinking from ours.” Gerini takes La Loubère's statement as a mask of ignorance and poor ability to learn. He clarifies to his twentieth-century readers that ‘in the case in point the difficulty in translating Siāmese songs well must be laid to the door of the concise and artificial language employed in native poetry, - which so often proves a hard nut to foreign scholars- rather than to an altogether different mode of thinking.”[[32]](#footnote-32) This is Gerini’s first retaliation. Then, he communicates to his foreign scholars to look at the traits of Siam as being themselves from within without reducing it to the imperialism root of the dominating and the dominated because every culture is equal. In the same work, he features a long list of illustrations of Siāmese sayings and European equivalent proverbs to “conclusively prove that Siāmese thought runs, on the whole, in grooves very similar and at times absolutely identical with our own”[[33]](#footnote-33) His writing resonances that Siāmese and European thinking are not of different mode. They are equivalent and can be imagined.

##### 2. Researching

Gerini's writing process is as important as the definitive works because it represents a notion of errantry in intention and operation. It is clear from his pre-compositional and compositional process that each of his writing is not founded upon a single origin or root, but on relative ones. Its intention is not to follow the structural pattern of the root but to research within the non-structural pattern of the rhizome.

In his pre-compositional phrase[[34]](#footnote-34), the conception of his writing is opposite to the manner of ‘imperialist scholar’ who is not errant but monolingual and closed. On the contrary, his conception derives from his direct contact with heterogeneous elements of reality and his recognition of the values. The direct contacts are, for example, eye-witnessing of Siāmese ceremonies, taking journeys and voyages into regions in Siam and neighbouring countries, surveying the landscape, history of places, talking with local people in their own languages, reading their scriptures, chronicles and annals etc. These contacts form a recognition of their values. With errant mindset, his work is conceived and the outline is written.

In compositional process[[35]](#footnote-35), Gerini establishes further contacts with heterogeneous multiplicities in quest for knowledge. His research methodology is always relational, as opposed to rooted. The correspondences between Gerini and Siāmese and foreign scholars asking and rendering assistance in the studies show their enthusiasm and anxiety to achieve the work together. Gerini's sketchbook of his survey contains not only textual notes but also graphics such as maps of villages with names in Siāmese language, drawings of houses of ethnic people, bullock carts[[36]](#footnote-36), etc. These notes and signs can be read as the orality of villagers contributed to his articles. Gerini's clipping of newspaper articles about Siāmese tales and ceremonies written by Siāmese and foreign writers is also a kind of contact he made with other authors. He reads and marks in pen at what he finds important or doubtful. This is the image of the multilayer and multiplicity of contacts in this process. In the textualization process, Gerini becomes multilingual. The various languages streaming through his text reflects his preference for relation rather than root. Every Asiatic and Western language can be heard and all can be said in his text. Gerini uses English, French, Italian, Latin, Pāli, Siāmese, Chinese, Khmer in his text so as to maintain and show respect to the owner of these wordings. Gerini criticizes some 'rooted' imperialist writer who consider *verba peregrina* (foreign words) as *barbarolexis* (barbarian vocabulary) and opaque, then, alter the pronunciation of toponym or place name in order to make it 'transparent' to the westerners. For him, it is essential to be opaque, as Glissant puts it, his author has 'the right to opacities.' Gerini considers opacities as the manifestation of the contacts, the crossing of cultures and languages and the defense of a certain identity of every single language by the authors.

Besides, his writing, even though it is written in English or Siāmese, is conceptually multilingual, considering from all the multilingual sources of knowledge used by him that are translated and retranslated by himself. Gerini prefers using original sources in Oriental languages than the translation of the 'root' scholars that he finds very poor. For instance, In “A Recent Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja”, Gerini talks about the name of the capital of Kamboja that which he finds recorded in the Khmer chronicle preserved in Siam as *Amaravati Randapuri,* but “unconsciously given as *Omorabotey”* in Lagree's translation.[[37]](#footnote-37) A few lines further he finds *Amraptorou* *chor* in lieu of the *Amaravati* *randapuri* of the chronicle preserved in Siam. He urges that “a new, or at least newly revised, translation of the chronicle in question is sadly needed” [[38]](#footnote-38) For this reason, in his writing, there are selections and excerpts that are translated by himself from Pāli, Siāmese, Chinese into English that pertains all the accuracy and register of the language.

It can be seen at this point that Gerini's compositional process or writing has formed a rhizome with his own competence and performance of languages. His writing which involves knowledge of many different speaking-tongues is free from the notion of root which is monolingual.

##### 3. Relating

Like a rhizome, each and every single work by Gerini, both published and unpublished one, always relates to his preceding or proceeding ones. In fact, every definitive work is a part of his work-in-progress that relates and is related.

Gerini never considers any of his work a totality but it is a stability in the relation to be relating to a new one. This typology is apparent in his writing on Indo-China historical geography. As early as 1887, Gerini translated original annals of Siam, Pegu and Indo-China from Siāmese and Mon languages into Italian language[[39]](#footnote-39) for his own research on the prehistory of Siam and its neighboring countries. Subsequently, these private works formed a rhizome with a western ancient text in relation with the Gulf of Siām and the Malay Peninsula namely *Ptolemy's trans-Gamgetic geography*. At this point, they were multiplied into numerous published essays and books in English and French languages such as  *“*Notes on the Early Geography of Indo-China” (1897), “Shān and Siām” (1898-1899), “Some Unidentified Toponyms in the Travels of Pedro Teixeira and Tavernier” (1904), “The Nagarakretagama List of Countries on the Indo-Chinese Mainland” (1905), “Historical Retrospect of Junkceylon Island” (1905), “Notes sur quelques ancienes bouches du Më-Khong (1905)and many *paralipomena* before arriving at his 800-page *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia (Further India and Indo-Malay Archipelago)* in 1909. Even so, Gerini continued to form a relation with scholars of China and Central Asia “to complete the investigation and fill in the blanks I have left.”[[40]](#footnote-40) The importance of his rhizomatic book does not lie in his definitive works but in the directions in motion. It is like a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entrance ways and exits and its own lines of flight[[41]](#footnote-41) ceaselessly relates to other multiplicities. What is viewed as one specific work is composed of multiplicities of works, representing multiple origins, taking different imaginative forms and displaying its multiple interfaces.

Hitherto, the most important gain to literary Orientalism provided by Gerini's corpus of tales of rhizomatic errantry is an alternative formula to understand Orientalism, a detour from Edward Said's definition of Orientalism[[42]](#footnote-42) which is a single image, a sweeping generalization, an essentialized image which carries with it the taint of inferiority.[[43]](#footnote-43) Gerini's more genuine literary Orientalism about further India and Far eastern Asia is the multicultural image which carries both Oriental and Occidental manner. His works are written in the presence of all the languages in the world to relate, to represent and to motivate the orality of the Orient. The landscape of his word is the world landscape. The literary language spoken in the works is the result of contacts between different cultures; it does not preexist these contacts. It is not a language of essence; it is a language of the Related.[[44]](#footnote-44) It is the literary Orientalism, multilingually spoken.

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Said, Edward W. *Orientalism.* New York : Vintage Books, 1979.

1. Associate Professor of Literature in English at Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Archaeology,

   Silpakorn University, Bangkok [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Glissant, Édouard. “Errantry, Exile.” *Poetics of Relation.* Ann Arbor : The University of Michigan Press, 1997, p.18. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The concept of rhizome, which is the principle behind what Glissant called 'poetics of Relation' is developed by Deleuze and Guattari. The main characteristic of the rhizome are connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture and cartography. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The trajectory of errantry is as opposed to (1) a conquering trajectory of Imperialism led from the Centre toward the periphery and loaded with a culture and language with the aim of dominating it and (2) a movement from peripheries toward the Centre with the aim of tracing the origin. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Victor Segalen, (1878-1919). Between 1909 and 1917, Segalen made several prolonged trips to China on various official missions. He also undertook two important archaeological expeditions in central China with a friend, Gilbert de Voisins. During that time, he wrote a number of texts now considered by many critics as masterpieces (among others a novel, René Leys, a collection of poems, Stèles ) and a large number of fragments and drafts for projects that remained unfinished. He devoted all his energy to the pursuit of what was for him both an aesthetic and a moral ideal, the celebration of "diversity", the concept of 'otherness' resonates deeply with present-day cultural problems. Édouard Glissant describes his novels as the works that are at the same time ethnological studies, declarations, and defense. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Gerolamo Emilio Gerini (1860-1913). A few months after the arrival of Duke of Genoa in Siam on March 29, 1881, Gerolamo Emilio Gerini, a young Italian Lieutenant from Pinerolo Regiment in Perugia with other two Italian military officers arrived in Siam. King Chulalongkorn appointed him an instructor of the Royal Page Bodyguards on Saturday September 10, 1881 and eventually in 1895 entrusted him as Director of Military Education whose task was to build up the military manpower and resources for the Kingdom of Siam and granted the high-ranking Siāmese title “Phra Sarasasana Balakhandh” and Commander (Third Class) of the Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant (1905). Holding in his mind the motto 'The pen and the sword in Accord', he was an officer and the Orientalist who wrote hundreds of pieces of writings about Siam in English, French, Italian and Thai. Unlike other Italians who came to transform Siam into a modern country, he recorded, researched, investigated, compared, contrasted, synthesized, analyzed different versions of facts in order to write a true history and civilization of Siam and further East for the western readers to know. His works were well-recognized in Asia and Europe. In 1904, he was one of the establishers of the Siam Society in 1904 and was the Vice President. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. According to the statistics in 1904, apart from Thai or Siāmese and Indo-Chinese races, namly Lau (2 millions), Malay (900,000), Chinese (200,000), Mu Hsu, Lu, Yao Pegans, Annamese, Burmeans, Cambodians, Nigritos, etc, there are 450 Europeans residents: the biggest community is the German one, 130, followed by English, Americans, Danish, with almost the same number of members, 50-60 and 18 Italian besides G.E. Gerini. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Glissant, Édouard. “Poetics.” *Poetics of Relation.* Ann Arbor : The University of Michigan Press, 1997, p.34. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid, p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Gerini, Gerolamo Emilio, “A Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja.” *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, April 1904, pp. 355-398; April 1905, pp. 361-394; July 1905, pp. 80-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Gerini’s contacts can be classified into 5 multiplicities according to the social functions and the roles they played as related to his writing: a) Siāmese sovereign, princes and noblemen b) Siāmese intellectuals and common people c) Buddhist monks d) publishers e) international Asiatic scholars and societies. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Glissant, Édouard. “Poetics.” *Poetics of Relation.* Ann Arbor : The University of Michigan Press, 1997, p.33. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. (1) H.M.Queen Sri Suriyothai of Ayutthaya (2)Thanphuying Pien of Thalang (3) Thanphuying Thabthim of Thalang (4) Thanphuying Mo of Nakhon Ratchasima. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Glissant, Édouard. “Transparency and Opacity.” *Poetics of Relation.* Ann Arbor : The University of Michigan Press, 1997, p.112. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Gerini, Gerolamo Emilio, “On Siāmese Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions,” *The Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 1, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1904 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid, p. 12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Gerini, Gerolamo Emilio, Lieutenant-Colonel, “A Recent Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja.” *The Hanoi Exhibition-The First International Congress of Far Eastern Studies - A Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja.* Reprint from the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review,* Surrey :Publishing Department, Oriental Institute Woking, 1906, p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid, p.88. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. H.R.H Prince Devawongse, Minister of Foreign Affair, H.R.H. Prince Bhanurangsi, Minister of War and Marine. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Gerini, G.E., Captain. “ Wadoi Thammachat munhetkoedhaeng tuaaksonthai” (On the Origin of Thai Scripts) a lecture given at Wittayathansathan, Bangkok on December 15, 1895. *Bangkok Times*, December 17, 1895. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Gerini, G.E., Captain. “ Phongsawadan wirasatri Sayam” (Siāmese War Heroines). *Yuddhakosa ,* Vol. 4. 1895. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Phra Sarasasana Balakhandh (Gerini). “Athibai duoi boranwatthu naprathet Sayam taedoisangkhep ” (On Achaeological Findings in Siam). *Dvi-panya*, May, 1905, pp.198-214; June, 1905, pp. 372-384. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Phra Sarasasana Balakhandh (Gerini).“Rueang prathom phongsawadanhaeng prathet Kamboja laetonhethaeng prasatsila naprathetnan doisangkhep”(On History and Ancient Monuments of Cambodia). *Dvi-panya,* a journal directed by H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Siam. July, 1905. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Phra Sarasasana Balakhandh (Gerini). “Rueang thang phraratchamaitri nairawang prathet Sayam kap prathet Java taenaicantonhaeng Krung si Ayutthaya ” (On Ancient Relation between Siam and Java). *Dvi-panya*, April, 1905, pp. 28-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Gerini, Gerolamo Emilio, Lieutenant-Colonel, “A Recent Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja”, *The Hanoi Exhibition-The First International Congress of Far Eastern Studies - A Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja,* Reprint from the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review,* Surrey :Publishing Department, Oriental Institute Woking, 1906, p. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid, p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid, p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Gerini, Gerolamo Emilio, “On Siāmese Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions,” *The Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 1, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1904, p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Pierre-Marc De Biasi characterizes the pre-compositional process as orienting, exploring determination of the composition project, conceiving and initial planning. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Pierre-Marc De Biasi's compositional process comprises general structuring of the composition, researching and texualization. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. G.E.Gerini describes, classifies and explains in details about Siāmese carts and their functions in “Transportation in Siam”, *Siam and Its Productions, Arts, and Manufactures* : *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Siāmese Section at the International Exhibition of Industry and Labour,* *Turin,* 1911. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. This translation of Khmer chronicle was published in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1871, p. 348. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Gerini, Gerolamo Emilio, Lieutenant-Colonel, “A Recent Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja.” *The Hanoi Exhibition-The First International Congress of Far Eastern Studies - A Trip to the Ancient Ruins of Kamboja.* Reprint from the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review,* Surrey :Publishing Department, Oriental Institute Woking, 1906, p. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Some examples of his translation into Italian language are *Chronicle of Ayuddhaya. Book I-IX* (1887-1888-1895) *Le cronache dell'Indocina-Vol IV Storia del 'Pegu', La Cronaca di Gauampati-Thera, La Fondazione di Haripunjai* (1895). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Gerini, Gerolamo Emilio, Colonel. *Researches on Ptolemy's Geographia of Easterne Asia (Further India and Indo-Malay Archipelago)* , London : Royal Asiatic Society and Royal Geographic Society, 1909 p.6 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand of Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. It is conceived in the light of Freud's manifest and latent psychology and Foucault's notion of power and discourses. An analysis of the examples from the English, French and American's academic text and litratures of North Afrian Arab and Middle-Eastern peoples and cultures from the late eighteenth century to the present. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Said, Edward W. *Orientalism.* Newyork:Vintage Books, 1979, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Britton, Celia M. *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonail Theory.* University Press of Virginia 1999, p.16. quoted from Glissant, Édouard. *Le Discours antillais.* Paris: Gallimard, 1997. p, 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)