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SECTION ONE:
CULTURAL STUDIES

TELEVISUAL HISTORY IN DON DELILLO'S *LIBRA*

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Abstract: *The current paper analyzes how the media images and clips connected to the assassination of President Kennedy function as arguments for the rendering of history as televisual experience in Don DeLillo's *Libra*. Explanations for television's power to shape historical framings are explored in the works of, among others, Walter Benjamin and later representatives of the Frankfurt School.*

Keywords: *Don DeLillo, mass-media, the Kennedy assassination, the Frankfurt School.*

1. Introduction

Televised media and the impact of its omnipresent discourse in contemporary society are identified as constant themes throughout DeLillo's literary work. From his 1970s to his 2000s novels, characters are constantly exposed to the ever-growing power of the media. From *Great Jones Street* to *Cosmopolis*, the author displays an obvious interest in how the lives of audiences are affected by visual media consumption; how it influences the way they talk, think and act. However, it is only in *Libra* that DeLillo visibly explores the complex relationship between history and television. The arguments for the association between the two are provided by history itself, since the novel's theme—the assassination of President John F. Kennedy—was represented in the eyes of the American public primarily by means of a few media images and short films. Kennedy's shooting captured by the amateur camera of Abraham Zapruder, Oswald's killing by Jack Ruby in front of live television cameras, as well as Oswald's famous "backyard photos"—these are the main visual instruments that influenced the way in which the event was recorded in the collective memory of American audiences and thus entered history.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how the media images and clips that are connected to the assassination function as arguments for the rendering of history as televisual experience in DeLillo's novel *Libra*. Potential explanations for television's power to shape how an event is framed and enters history are explored in the works of Walter Benjamin and later representatives of the Frankfurt School of critical theory. Issues pertaining to the reconfiguration of the relationship between on-screen performers and their audiences, as well as the fascination of stardom that nurtures the desire of characters like Oswald to enter history at any cost are also analyzed in the works of French media critics Guy Debord and Gilles

Lipovetsky, together with the mechanisms that ensure the TV screen's mesmerizing power, analyzed in some of Pierre Bourdieu's critical work.

2. The "Heat And Light" Of The Past

The few seconds of the Zapruder film capturing the head shot of President Kennedy during his Dallas motorcade, together with Oswald's shooting by Jack Ruby represent two key episodes in the historical reconstruction of the JFK assassination case. To represent the latter scene in his novel *Libra*, DeLillo chooses to render actions as if through the lens of a television camera. What he does in fact is retell not the event as such, but the way in which the event was mirrored by television. In other words, he portrays its climactic sections from the point of view of the television camera. The scene in the novel starts with Jack Ruby's preparation, his morning at home, his phone conversation with Brenda Jean Sensibaugh, one of the women working in his club, and then the distinct outlining of the intention to kill Oswald and the projection of the event as an item in his morning schedule ("If he hurried he could wire twenty-five dollars to Brenda and then go shoot that bastard Oswald"). This is followed by second thoughts reflected in his reliance on the haphazard power of destiny ("If I don't get there in time, it's decreed I wasn't meant to do it"), his way from home to where Oswald was detained, and finally his face-to-face encounter with Oswald.

Whereas the preparation is represented through a constant switch between a third-person limited point of view and first person, the actual shooting is depicted through the perspective of the camera lens. Short and fragmentary sentences, imitating the language of media headlines, reconstruct the climactic moment from puzzle-like bits and pieces, from images whose chaotic sequence reflects the anxious trepidation of the moment, the surprise and outrage it generates. They are printed in italics and listed one beneath the other, including several repetitions and disjointed sentences, whose style lacks the coherence of previous and following paragraphs, and which seem to represent the recordings of the panicky statements of a reporter who transmits live from the scene, as the events are happening: "*A shot. There's a shot. Oswald has been shot. A shot rang out. Mass confusion here.*" (DeLillo 1988:438-9)

The illustration of events as if seen through the lens of the camera, the reproduction of the anarchic sequence of images that characterizes the filming of a live event, as well as the general use of journalistic discourse and techniques of media representation to render history (whether past or in-the-making) are recognizable strategies of Don DeLillo, that we find in other works of his as well. In *Great Jones Street*, part of the story is

constructed through media articles and interviews done with the main character, rock star Bucky Wunderlick. In line with Baudrillard's theories on simulacra and simulation, the media functions as the supremely authoritative source, as the narrative is taken to the point where what journalists report to be true actually becomes reality. When asked how long it has been since Wunderlick's rock group broke up, one of its members replies: "I heard it on the radio coming in from the airport. When I left L.A., things were still in flux. Nothing was decided to the point where we could come out and say we've reached a decision. But I guess we broke up because I heard it on the radio. It sounded pretty official." (DeLillo 1973:181) In *The Body Artist*, character Rey Robles is introduced by means of a fictional biography published in the magazine *Cahiers du Cinema*, including laconic reference to his life and work, filtered according to the journalistic principle of newsworthiness.

The use of "paratextual insertions," such as newspaper clippings or TV clips, is analyzed as a prevalent postmodern technique by Professor Linda Hutcheon (2002). In her view, these "documents," as historians call them, function as tools for the de-naturalization of the archive, "foregrounding above all the textuality of its representations." (Hutcheon 2002:88) In other words, one of their main roles is to restate the postmodern question of how we acquire knowledge about the past. What determines the selection of certain facts from the past and their transformation into historical events? According to what framework are meanings granted to these historical events?

DeLillo's answer to these questions seems to point toward the extension of media's epistemological framework onto the structure used for the representation and understanding of history. As outlined in many of his novels, the selection of facts that are bound to enter history and the general granting of meaning and importance is determined by values that are intrinsic to the media field in contemporary American society, such as spectacularity and visibility. Though evidence of the import of media's epistemological framework can be traced throughout several of DeLillo's novels, the most relevant case of history's representation as a prevalently image-mediated experience is the novel *Libra*. This is due to the author's choice to center the case "that broke the back of the American century" around the two filmed clips that shaped its perception in the eyes of the audiences. One is the amateur footage of President Kennedy's assassination, captured by Abraham Zapruder, and the other is the film of Oswald's shooting by Jack Ruby, captured live by television cameras. Both represent the media filters that had a decisive role in the representation of those historical events as exclusively televisual experiences.

As DeLillo himself confesses in an interview (Begley 1993), the meaning of both assassinations being caught on film is that the events became “instantly repeatable” and “belonged to everyone” (this was true at first only for Oswald’s assassination clip, as the Zapruder film was only available on the black market until the mid-1970s): “you could watch Oswald die while you ate a TV dinner, and he was still dying by the time you went to bed.” (Begley 1993:300) This wide availability and the possibility to play and replay the video recording, endlessly reproducing the murder, noticing details and appropriating facts, seems to answer the audiences’ urge to “get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction,” as Walter Benjamin observes (1969:223). And it is this closeness that enhances the emotions that are part of the image-centered experimentation of history: “The head shot is like some awful, pornographic moment that happens without warning in our living rooms.” (Begley 1993:301) The shocking power of the moving images facilitates the representation of history through the mediation of the television screen. The assassinations become history because and as they are made visible by televised media.

One of the topics touched upon by the German philosopher Walter Benjamin in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1969) is the change that the advent of film and television marks in the relation between actors, or more generally people who appear on screen, and their audiences. As compared to a person who appears on stage in front of an audience, the screen performer is subjected to a series of “optical tests”—camera movements, changing filming angles, close-ups, zooming-ins and zooming-outs, and many others—that are conducted by a cameraman and that continually change the audience’s perspective on the performance. In addition, the screen actor cannot adapt to the audience during the performance or adjust his acting according to the received reactions. Inspired by some of Luigi Pirandello’s observations, Benjamin (1969:229-230) concludes that “what matters is that the part is acted not for an audience but for a mechanical contrivance,” and for this reason the screen actor feels an estrangement before the camera equal to the one felt “before one’s own image in the mirror.” The lack of contact between the performer and his public breaks the “aura” of himself and his performance and turns both into something similar to “any article made in a factory.” Deprived of the relation with his human public, the screen performance, and with it the performer, are suffering what representatives of the Frankfurt School of thought will later call a commodification of art, a turn towards the transformation of culture into an industry of mass production. In this context, the authoritative power seemingly generated by the visibility of

those who appear on screen is nothing but a deceptive reconstruction of the old relationship between performer and public: “The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the ‘spell of the personality’, the phony spell of a commodity.” (231)

The result of the transformation that performer and public are subjected to, and the emergence of the mediated connection between “stars” and “fans” as a substitute for the former interaction facilitated by the actor’s performance were also analyzed by Guy Debord. He defines screen stars as “specialists of apparent life,” acting out a certain lifestyle and acquiring their power by showing off as possessors of certain inaccessible commodities and certain freedoms (Debord 2002:9). Hence the fascination generated by their intensively televised persona, and the fans’ constant desire to emulate their promoted lifestyle. However, Debord warns, these freedoms are illusory because what screen stars offer is nothing more than a spectacular façade, without possessing real freedoms and choices. In the end, their existence as celebrities remains exclusively dependant on the mass media and on the way each medium chooses to represent them.

On a similar note, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1995) analyze stardom as a type of cultural commodity. The power of television and film idols to function as role models and establish aesthetic and behavioral trends for their audiences is seen in connection with the shift that takes place in the relation between performers and public, together with the advent of a society in which art and culture are bound to being produced for a mass audience, thus functioning as an industry. Whereas initially films were regarded as obvious reproductions of certain aspects of real life, in the era of the culture industries the use of sophisticated techniques and manipulative screenplays transforms films into complex duplicates of reality. In the view of the two German philosophers, “real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies” and audiences equate what they see on screen with what happens in the real world. This transformation has a deep impact on the audiences, whose lives become shaped by the formulaic settings and developments of the filmic recipes according to which the movie industry functions. This leaves no room for imagination or creativity and allows only for an automatic reproduction of the appearance and behavior of celebrities who show up on screen.

The fascinating visibility and the “spectacular façade” of televisual stardom are part of an omnipresent theme in DeLillo’s work. In *Libra* this fascination is integrated into Oswald’s search for an identity that would grant him a historical role. As Professor Arnold Weinstein (1993:312) argues, “Lee Harvey Oswald, putative candidate for regicide, is actually

Homo americanus, a man trying to forge his identity, utterly at home in our line of figures that starts with Wakefield and passes through Gatsby and Joe Christmas en route to beleaguered types such as Coover's version of Richard Nixon and Rick Blaine." The desire to shape and define one's self is central to DeLillo's novel, as are the terms of media and technology this quest is based upon. Nurtured by a set of media screens that are more and more proficient in duplicating reality, many of DeLillo's characters develop a constant desire for what Warhol called their "fifteen minutes of fame," and acquire a performative personality. Oswald himself sees media coverage as his ticket for entering history.

Pierre Bourdieu is one of the media theorists who analyze the role of the screen as a "mirror of Narcissus." In his book *On television* (Bourdieu 1998) he observes how the screen becomes "a space for narcissistic exhibitionism" and televised appearances become addictive for most public performers. In Bourdieu's view, they become willing to go to any length in order to obtain media attention and their goal is no longer that of conveying a message, but of doing whatever is necessary to see themselves appear on screen. Being seen on television and benefiting from the legitimacy and authority offered automatically by the medium is the ultimate goal for most commentators and "political analysts" that Bourdieu refers to, and we can extend the list to politicians, cultural icons and other types of celebrities as well.

An equal enchantment in front of his own reflection on screen seems to be manifested by Lee Oswald in *Libra* during the spectacular episode of his death in front of television cameras. In the few minutes before his death, watching the shot of Jack Ruby as if it were an exterior event, happening to someone else and seen through the lens of a TV camera, Oswald sees his dream of entering history come true. His fascination for the personalities of televised history and his desire to become one of them finds an answer in the media attention generated by the spectacularity of his last moments alive. Such dramatic and unexpected events as his shooting can only be perceived in his mind as connected to a televised news bulletin: "He could see himself shot as the camera caught it. Through the pain he watched TV. [...] Through the pain, through the losing of sensation except where it hurt, Lee watched himself react to the augering heat of the bullet." (DeLillo 1988:439) Oswald's image as "an actor in real life," constantly aware of the audience around him and "watching himself perform" is acknowledged by DeLillo himself (DeCurtis 1991:51), who describes his performative personality as being evident from many of the sources he used to research the character.

Oswald's intense desire to offer a memorable performance that would impress his mediated audiences to such an extent that it would allow him to enter history shapes his actions in a decisive manner. The nature of this performance is obviously influenced by how the famous "television stars" of Oswald's time acted on screen, by the theatrical contexts staged for them in order to obtain a dramatic effect that would impress audiences, by the way they pose and gesture. This is particularly evident in the case of another piece of historical evidence that is intrinsically related to Oswald's representation as a key character in American recent history: his "backyard photos," allegedly taken by his wife Marina and representing him with a rifle and two copies of well-known socialist magazines. Dressed in black and posing in a corner of his home's yard, "rifle in his right hand, muzzle up, butt end pressing on his waist, just inches from the holstered .38" and holding copies of "the Militant and the Worker [...] fanned like playing cards" in his left hand, Lee Oswald adopts the aggressive pose of a charismatic anti-hero from one of the westerns that started to become very popular in the early 1960s. (DeLillo 1988:278)

Although the authenticity of the "backyard photos" was often contested and there were plenty of professional image analysts who brought arguments supporting their fabrication, the images are still widely regarded as relevant for the projection of Lee's image as President Kennedy's assassin, with a deviant personality and holding the obvious pieces of evidence of anti-American beliefs in his very hands. An important part in the process of this photo becoming inherently associated with Oswald was held by the fact that it was published by a large number of wide-coverage magazines, the most prominent of which was Life Magazine from February 1964. With his trademark subversive irony, DeLillo tries to disrupt some of this aura of "the ultimate killer" when he re-enacts the scene of the backyard photo shoot in *Libra*. He presents Marina's distrustful input as a photographer, constantly subverting Oswald's performative pretences by repeating "It's foolish, Lee," "It's stupid. It impresses no one. It's pure and simple show." (DeLillo 1988:278) Nevertheless, this obviously overdramatized and ridiculous posturing did manage to convey Oswald's "thin smile [...] into the frame of official history" and get imprinted as an expressive representation of JFK's alleged assassin in the eyes of the audiences. And this was entirely due to the large-scale reproduction and distribution of the "backyard photos" by and through the media.

That Oswald's actions are resolutely influenced by television and by his desire to emulate the performance of the "screen stars" promoted by the media is also brought into focus by DeLillo through the two films that he sees before the assassination: *Suddenly*, starring Frank Sinatra as a "savage,

sensation-hungry killer,” and John Huston’s *Strangers*, centred on a plot for a presidential murder. In DeLillo’s representation of the sequence of events that led to the President’s assassination, the two films are granted a key role. Not only do they both feature a plot that seems to foretell what will happen in the future, but they are also sent out by what Oswald obviously regards as an authoritative source. The television screen becomes a symbolic oracle and is able to provide prophetic data about the future. As if in front of a religious entity, the viewer seeks guidance and support on the flickering screen, and consequently interprets what the screen provides as sacred commands. The hypnotic power of the television screen becomes obvious in the scene describing how Oswald watches the two films and, as French philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky (2008) observes, its entire impact depends on it. The sequence of images reaching the viewer who sits in near-darkness marks a violent optical encounter that cinema and television have always attempted to use and refine through technology as a means to attract and persuade. In the view of film critic Bela Balasz (qtd. in Lipovetsky & Serroy 2008:42), the cinema—and later television—abolished the traditional distance between spectator and performer, which characterized all previous forms of visual art. The viewer no longer holds a place exterior to the work of art, but actually becomes part of it. Hence, they have to get actively involved in what happens on the screen, empathize with the performers and deeply identify with their feelings and reactions. Once having experienced the situations that film characters are exposed to, the viewer can easily reproduce on-screen behavior in real-life contexts. Cinema and television feature films thus become an instrument of shaping a certain perception of the world, thus literally producing reality. As Lipovetsky and Serroy (2008) conclude, the two mass media not only help visualize a series of illusions or dream-like contexts, but the world itself, which has actually become a combination of reality and cinematic image.

The intrinsic connection between reality and its televised simulacra is also explored by French critic Jean Baudrillard, in particular in connection with contemporary America. In his famous overseas travel diary, Baudrillard (1989:56) describes cinema as a ubiquitous presence: “even outside the movie theatres, the whole country is cinematic” and “the American city seems to have stepped right out of the movies.” Itself an extension of the images promoted by televisual media, reality becomes indistinguishable from them. Exposed to the two films he perceives as analogous to his own experiences, Oswald’s character in *Libra* identifies with the Hollywood characters performing on screen and perceives their actions as something that can and should be reproduced in his own life. This

way, the screen becomes an essential instrument in the shaping of his behavior and has a vital role in what will happen next in the novel.

Equally powerful in shaping the viewers' collective perception on Kennedy's assassination is the televisual representation of those "six point nine seconds of heat and light" picturing the murder as it actually happens—the Zapruder film. As Peter Boxall (2006:147) notes, "the narrator of *Libra* works to enter into the light of the Zapruder film" because the "heat and light" become "the living medium in which the assassination is crafted and built: the 'heat and light' of the Bay of Pigs invasion; the 'heat and light' of the Texas university campus in which Everett imagines the plot; the 'heat and light' of New Orleans; the 'heat and light' of Dallas on November 22." The Zapruder film is the key piece of evidence in the case of the assassination because it provides its seemingly unequivocal visual depiction, its live account as a series of moving images. For this reason, the film becomes emblematic for the historical event and penetrating its atmosphere is a decisive point in the search for a valid interpretation of the events. In *Libra*, DeLillo renders the importance of the Zapruder film by symbolically extending its atmosphere over the rest of the key moments that form the event's development. However, despite the seemingly direct access that the film provides to the assassination, this does not automatically facilitate the understanding of its meaning. In other words, "visibility is no guarantee of intelligibility" and the mesmerizing power of the spectacular should not be mistaken for the actual understanding of the historical event (Simmons 1997:73).

The fact that the Zapruder film's power to clarify what happened in Dealey Plaza is only apparent, and that the footage does little to clear up the ambiguity surrounding the assassination represents one of the underlying ideas of DeLillo's novel. Although the characters involved in the plot literally come into being as they are captured on televisual image, thus becoming part of our "collective history," *Libra* raises the questions of whether this actually leads to our better understanding of the event and, from a larger perspective, "to what extent satisfactory historical understanding can ever be achieved under televisual conditions." (Simmons 1997:73) This should be regarded in connection with the fact that "the media spectacle surrounding these deaths is itself history; the images themselves *are* the events, and to speak of these killings separately from our experience of watching them on television is in a way, paradoxically, to deny their essential reality." (Simmons 1997:73)

3. Conclusion

Transformed into an essentially televisual experience, the rendering of history is bound to go through a lens that favors spectacularity and overdramatization as its main filters, manifestly emphasizing the magnitude of facts and data that meet these characteristics, and minimizing or ignoring those that do not. More than any of DeLillo's novels that touch upon historical events, *Libra* conveys the idea that the images we gather from television are our main source for the reconstruction of a historical event and that "our experience as television watchers [is] the primary ground of our understanding of [...] history, the starting point and perhaps the limit of any 'deeper' narrative structure we might erect to explain events." (Simmons 1997:80) By reconstructing the events that lead to the assassination of Kennedy and Oswald through a series of accidents and coincidences, DeLillo does nothing than to imitate the structure of the nonsensical ramblings provided by the overabounding media discourse in contemporary American society, suggesting the random selection of events by media outlets and the consequent confusion and ambiguity they create in the rendering of history.

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THE 'GARDEN VERSUS WILDERNESS' MYTH IN WESTERN IMAGINATION

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***Abstract:** The American myth of “earthly paradise” upholds the universal project of crafting the perfect society. The first Americans dreamed of turning the “wilderness” into a “garden”, notwithstanding that it already appeared to them as Paradise. This mythology builds upon a series of contradictions, along the lines of Western cultural oppositions (nature/ culture, primitive/ civilized), which indicates the source of a disintegrating “Paradise lost” complex.*

***Keywords:** America, garden, identity, myth, paradise.*

***Motto:** “As a true patriot, I should be ashamed to think that Adam in paradise was more favorably situated on the whole than the backwoodsman in this country.”*

– Henry David Thoreau, *Walking* (1862)

1. Introduction

The paper looks at the conflict between the mythical American wilderness and the civilizing mission of the Puritans, pointing to the self-deconstructive proclivity of the dualistic American quest. On the one hand, the American myth associated wilderness with the vitality and regeneration of the “frontier”. On the other hand, the process of “conquering” nature or making a garden out of the wilderness minimized that desired space of freedom so typically American. The paper proposes a discussion of this major theme American mythology is based upon, analyzing a series of divergent representations. Conflicting narratives of America as a New World, a Garden of Eden or paradise, come under close scrutiny, as the paper deals with images and self-images extensively. The Christian crusade set out to domesticate a primitive world integrated the Puritans’ quest in the scheme of national destiny, confirming the idea of mission. Thus, the first Americans dreamed of making a garden out of the wilderness, despite their representation of America as Paradise. This paradox would soon be followed by the conflict between nature as a repository of American identity and the organized society ushered in by capitalist society.

2. Paradoxes of the Garden Myth

One of the countless paradoxes of the American myth is that its creators dreamed of making a garden out of the wilderness, while preserving it pristine and unspoiled. American dream mythology draws on metaphors

of the “terrestrial paradise” which inspired newcomers to reach out for the land of promise. The prevailing myth of the “garden of the world” is amply illustrated in early colonial narratives, which enforced the idea of America as paradise. This myth is acknowledged as one of the commanding organizing forces of American culture (Sanford 1961:171). Paradisiacal narratives may be regarded as latter-day mythology, with America being depicted as an exotic place of extraordinary abundance, in contrast to the rest of the world. This mythology builds upon the Western cultural oppositions of good and evil, nature and culture, primitive and civilized, abundance and poverty. While beliefs in the existence of paradise and its supposed characteristics vary in different mythologies, the underlying idea is pervasive in human imagination:

“Man seems always to have cherished, in vision or imagination, strange thoughts of a mysterious country to which he longs to go. Whether this takes the form of a supposed realm of delight ... whether as an escape from reality or as an instinctive resource, he has brought forth from his imagination ... all the many images of the Isles of the Blessed, the Earthly Paradise, the Pied Piper’s country inside the mountain, the garden on the mountain top, the heavenly city in the skies, and the realm under the earth or under the sea. Descriptions of such places are found widely distributed in the literature of every nation.” (Patch 1950:1)

Western mythology traditionally associated Paradise to heaven, positioning it decidedly outside the earthly realm. Yet, upon the discovery of America, explorers and conquistadors accorded on locating paradise-on-earth precisely in the Newfoundland. Columbus and Vespucci wrote letters and travel reports which enforced the myth of an earthly paradise located at the ends of the earth (Jacoby 1980:191). They claimed they had discovered the heaven mentioned in the Scripture, which was suggested through various analogies. The condition of the natives, the incredible lushness of nature, and the temperance of the climate all gave reasons to think of the New World as a garden of paradise.

The precise location of the Earthly Paradise having been established, everything seemed to confirm it. The exoticism discovered in these primitive places fueled the Western imagination. Consequently, the quest for paradise surged with each validating description given by explorers. By combining the elements of Western mythical idealizations, America thus reflected the pre-imagined Western archetype of Paradise. Taking possession of nature in order to transform it into an alleged “land of promise” reflects the renaissance European’s belief that man was chosen by the Creator to possess and dominate the rest of creation. Thereby, the

chosen ones could hope to achieve a promised land or a garden of delights, though, strangely, by intervening and modifying what already was perceived as paradise.

In *Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Smith (1950) dedicates the chapter “Garden of the World” to an exploration of enthusiastic descriptions of the New World. The continent is described as “a new and enchanting region of inexpressible beauty and fertility” in the tradition of utter utopian fantasy (Smith 1950:11). America as plentiful cornucopia presented newcomers with a series of natural wonders, as though pristine nature was expecting its discoverers. From this inconsistent European standpoint, Tocqueville perpetuated the same idea: “That vast country was still, properly speaking, an empty continent, a desert land awaiting its inhabitants” (1981:173). Thus, “thirteen millions of civilized Europeans are peaceably spreading over those fertile plains”, driving away the natives as they explore and “make ready the triumphal march of civilization across the desert” (Tocqueville 1981:174). It is not less paradoxical that this continent was perceived as a resourceful garden and an empty desert at the same time.

The conflict between nature and civilization deserves closer attention, as it significantly heralds the clash between idyllic America and the emergent urban capitalism which will soon make way. On the one hand, Paradise promised a bountiful life free from want and unspoiled by civilization. On the other hand, the intruders set out to civilize the wilderness, in order to bring it to a degree of civilization they had fled from. Therefore, the transformation of the wilderness into a garden is a constant theme in the early writings. As Europeans engaged the conquest of paradise, they played upon binary oppositions such as “primitivism” and “civilization”, which functioned to justify their supremacy. This rhetoric paralleled the enterprise whereby the new land was explored, settled and Christianized – in brief, colonized. Another contradiction follows, as the myth of America as Garden of Eden enforced an optimistic interpretation of the primitivism Indians displayed. However, a different representation attempted to justify the colonist conquest and oppression of Indian civilizations. According to the theory of the inevitable accession of “savagism” to “civilization”, Indians were forced to submit to the declared superiority of God’s chosen Puritans.

Furthermore, the myth of supplanting a European garden for a desolate wilderness comprises a whole set of Old World paradigms. For instance, man as controller of nature tames and domesticates the space according to God’s will, as a force of righteousness. Moreover, the crusaders’ myth evokes the images of the Christian garden of delight

contrasted with the satanic wilderness. To Europeans, gardening meant clearing the land, sowing seeds and enclosing the cultivated area. Such an enterprise brought European seeds and fences to the New World in the name of progress and the advancement of civilization. Whereas the natives struggled to preserve wilderness, refusing the superiority of the garden, it is ironical that Americans would later strive to recapture the very wilderness they set out to remove.

As America was being built on a crusader's myth, the dream of expansion was pursued westwards. Therefore, it may be said that the West was designed by means of expansion (Cunliffe 1959:70). The frontier further enhanced the myth of expansion and ensuing progress by integrating the West. At this point, the expansionist penchant becomes inseparable from the American myth made manifest, which Americans nonetheless insisted on dissociating from imperialism or colonialism (Robertson 1980:74). Instead, the West started to take shape as a distinctive new region and a significant repository of American cultural identity (Worster 1994:119). It was a unique location, "more heroic, more immense in vistas" than the already settled East, thus reinforcing a renewed sense of American exceptionalism (Worster 1994:ix). In the great trek westwards, moving pioneers arrived into this vast strip of promising nature which afforded new opportunities for self-reinvention. Therefore, the American West is mainly a migrating region from the primitive wilderness to the civilized garden. Unlike other places with a particular past and memory, the West was "a fantasy land" for idealists to fill with American dreams (Worster 1994:4).

Thus, the incredible growth of the region soon inspired the optimistic psychology of the new West, which ironically upheld wilderness as an American frontier virtue. The frontier thesis, as framed by Frederick Jackson Turner (1997), maintained that American progress was upheld by the physical advance westwards. Turner's contention was that the West was the most important of American cultural regions because the frontier engendered democracy, which outweighed the imported European legacy in shaping America. This is also the source of national democracy, as frontier society was shaped by the sense of freedom afforded by the appraised wilderness. That is why the settlers gradually developed an "American character" by setting out to civilize the wilderness and themselves.

Significantly, Turner conceived of democracy as a trait of agricultural communities. The same agrarian ideal can be traced in his insistence on frontier democracy, as well as in Jefferson's conception that democracy should have a native, agricultural basis (Smith 1950:255). From this perspective, the American dream was not carried overseas aboard the Mayflower to Plymouth, but came out of the native wilderness and became

more commanding each time it touched a new frontier. Moreover, American nature inspired yet again idealistic accounts of rebirth and regeneration, constantly reenacted as civilization came into contact with the wilderness. Though Europe had once represented the only West, with each new “west” discovered, America regenerated and received a new lease of life.

What is more, the frontier hypothesis is based on a broader conceptualization of the West, which asserts the significance of the West and the ideal of democracy. Ambiguously, the frontier is the meeting point between savagery and civilization, as the limit of settlement is also the border line of civilization. Consequently, two Wests may be discerned, one beyond and one within the frontier line (Smith 1950:251). The West now gaining ascendancy is the one beyond civilization, notwithstanding some underlying contradictions. On the one hand, the wilderness beyond the frontier is not only the realm of savagery, but also that of free land and individual freedom.

In terms of mythical imagery, the division between West and East connoted the same contrast between wilderness and civilization, frontier and settlement, primitiveness and improvement (Robertson 1980:79). The master symbol of “the Garden of the World” resurfaces in order to depict the West as a mythical agrarian Eden. This myth contains a “cluster of metaphors expressing fecundity, growth, and blissful labor in the earth, all centering about the heroic figure of the idealized frontier farmer” (Smith 1950:123-128). Thus, Smith imagines the agrarian utopia of virtuous yeomen who seek the American dream in the virgin West and enact it in a classless society.

Yet, on the other hand, the tendency to cut off the American West from the urban East and from Europe also entailed a series of drawbacks. Cast as the opposite of civilization, the appurtenance to this region inflicted the stigma of cultural and ethical inferiority upon Westerners. The theory of civilization was based on the assumption that America, in the guise of the utter West, was to reproduce and enhance the achievements of Europe-as-West (Smith 1950:260). That is why American mythology had to integrate the contradictory ideas of both nature and civilization, each of which remained irreducible as well as irreconcilable.

The preeminence of nature in the nineteenth-century imagination was enhanced by romantics and transcendentalists, who recapped the agrarian doctrine described by Henry Nash Smith (1950). The ever-growing number of literary works which used landscape with tremendous exaltation prompted the vogue of romantic primitivism. Romanticizing mythical themes of nature suggested that great potentialities lay hidden in American nature. For Tocqueville, in America “nature herself favors the cause of the

people”. He explains that “the chief circumstance which has favored the establishment and the maintenance of a democratic republic in the United States is the nature of the territory that the Americans inhabit” (Tocqueville 1981:172). At this point, the wilderness becomes associated more to ideas of innocence, freedom and potentiality than to barbarian primitivism.

For these reasons, romantic literature held nature in the highest regard and spread exaltation about America as “Nature’s Nation”, in contrast to European aristocratic corruption (Lears 1994:27). In *Errand into the Wilderness*, Miller (1964) traces the difference between the European and the American idea of “nature” in the shared pursuit of progress. European Puritans who nurtured their own Dream appear as the “harbingers of civilization”, building communities in search for a new beginning (Robertson 1980:142). While Christian belief had conflicted with the wilderness, Americans later revered nature as a prime element of national piety. What is more, Thoreau and the transcendentalists even transformed the notion of “wilderness” into myth. From his romanticizing perspective, the wilderness generates virtue and morality, as opposed to civilization. Thoreau’s contemporaries further developed the mythical American wilderness as a locus of opportunity and boundless resourcefulness.

However, the myth of the garden, with the quality of timelessness characteristic of myth, failed to reflect the surfacing conditions of industrialization (Smith 1950:159). Conspicuously, American nature was changing rapidly, with ample disillusioning consequences upon American character. The earlier values that had been asserted by idealistic agrarian doctrines conflicted with the emergent age of progress. The taming of nature would be continued by the Industrial revolution, attended by a host of new implications. Yet, the veneration of nature for its goodness, abundance and naturalness remains in disagreement with the inescapable replacement of nature by civilization.

As the mythical American wilderness yielded in the face of civilization, fundamental values were lost and replaced by incongruous themes. This has produced two contrasting sets of imagery between the mission into the wilderness and the celebrated wilderness to be preserved. Paradoxically, pioneers domesticated the wilderness, by advancing into the West and minimizing the land of hope as the frontier was closing in. As civilization was being ushered in, classless equality soon developed in urban America, a “society of the middle mass” (Robertson 1980:258). American cities were places of opportunity and success, but this new perspective coexisted with urban visions of regimentation and dependence. At the close of the nineteenth century, F. Jackson Turner had warned that the era of the frontier had passed, together with its foremost value – self-reliant

individualism. As soon as the transformation of the wilderness into civilization had been fully accomplished, progress was followed by the dissolution of the American dream of paradise.

Thus, American nature, worshiped for its vastness and virginity preserved until recently soon made way to an irresolvable conflict. On the one hand, its transformations fulfilled the dream of progress, but on the other hand, the dream was also dispelled as “steam has annihilated space” (Fisher 1968:229). Hence, there emerges an inconsistency between the upheld improvement of industrialization and its image as a destructive force. The machine would lead to the desired and complete mastery of nature. From this perspective which celebrated technology, nature serves to be exploited rather than admired. The myth of progress emphasized human supremacy and triumph over nature by means of machines which were meant to improve the masters’ condition (Fisher 1968:230). Metaphors of the machine as a servant connoted the beneficence, freedom and abundance it brought to humankind. Therefore, it was cast as the new inspirer of the American dream of uplift and fulfillment.

Even more problematic was the fact that nature represented the repository of American exceptionalism. It was precisely the element that confirmed the superiority over European artificiality. The unique character of America had been associated with the virtues of wilderness and unspoiled nature. As the American loses sight of nature, while being “helped” by the machine, self-reliance and other distinctive myths are imperiled. Despite the conflict between the machine society and the free individual, Americans celebrated both progress and self-sufficient individualism. Industrialism triggered tensions between its upheld tenets and idealizations of nature advanced by romanticism and the Enlightenment. The simultaneous belief in the beneficence of progress and in the goodness of nature was decidedly an irresolvable paradox (Fisher 1968:241). These hopes and fears were shared by both Americans and Europeans in the nineteenth century, generating a contradiction which is possibly the source of contemporary conflict.

Later, modernity would engender new myths of Paradise (Lost) in the attempt to rescue a past Golden Age. Capitalist fantasies of urban plenty move to the thematic core of American dream mythology, replacing the abundance of nature. The final phase of the conquest of paradise myth is represented by the marketing and consumption of paradise through the promise and abundance of commodities in mass culture. America as a postmodern Paradise may also be traced in entertainment, e.g. Disneyland and Hollywood-produced images, which would all engender the disintegration of the “American dream”. However, the meaningful utopian

content of an American Paradise myth has gradually been worn out. Therefore, the debate remains open whether American “paradise” should more accurately be located in the wilderness or in the civilizing garden.

3. Conclusion: Closing Down the “Garden of the World”

The theme of the West is designed as an enforcement of the myth of American exceptionalness, upholding a special universal mission in the world. The dualism inherent in this myth positing a nation both unique and universal further enhances conflicts between self and other within the Western thought paradigm. Ultimately, the global dream to bring the hope of democracy to the world is informed by the myth of the “civilizing mission” as much as the colonist quest had been. Therefore, in the current context of the crisis of the West, a perceived rivalry appears between the East and West with regard to how their respective projects should be achieved. The enforcement of the American dream as the desired framework of world order, however paradisiacal, becomes a point of tension in the contemporary world, which undermines the credibility of the West as a possible community of tolerance.

Finally, terrorism is the last conflicting element which engenders dramatic transformations in America’s self-image as Paradise, as well as in the changing configuration of the concept of “West”. Ultimately, even the war on terror may be seen as an effort on the part of America to reinforce an image of itself as a peaceful garden, while also imposing its own set of values universally. In terms of American mythology, the West had once been represented as either a wilderness to be conquered or a “garden of the world” which Western Europeans set out to cultivate in their unrelenting westward trajectory. Colonial visions of paradise had associated the newly found West to the best of all possible worlds, though they paradoxically also felt compelled to modify it. Yet, as the American West is integrated in the larger concept of West, it becomes not only the encapsulation of liberalism, but also the legacy of colonialism and imperialism. Such aspects point to the fascinating energy the American dream myth continues to emanate.

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COLONIAL VERSIONS OF A POSTCOLONIAL REALITY

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Abstract: *V.S. Naipaul's novel The Mimic Men focuses on Ralph R. K. Singh who will pursue the dream of a metropolis, leaving his native land in order to live in a global city where his identity should become “one out of many”, less visible but at the same time reassuringly close to his idea of “home”. Yet, the postcolonial society fails to come up to his expectations and transforms him into a homeless drifter.*

Keywords: *displacement, exile, identity, postcolonial theory*

1. Introduction

The novel to be discussed has a rather simple - or, if I may, “postcolonially predictable” – plot. Ralph Singh, the central character, is born on the island of Isabella and decides to complete his education in England. After a few failed relationships he marries Sandra, an English girl, comes back to his original place of birth and builds a business of his own. His marriage, however, does not seem to work out: he gets divorced and afterwards becomes politically involved, alongside one of his former school colleagues, Browne. Politics will also fail to offer him the desired kind of order, so that he flees again to England, hoping to hide in a remote village and write his memoirs. His neverending trips to and from England will not grant him the feeling that he is actually looking for. Being constantly on the move, he hopes to reach his destination and, consequently, his dream.

2. A Colonial Childhood

Although the novel opens with his life in London, I have chosen to discuss the second part of the novel first, i.e. the account of Ralph Singh's childhood on the formerly colonial island of Isabella. His upbringing and environment will be the ones to finally shape his adult views of the world, proving crucial for the young child in search for a world of his own. As the offspring of a poor schoolteacher (his father) and of the owners of the local Coca-Cola bottlers (his mother's family), he will choose early in life the path to follow, by rejecting his father's side of the family and rejoicing the privileges of having a famous family branch to go back to. His mother's brother, Cecil, is also his schoolmate and, even if he treats him rather harshly, Ralph does not seem to mind as long as he can still be close to those in power.

One of his first memories about school comes as a surprise: “My first memory of school is of taking an apple to the teacher. This puzzles me. We had no apples in Isabella. It must have been an orange; yet my memory

insists on the apple” (Naipaul 2001:109-10). Clinging onto a desired reality, the boy’s memory starts to replace things so that he may better fit into the world he so desperately tries to create. It must have been an apple - a common fruit - that was brought to school, not something as “exotic” as an orange. Also part of this process of replacement will be the new identity he creates, the result of a sort of game he plays, placed between the old and the new, the forgotten and the desired:

My reaction to my incompetence and inadequacy had been not to simplify but to complicate. For instance, I gave myself a new name. We were Singhs. My father’s father’s name was Kripal. My father, for purpose of official identification, necessarily in that new world he adorned with his aboriginal costume, ran these names together to give himself the surname of Kripalsingh. My own name was Ranjit; and my birth certificate said I was Ranjit Kripalsingh. That gave me two names. But Deschampsneufs had five apart from his last name, all French, all short, all ordinary, but this conglomeration of the ordinary wonderfully suggested the extraordinary. I thought to complete. I broke Kripalsingh into two, correctly reviving an ancient fracture, as I felt; gave myself the further name of Ralph and signed myself R.R.K. Singh. At school I was known as Ralph Singh. The name Ralph I chose for the sake of the initial, which was also that of my real name (Naipaul 2001:112-3).

Living with the myth of the Deschampsneufs, a family whose name bears ancestral overtones, the child feels that he can fabricate similar roots and regards his act as a natural deed: imposture will be feared only later, given the fact that nobody seems to inquire after his real name. The security of this new identity will give him the courage to (secretly) pursue his Hindu roots, by reading books which he does not understand about the Aryans and dreaming of becoming their leader. The myth of the origins seems crucial to every child of the New World. Hok, one his colleagues, will also try to trace back his Chinese heritage. Each of the children hides in a corner of the public library, old books in hands, engulfed in a reality which he desperately tries to reclaim. The need for ancestors, for a tradition which they can call their own, is crucial to these children who are educated as mimic men of the New World. Unfortunately for Hok, he will be exposed in front of all his colleagues as having a black mother, and his first reaction is similar to Ralph’s: he simply pretends not to know her. Since it is too late, he will be punished in a way that only children can manage so unremittingly: he will be simply overlooked and forgotten.

It is charming how Naipaul grasps such feelings in children. As the act of looking for an ideal world and ancestry might be interpreted as schizoid melancholy in adults, he hinds behind the faces of children, who are allowed to pursue any of their fantasies. It will be the same fantasy, but

with deeper valences, that the grown-up Ralph Singh will try to live out: he will flee to the city of London. This sort of return to lost origins will no longer speak to him; it will be merely a voyage between here and there, with no final destination. Ralph Singh is, from this perspective, similar to V.S. Naipaul: “[a]fter the failed attempt to reconnect himself to India and the return to England, Naipaul had become like Singh an uprooted colonial, a permanent homeless exile, wedded to his writing and his desk, seemingly writing about the upheavals and turmoils of the colonial and postcolonial world, but in actuality giving order to his own life through writing” (King 2003:73).

It is not only Hok, his Chinese-African-American colleague, who will betray Ralph’s high expectations of famous origins. He will one day pay a visit to his other friend, Browne, but will be turned off by reality:

A genuine old-time Negro [*Browne’s father*], grey-headed and pipe-smoking, was leaning out of a window and vacantly regarding the crowded street. He wore a grimy flannel vest. A flannel vest was proletarian wear – flannel the favoured material of Negroes enfeebled by illness or old age – and I wished I had not seen it on Browne’s father (Naipaul 2001:177).

This is the old, stereotypical image of a Negro lying around, wearing a flannel vest, which one can encounter in old American movies (there are several other characters who build up their images of the world based on movies). Ralph would have wanted to avoid it, since it only confirms once more that the old order of things cannot be simply forgotten. Used to fabricated images of themselves, the children postpone reality until it is no longer possible to do so. When faced with the truth about themselves, they turn around and look for a new image they can cling onto.

The atmosphere in school is actually laden with racial overtones: Browne reminds one of the minstrel shows when proudly singing “Oh, I’m a happy little nigger” to the white and joyful audience; Eden is the little servant of the Deschampsneufs’ boy, racially abused by a teacher while his colleagues pretend nothing happens; Deschampsneufs decides to baptize his horse with a name that reinforces the slave commerce. All this is presented as given fact, and nobody seems to mind. A colonial view of the world still prevails in one part of the island, while the other is being seduced by the privileges of postcolonialism: “We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new” (Naipaul 2001: 175).

Raised in an intellectual tradition which is not their own (i.e. the English tradition) the children will perfectly illustrate Governor’s Macaulay

expectations from “his” colonial subjects. They had to be “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (Macaulay in Harlow and Carter 2003:237) – in other words mimic men raised through the English School. It is Homi Bhabha who has very accurately observed that “mimicry *repeats* rather than *re-presents*” (Bhabha 2002:88), and this is what Naipaul’s characters are desperately doing: lacking any solid definition of their past and of the surrounding reality, they begin repeating the models they see as already working. This is also the reason why a boy like Deschampsneufs will always be regarded as the measure of things, even if he turns out to be as mediocre as many of his colleagues: he has a tradition, and, more importantly, a colonial past he can go back to and reclaim as his own.

His household is the only one adorned with pictures of ancestors and personal histories going as far back as Stendhal. It is this kind of tradition which protects him from being a mere imitator – the others’ only choice is to be “natural impersonators” (Naipaul 2001:160) of anything desirable. It was Rob Nixon who stated that mimicry is, in Naipaul’s writings, a “condition of insecurity” (1992:131) derived from a weak sense of history and the grandiose dreams of the formerly colonial subject. It is such dreams that determine Ralph and his colleagues to turn idealized images of the past into “real” events of their present lives.

3. The Flight to the Centre

Chaotic as these lives might be, the boys know one thing for sure: they need a real past of their own, a current guide in life and a future which should separate them from the mediocrity of life on a small island. With this in mind, Ralph sets out to London, although warned that his only accomplishment will be to turn back to the island with a “whitey-pokey”. Aware of the fact that Isabella was just “an obscure New World transportation, second-hand and barbarous” (Naipaul 2001:141), triggering only disorder and offering no feeling of home, he sees London as the only place which could bring solidity into his disoriented life. Yet, London will fail to save him from the obscurity he tries to evade, sending him back to the old order of the world, living in a boarding house which separates the English (living upstairs) from the immigrants (residing in the basement):

When I first came to London, shortly after the end of the war, I found myself after a few days in a boarding-house, called a private hotel, in the Kensington High Street area. The boarding-house was owned by Mr Shylock. He didn’t live there, but the attic was reserved for him; and Lieni, the Maltese housekeeper, told me he occasionally spent a night there with a young girl. ‘These English girls!’ Lieni said. She herself lived in the basement with her illegitimate child. An early postwar

adventure. Between attic and basement, pleasure and its penalty, we boarders lived, narrowly (Naipaul 2001: 7).

The place he now lives in is owned by Mr. Shylock, a man who enjoys his privileges (the attic was reserved for him) and sensual moments: the English girls, so harshly judged by the Maltese housekeeper, sometimes offer their sexual services to the wealthy man. Two worlds are, thus, kept apart: the decaying Englishmen and the hard-working immigrants. Lieni, however, resembles the English girls more than she wishes to, by having an illegitimate child “in the basement”. The two worlds consequently seem to come closer, as one might mistake one for the other: from now on, borderlines are erased and anything can happen. Between the attic (the morally decayed England) and the basement (the morally decayed immigrant) live the boarders, who are somehow preparing to choose between these options or, maybe, walk the in-between line. It is this in-betweenness that will (mis)guide our character throughout the different stages of his life, to find pleasure or penalty in London or elsewhere.

It is the very same Mr. Shylock, the first real person Ralph Singh gets in contact with in England, that he decides to copy, as he admires his way of dress and behaviour. From the very first page, the act of imitating someone’s gestures is rendered as natural: “He had the habit of stroking the lobe of his ear and inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it” (Naipaul 2001:7). Due to this new world he inhabits, Ralph decides to create a new and more appealing side of himself, choosing to play “the dandy, the extravagant colonial” (Naipaul 2001:24), roaming on the corridors of the British Council, not in search of culture, but of foreign girls he could seduce for the night.

His declared purpose of coming to London in order to “find the beginning of order” (Naipaul 2001:22), to be taken in by the great civilization and assimilated into the mainstream, is far away from reality. Society decides to play a trick on the hopeful immigrant, strips him of all his identities and turns him into a simple colonial subject devoid of all past privileges. Like Naipaul himself, Ralph will be greatly disappointed in the city, which should have offered all that his colonial island life has kept hidden. Even if he looks for order in the metropolis, either he fails to find it or the city fails to offer it. It is this very city which enables him to create a new fictitious identity, according to the needs of the moment: “In London I had no guide. There was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistencies or inconsistencies. It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I

was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship.” (Naipaul 2001:24).

The postcolonial subject takes advantage of his chameleonic sides and shapes up his identities like an inexperienced actor on a stage. In his attempts to find a new personality, he allows Lieni to embroider stories of various kinds: thus, he will be transformed into a charming dandy, of great wealth, seducing women in the most unconventional circumstances, while he is rather shy, fails sexual contact and is in need for money. But “[w]e become what we see of ourselves in the eyes of others.” (Naipaul 2001:25). The foreign city fails in its role as definer of identities, causing the opposite: people lose their essence and become mere “flat postures” (Naipaul 2001:32). But the great city and the individual are connected through a key-element - language:

Language is so important. Up to this time my relationships had been with women who knew little English and of whose language I frequently knew nothing. These affairs had been conducted in a type of pidgin; they were a strain; I could never assess the degree of complication we had arrived at after the sexual simplicities. Once this had been glamorous and had suited me; now it was *like entering an imperfect world*, some grotesque tunnel of love, where, as in a dream, at a critical moment one is denied the use of arms and legs and longs to cry out (Naipaul 2001:53, emphasis added).

Language proves to be vital to social relationships; communication cannot occur in translation, because something will always get lost and this could be fatal for personal relationships. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Ralph Singh will marry a white woman, Sandra, an exotic character herself, who paints her breasts and thus turns into a different kind of mimic, taking up traditions which are not her own. By this act of inter-racial marriage, Ralph Singh does not want to become white (see Frantz Fanon 1967:47); due to his education, he already is. The issue is no longer that of conquering the white world he feels so distant from his own identity. This is one crucial difference between the colonial and the postcolonial individual: one no longer needs to fight for recognition, not in the desperate grasp of the colonized.

London will fail to provide a new home for the new immigrant: we read nothing about cultural revelations, his education or his English friends. The city has no face for the immigrant, no details are provided to make it visible. His only friends are immigrants like himself, sad faces in a gloomy atmosphere, overburdened by daily life. Promiscuity will define his life in the great city, lurking behind the faces of foreign girls or mediocre prostitutes. Only when facing this kind of life is he aware of the fact that “I

could not, like many of my fellow exiles, live in a suburban semi-detached house; I could not pretend even to myself to be part of a community or to be putting down roots.” (Naipaul 2001:13). His dream of finding in London both the order of things and a new place to call home will eventually be shattered, so that he cannot but go back to the island, together with the newly-acquired wife. It is this new person that Ralph’s mother sees for the first time at the airport:

[W]e are a melodramatic race and do not let pass occasions for public display. Picture, then, Sandra in her carefully chosen disembarkation outfit coming face to face with a conventionally attired Hindu widow. Picture her mistaking the raised arms and the first wail for a ritual of welcome and, out of a determination to meet strange and ancient customs half-way, concealing whatever surprise and bewilderment she might have felt; then, with the wail broken only to be heightened, the gestures of distress converted explicitly into gestures of rejection, realizing the nature of her reception, hesitating in her already tentative approach to the frenzied figure of my mother, and finally standing still, the centre now of a scene which was beginning to draw a fair audience of dockworkers roused from their languor, passengers, visitors, officials, the crews of ships of various nations (Naipaul 2001:62).

4. The Lure of Colonial Life on an Island

The encounter between two different civilizations and the misinterpretation of cultural codes are humorously captured in one breathtaking sentence. An English wife is not exactly what Ralph’s mother was expecting, and she does not hesitate to show it. The arrival to the island coincides, however, with a new discovery: everything around has been modernized, while the old “haphazard, disordered and mixed society” (Naipaul 2001:66) seems to be only a bad dream. Yet, even if a new context is to be provided for this new beginning, the marriage to Sandra will fail. Bruce King recognizes in her a sort of pattern, failing, like any individual might, in her attempts to become a “person of the world”:

Rejecting her family, she aspires to fame in London, fails her university examinations and with no hope for the future attaches herself to Singh and finds herself adrift and without purpose on Isabella, where everything and everyone seem third rate to her. She is herself a forerunner of Linda, Bobby and Jane, expatriates in Naipaul’s novels who were unsuccessful in their own country (King 2003:73).

Expatriates do not need to be hybrids in search of their identity and Sandra does enjoy the “privilege of the expatriates” (as Robert Nixon would put it, cf. 1992:22-24). She leaves when she actually chooses to, the image reminding Ralph of the *Casablanca* sadness. Ralph will give the marriage a

last try, building a Roman house. The welcome-party proves to be a failure, everything smashed up by the drunken guests, an image reminding of the Jazz Age and F. Scott Fitzgerald: the same decaying yet glamorous atmosphere, the same individuals drifting in search of some sort of achievement. Ralph blames it on the rented house they live in, which cannot provide the feeling of home. Still, none of the houses he inhabits can grant him that feeling: as a child he fears (even has nightmares!) for no real reason that the house he lives in will fall apart due to rain. After a storm, he rushes home, convinced that the house could no longer be standing. Nor has the first house he inhabits in London a better destiny: it will be turned into a whorehouse, a place where anonymous people hiding from their real identities parade. Ralph's feeling of displacement will trigger the impossibility of peopling a place. The individual's inner insecurity will shatter the real walls of a personal shelter, so that he is forced to start anew every time.

After an instable London life and a chaotic marriage, Ralph Singh attempts a political career together with his former colleague Browne, at the *Socialist* newspaper. This is Ralph's last form of rebellion. He is, however, forgetful of the fact that his father had already attempted to play the role of the spiritual leader, taking on the name of Gurudeva and turning into an odd mixture between Che Guevara and Mahatma Gandhi. Like everything in his life so far, politics will also prove to be a failure. We are not provided with details about the party, only with disparaged events finally triggering his expulsion from the island. He will be on the road again, heading once more towards England and towards a home he cannot call his own. Like previously, he will choose to live in a remote hotel, hiding behind the anonymity it can confer and behind the book he is struggling to write. The continuous search for a place of his own will come to a momentary end: no matter where he goes, he cannot recover his roots. For Ralph Singh, a place has little to do with spatial location (see also Bill Ashcroft 2001:13-14); it rather has to do with family, community – a shared culture he is unable to find.

Ralph Singh's personal history reduces him to the rather stereotypical postcolonial image: born in the wrong place, taking up traditions other than his own, tracing back a past which should offer him some sort of consolation and playing with different versions of the self. Because of his inability to relate to his past, he cannot find his place no matter where he lives. London fails to provide the feeling of order he is desperately looking for, causing yet another rift in an already torn individual. Thus, he will complete the gallery of Naipaul's characters: early postcolonials defined by their strange choice in favour of displacement after

a short search for wholeness. Frustrated by his designated place in life, Ralph Singh will hide behind the tempting act of writing, with totally unclear outcomes, however. He will probably fail in this attempt as well, as he lacks the determination the postcolonial world requires. Freshly unglued from colonial life, he is not ready to enjoy the privileges of postcolonialism, since he refuses to perceive multiculturalism as a real solution. To Ralph Singh, clear definitions of the self are the only viable variants in a world dominated by shifting identities.

5. Conclusion. Drifting through Postcolonialism

Ralph Singh portrays a very specific attitude towards the encounter with the new world: as a child, Ralph was educated in an English manner, so that his dreams can be but of Englishness and England. His encounter with the new reality does not involve encountering and accommodating difference, because this world has always been perceived as familiar. Although the metropolitan city fails to fulfill his dreams, this only happens because his dreams are vaguely shaped. The refusal to adapt is the final statement this character makes in the postcolonial confusion. Ralph Singh is a colonial subject lost in the postcolonial reality, who cannot recreate the idea of home or adjust to the hybrid facets of the new surroundings. He will drift towards the centre, but will refuse its gifts, clinging to old definitions of the self. It is these drawer-like definitions he will seek to avoid until the very end.

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**PROMISCUOUS ANGELS.
ENOCH, BLAKE, AND A CURIOUS CASE
OF ROMANTIC ORIENTALISM**

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***Abstract:** The paper has a double purpose. On the one hand it explores the knowledge of the Book of Enoch (discovered in 1773, published in English in 1823) by artists (William Blake, John Flaxman, Robert Westall) and poets (John Byron, Thomas Moore) of English Romanticism. Moore's using the theme reveals a curious case of Orientalism, not noticed by Edward Said. Furthermore, the paper is a progress report and methodological survey how traditional library use and the new electronic research tools can be combined for a complex study of cultural history.*

***Keywords:** angels, Blake, Enoch, Orientalism, Romanticism, Thomas Moore*

1 Context

For a few years it has become more and more apparent that our (English major) students are less and less inclined to read, although reading is obviously one of the most important activities of the practitioners of the humanities. Fading enthusiasm for reading has automatically lead to the diminishing habit of frequenting libraries in favour of surfing on the internet. While noticing this – and before unconditionally complaining – we should also acknowledge that the culture of the world wide web and the new digital cosmos have radically changed the ways of learning and research, among other factors by means of the accessibility of an exponentially increasing amount of primary and secondary sources as well as archival materials. My observation is that a lot of traditionally disposed colleagues desperately try to fight against these new trends and they do their best to redirect their students to the libraries while expressing suspicion and distrust toward the digital resources. My present paper has a double purpose. While I am going to introduce an interesting cultural phenomenon from the era of English Romanticism, I also try to demonstrate that the methodological struggle between "orthodox library research" and "new wave digital scholarship" is ended in a draw, namely, they don't exclude, rather complement each other and a good blend of the two yields unexpected results.

I spent the calendar year of 2009 in one of the dreamlands of scholars of English, that is in Cambridge, England. There one could enjoy not only Britain's third largest, but one of the world's best research libraries, not to mention the additional manuscript-, rare book-, and visual collections

of the individual colleges. In addition, the University Library is fully equipped with the most extensive and expensive electronic databases presently available. This complex work environment proved and reinforced my already previously existing conviction that really efficient and fruitful research can only be carried out with a combination of the Gutenberg galaxy and the digital universe.

2 The Enoch-project

For a year I was working on the cultural history and reception of the Biblical patriarch, Enoch. I hit upon this topic while studying the world picture of the Elizabethan mathematician and magus, John Dee. The well qualified humanist doctor, after a long career finally had become disappointed in the natural sciences and had arrived at a rather surprising conclusion according to which the only way to attain perfect knowledge and omniscience was to learn the language of the angels, or the primordial Adam, and try to become the conversation partner of the supernatural spirits, ultimately even God. In Dee's famous "spiritual diaries" I have found the following quotation:

All my life time I had spent in learning: but for this forty years continually, in sundry manners, and in divers Countries, with great pain, care, and cost, I had from degree to degree sought to come by the best knowledge that man might attain unto in the world: and I found (at length) that neither any man living, nor any Book I could yet meet withal, was able to teach me those truths I desired and longed for: And therefore I concluded with my self, to make intercession and prayer to the giver of wisdom and all good things, to send me such wisdom, as I might know the natures of his creatures; and also enjoy means to use them to his honour and glory. (Dee, 1659: 231)

While expressing his desire to be privileged with a superhuman knowledge, the English doctor mentioned the example of Enoch, who, according to legends as well as Biblical information was allowed to communicate with angels and with the Lord:

I have read in thy bokes & records, how Enoch enjoyed thy favour and conversation, with Moyses thou wast familier: and also that to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Josua, Gedeon, Esdras, Daniel, Tobias, and sundry other, thy good Angels were sent, by thy disposition to instruct them, informe them, help them, yea in wordly and domesticall affaires, yea, and sometimes to satisfy their desyres, doutes & questions of thy Secrets. (Dee, 2003: 58)

According to the Bible it was Enoch before the flood who had been the only human privileged not to die, but was elevated to God and translated into an angelic being, Metatron: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was

not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:21-25). As a Renaissance cultural historian, I first noticed that Dee was by no means alone to having become quite intrigued and enthusiastic about Enoch. The patriarch was generally highly esteemed by a lot of theologians, humanists, even esoterically minded magi, such as Pico della Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, or Paracelsus. Medieval legends considered Enoch – together with Hermes Trismegistus – the inventor of writing, the sciences and the arts. It was safe to pinpoint Enoch as an exemplary magus, since he was a canonized biblical figure so he could not be blamed of dabbling in heretical black magic.

In the New Testament the letter of Saint Jude referred to a *Book of Enoch* as follows: "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. To execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them..." (Jude 14-15). Saint Paul also praised him in his letter to the Hebrews: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found because God had translated him; for before his translation he had his testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5).

Pursuing my Enoch-research I became acquainted with those apocryphal texts that detailed the deeds of Enoch much more extensively than the Bible. During the last two centuries, but especially the last two decades, these apocalyptic writings have inspired scholarly literature by now filling a good size library. There are three longish texts that by Bible scholars are labelled *1*, *2*, and *3 Enoch* (apart from a great number of individual and critical editions, all three can be found in Charlesworth, 1983).

1 Enoch survived in Ethiopic Geez language and is part of the Ethiopic biblical canon. By now we know that originally it was written in the time of Second Temple Judaism (3rd century BCE – 1st century CE) and some fragments remained in Aramaic among the Dead Sea Scrolls. From this a Greek version was made, then it was translated into Geez in the time of the early Christian Church (a detailed history and analysis of *1 Enoch* can be found in Nickelsburg, 2001).

2 Enoch is a derivation of the first text. Its original must have been Greek (C 1-2 CE), but it survived only in Old Church Slavonic. *3 Enoch* is the latest and is farthest from the Ethiopic text. It survived in Hebrew and belongs to the corpus of Merkabah mysticism (C 4-6 CE), centering on the motif of *Himmefahrt*, that is the journey of a wise rabbi to Heaven where the narrator meets Enoch already turned into the mighty angel, Metatron. (A comparison of *2* and *3 Enoch* and the development of the angelic character of Metatron can be found in Orlov, 2005).

In all three texts Enoch is the chosen prophet of the Lord who foretells the Deluge and instructs his offsprings Metushelach, Lamech and

Noah how to build the ark and survive the flood. Another common element is that Enoch is elevated to Heaven by angels where he is given a tour of the cosmos, Paradise, and Hell; he is instructed in the secrets of astronomy, and finally is translated to see God face to face. It is only in *3 Enoch* that he is mentioned as Metatron the angel, regent of God.

Furthermore, another interesting motif is known only from *1 Enoch*: this is the story of the Watchers. There were two hundred rebel angels led by Shemihazah who descended onto the earth and there fell in love with the daughters of men. From their union terrible giants were born who having grown up started destroying nature as well as the humans. Furthermore, one of the watchers, Asael, taught the humans all sorts of wicked sciences from metallurgy to warfare, and cosmetics to women. God finally had enough of these transgressions and decided to destroy humanity with the Deluge.

The story of the Watchers is in stark contrast with the story of the Fall in Genesis. According to Moses the original sin was the full responsibility of the first humans, while here there is no Adam and Eve, no original sin, the early humans were deceived by the angels whom they were supposed to trust. Perhaps this was the reason why the official churches – neither Jewish nor Christian (with the exception of the Ethiopic) – never fully promoted the *Book of Enoch*, the above mentioned versions all disappeared into oblivion after the 4th century, the Enoch-tradition having remained a subversive apocryphal lore, cultivated only by unorthodox communities and enthusiastic mystics. It was only in the eighteenth century the the ensuing Romanticism that rediscovered this alternative mythology of Fall and Redemption.

One can immediately ask: how could then John Dee and other Renaissance humanists know about Enoch? Although the Book of Enoch was in its entirety hiding, some fragments survived in Greek and Latin translation, and the Enoch-mythology was referred to by many Christian authorities, like the Church Fathers, sometimes approvingly, more often with distrust and contempt (for details and quotations see VanderKam, 1995). The very complex and fascinating cultural history of Enoch indeed cries for a comprehensive monograph (apparently I am working on it).

In the remaining part of my paper I would only like to introduce a small chapter of this cultural history. I intend to present how the rediscovery of the *Book of Enoch* and its first English translation in 1821 enriched the thematic interest of English Romanticism. The 19th-century reception of Enoch also sheds light at interesting esthetical and ideological discourses. All this I shall relate to my own research practice and methodology.

3 Library Paradise and Digital Heaven

The *Book of Enoch* (*1Enoch*) was found in Abessynia by the Scottish explorer, James Bruce and brought to England in 1773. In the Cambridge University Library it was of course easy to find Bruce's five volume travelogue, published in 1790, in the first volume of which he related the discovery and described the religious life, beliefs, and customs of the Ethiopians. Here he also described the Enoch codices of which he found several copies (see Bruce, 1790: vol 1, book 2, ch 7). It was also easy to study the first English translation of the apocryphal text, which was made by the Oxford based orientalist theologian, Richard Laurence, and published in 1821. But it proved to be also important to compare this edition to Laurence's later emended and philologically improved editions. From the outset I was sure that this sensational text stirred up great interest among contemporaries, theologians and scholars as well as perhaps poets and artists. I tried then to map this reception.

First I chose a traditional method of library research by going through the various catalogues. Since in England – as opposed to Hungary and East-Central Europe – the full library holdings (including all rare books) are electronically catalogued, I could quickly generate the list of books I needed to look at in the Rare Book Reading Room. I found a wide spectrum of genres from sermons and devotional tracts to scholarly-philological analyses, but I also came across a Romantic epic poem about Enoch, some esoterical speculations, even mystical publications the authors of which imagined themselves the reincarnations of Enoch.

Tracing one of my intuitions brought about impressively rich fruition. I was almost certain that William Blake, the visionary poet and artist who was particularly interested in prophecies and apocalyptic settings had something to do with Enoch. The first test was disappointing. Modern editions of Blake's complete works and the available concordances showed that the poet only used Enoch's name twice in his entire poetry, as part of a Biblical genealogical inventory: "Adam Seth Enos Cainan Mahalaleel Jared Enoch." In Blake's biographies I nevertheless found further clues (the newest, "definitive" biography is Bentley, 2001), learning that one should look for Enoch rather in Blake's visual art. The artist-poet was all throughout his life intrigued by the Bible and he repeatedly illustrated the books of the Old and the New Testament as well as the Apocrypha, not to mention here his Milton and Dante illustrations.

Enoch inspired Blake in several of his artistic periods. First in the middle of the 1780s when he made a few sketches about Enoch and his family (Essick, *Separate Plates*, No. 31-34). Then, about 1807, when he discovered a new technology, the lithograph and made a sheet about Enoch as

the father-inventor of art, literature, and music (Essick, *Separate Plates*, No. 30, Figure 1).

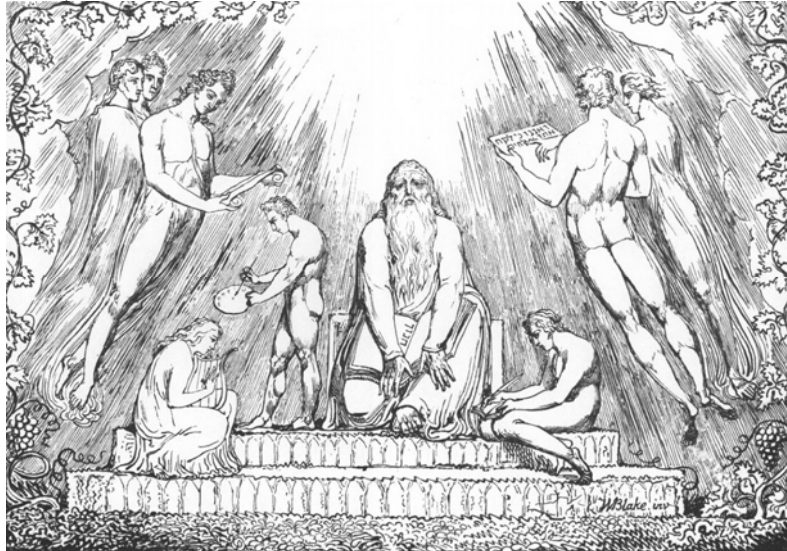


Figure 1

Around 1820 Blake painted a powerful, visionary watercolor as the title page to the volume of the popular 18th century graveyard poet, James Hervey, entitled *Meditations Among Tombs*. The subject of the poetry was untimely death and the mourning over the dead and Blake tried to depict the otherworldly unification with our deceased. The central figure is Hervey, the poet-priest, in front of him there are spiral stairs reaching up to heaven. At the bottom of the stairs a widow is sitting wailing for his dead husband and children. At the top of the stairs there is naturally God, in between various auxiliaries are arranged, identified by inscribed labels: "Recording Angels, Protecting Angels, Noah, Enoch," stb.

The Enoch-representations so far mentioned are in harmony with the orthodox Christian interpretations – except for the lithograph because critics trace the origins of the "father of the arts" image in ancient myths. Blake actually needed not to look for complicated mythographies, since one of the most popular 18th-century handbooks of painting and art history, Henry Bell's *An Historical Essay on the Originall of Painting* (1728,) clearly stated that the origins of painting had to be looked for among the pre-Deluge patriarchs, Seth and Enoch.

Without doubt, most interesting are Blake's five late pencil sketches which are among his last works, dating from the mid-1820s and illustrate the *Book of the Watchers*. Art historians may be right in pointing out that these drawings are likely to have been inspired by the Laurence translation of 1821. Historical accuracy demands to add that the Watcher-story had al-

ready been available in two earlier English renderings, although there is no evidence that Blake knew any of those three.

The *Book of the Watchers* survived in the Greek transcription of the Bizantine chronographer, Syncellus (8-9th century, CE), which was first summarized in English by Samuel Purchas in 1613 (Purchas 1613: 30-32), then in 1715 a Mr. Lewis, member of Corpus Christi College in Oxford translated and published the full Greek text in a popular edition. No need to say, I could study these books in the Cambridge University Library and as it turned out, Enoch- and/or Blake-scholarship has never noticed the Lewis publication (Figure 2).

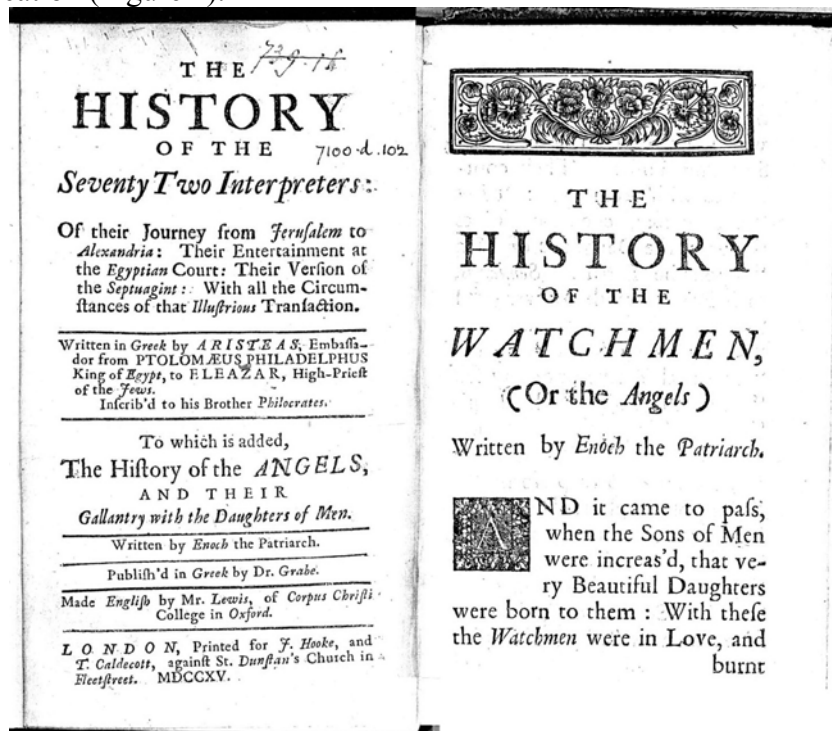


Figure 2

One can ascertain even without an absolute evidence that Blake knew the Laurence translation since it made quite a splash in contemporary intellectual life. Byron wrote a drama in 1823 titled *Heaven and Earth, A Mystery* in which he treated the love of angels and women based on Genesis, chapter 6 (this is the resume of the *Book of the Watchers*). A few months earlier, in the same year, Thomas Moore, Byron's friend and biographer, the popular Irish origin Romantic poet and song writer published a series of poems, *The Loves of Angels*. He prefixed to it a scholarly introduction in which pinpointed the *Book of Enoch* as a source of inspiration. According to scholarship, this collection was illustrated by the

contemporary painter, Robert Westall. His soft, Biedermeier pictures are in stark contrast with that of John Flaxman, leading sculptor of the period, who also drafted a series of powerful pencil drawings representing the loves of angels and the daughters of men. (Figure 3)

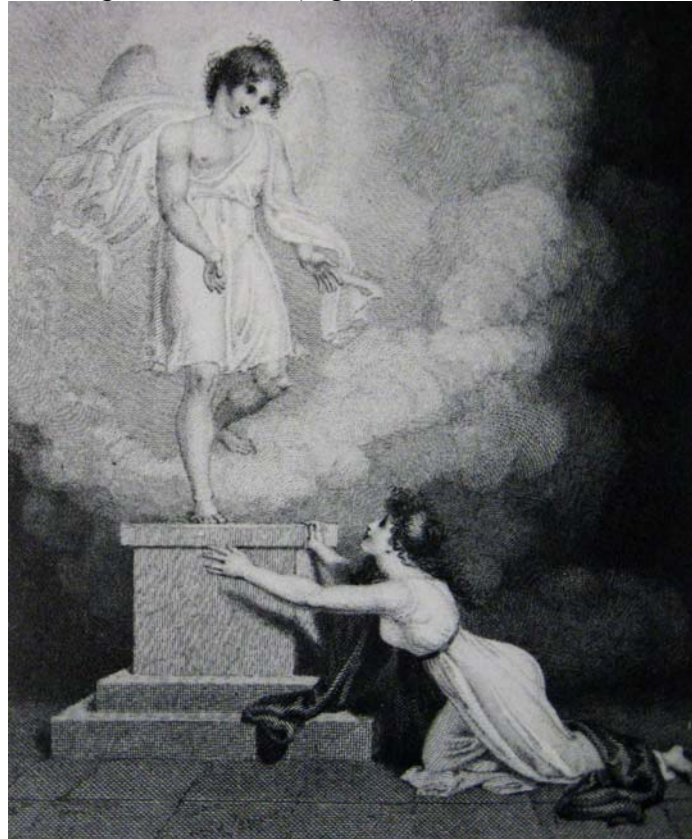


Figure 3

First I wanted to know more about Blake's late drawings. These pictures are not among the most researched pieces of the artist, but I could still collect substantial scholarly literature. In the University Library it was easy to locate the most important studies, published either in periodicals, or in collections of essays. As I have learned, Blake made five pencil drawings related to the *Book of Enoch*, all of them strongly expressing his idiosyncratic approach to the Bible. One of the faded sketches shows Enoch standing before the throne of the Lord, on another a Watcher is being punished: with shackled hands he is falling down, surrounded by falling stars. On three other, rather explicit pictures one can witness the illicit union of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men." On one of these a Watcher, shooting down from heaven touches the vulva of a naked woman, next to them two baby-giants are wabbling. On another an aroused Watcher

is surrounded by four women. Most shocking is the one representing a "daughter" flanked by two overtly priapic Watchers while the woman touches the impressive, radiating phallos. (See Figure 4)

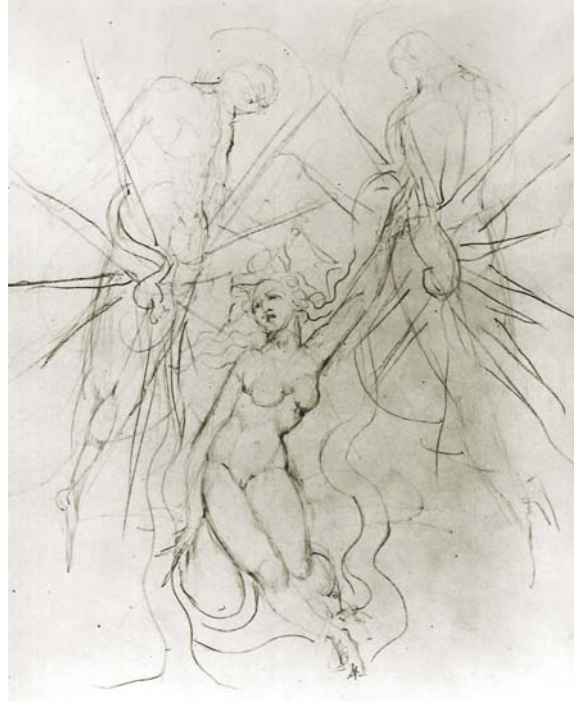


Figure 4

Since the character of my present paper is a methodological presentation and a progress report, there is no place here to analyze Blake's Enoch drawings. However, to understand these I needed to look at the cultural context: the English translation of Laurence, its scholarly and theological reception, not forgetting about other cultural-artistic representations either. In the latter group the most promising direction seemed to be the examination of Thomas Moore's collection of poems, *The Loves of the Angels* (1823). The Cambridge University Library copy surprised me: it did not contain Robert Westall's drawings which – according to scholarly literature – were supposed to be there. As a second step I turned to digital resources and on Googlebooks I found a scanned version of this publication. It turned out to be identical with the Cambridge copy, also without the illustrations. In the meantime I could also check the British Library in London, but again I found no pictures in that copy.

I decided then to double check the Cambridge catalogue and figured out that they had a second copy of Moore's book. When I asked for it, a great surprise followed in more than one respect. First, the book came in a *colligatum*, bound together with other books, all of which were published

around 1823 and all of which dealt with angels, partly in theological-scholarly, partly in literary-poetical genres. Consequently, I found such a nineteenth-century thematic collection of Romantic "angelology," which would have been impossible to put together just by using the catalogues or whatever digital resources. To find it one actually needed to go to a library and physically examine the book, besides, one also needed luck to be in that particular library which possessed that unique assemblage. If I satisfied myself with the good quality Goglebooks copy, this discovery would never have happened.

A further surprise was to compare the second Moore version of the colligatum to the first version I had already known. A glance made me realize that this was also a non-illustrated copy, but I also noticed that the publication, also from 1823, had a different subtitle. The first was simply called "A Poem," while the second "An Eastern Romance."

With considerable excitement I turned to the Introduction, which in the first version had an apology, referring to Byron's forthcoming work, *Heaven and Earth*, suggesting with a rhetorical bravura that Moore meant his unworthy poem to be published first in order to have a chance for a brief shining before the glorious sun rises and fades all the small stars around.

The author's next remark was that his verse should in no way be considered a paraphrase of the Holy Writ, since the expression, "sons of God" in the 6th chapter of the Genesis resulted from a wrong translation. In his endnotes he gave a detailed report about the discovery of the *Book of Enoch*, which he calls "an absurd creation" of apocryphal writing, only providing a suitable material for poetical allegorization about the fall of human soul, in harmony with the neoplatonic philosophers and some Hebrew mystics. In his notes Moore engages in very learned discussions of the Church Fathers, some classical philosophers and Renaissance thinkers – honestly, these notes are sometimes more satisfying than the poems themselves.

The second copy in the colligatum, however, had a completely different Introduction. In this the author admitted that because of the criticisms he had received, he decided to transpose the work from its Jewish-Christian mythological base to the exotic world of the Islam. Again, with learned arguments he tried to prove here that the love of angels and women can also be found in the Qur'an and Muslim mythology. Finally, he proudly noted that for this transmutation he only needed to change a few expressions and to insert four new lines in the poems.

Library work thus yielded its fruit, the discovery of an authorial rewriting. Its contextual examination made possible to reveal the ideological as well as cultural-political trends of Romanticism and a better under-

standing of contemporary, every-day religious attitudes and the early 19th-century authority of the Bible. The second Introduction, however, did not clearly explain what actually had happened between the two 1823 editions that urged the author to rewrite his poems.

Since my research program was to focus on the cultural history of Enoch, I had no time to scrutinize the critical heritage of Moore. A skimming through some basic publications on English Romantic poetry provided no clue if anybody ever took notice of the difference between the two versions. A bibliography mentioned that the first edition of *The Loves of the Angels* appeared on the 23rd of December, 1822. In 1823 four reprints followed and the modified version was its fifth issue. This suggested that the illustrated edition was the first and the pictures were dropped from the later versions – probably because of financial reasons. At this point I had to decide about the next step of the philological research which would take me nearer to the assessment of the critical response of the work. The solution was to transfer from the Cambridge library paradise to the digital heaven.

My purpose became to find contemporary critical reactions about Moore's Enoch-inspired poems. But how to figure out when and in which periodicals were published those critiques? The success came easier than I would have expected on the basis of our library research experiences in this part of the world. There exists a database called *British Periodicals* which contains the searchable facsimiles of all 17th and 18th-century journals and magazines, so keying on "Moore" and "Loves of Angels" immediately resulted in nine articles, all from 1823, published in periodicals such as the *British Critic*, *Eclectic Review*, *Edinburgh Magazine*, *Edinburgh Review*, *Examiner*, or the *Literary Gazette*. According to contemporary practice, none of these critiques were signed by their authors. Most of them referred to the first version and Thomas Moore received praises as well as harsh chastisements. As I started unfolding the reception history, it also became clear why Moore decided to rewrite the collection and drop the references to Enoch from it.

It would be impossible here to give a full account of these reviews but it is instructive to look at the main arguments. An additional gain is that most of these writings compared *The Loves of the Angels* to Byron's *Heaven and Earth*, often mentioning the literary dictator's recent and subversive Biblical drama, *Cain* (1821), too. Thus the modern cultural historian receives a complex picture about critical reactions to an important trend in Romantic poetry.

The January issue of the *Literary Gazette* gives a factual account of Moore's work and restricts itself to discuss the poetical devices of the collection. Eventually criticizes the literary images, the metrics and rhymes,

finally concluding as follows: "But we are tired of noting little faults, and in conclusion beg to say that, though far from being a divine, we look upon the *The Loves of the Angels* to be a beautiful poem, and one which will add to that species of erotic fame which its author enjoys" (*Literary Gazette* 311 [Jan 4, 1823]: 11). The *Monthly Review* (issue 100 [Jan, 1823]: 79f) is similarly appreciative, calling Moore the greatest poet of the age: "More clear and more correctly English than Lord Byron, he at the same time is manifestly more varied, figurative, and poetical than Wordsworth. Never idle, like Scott; never prosaic, like Crabbe..." (80).

The next praise refers to Moore as a *poeta doctus*: "Throughout his works, we trace every mark of research in collecting of his materials; of unbounded pains in ransacking the most recondite and even the most unpromising sources for fresh elements of thought; and of unwearied exertion in digging in the mines either of ecclesiastical antiquity or of scholastic dulness itself..." (80). This avenue directly leads to the intellectual contents of the poems and the critic arrives at the neuralgic point, namely that the work profanely treats a sacred topic, in which the angels are compromised. Since it is an apologetic review, the writer repeats Moore's own defence from the Introduction, echoing some Church Fathers that the "sons of God" were not angels, only the offsprings of Adam's son, Seth, thus Moore's angels could not be the Biblical angels, at most Enoch's apocryphal creatures (89).

Other critiques, for example in the *Eclectic Review* (issue 19 [March 1823]: 210f), are much more severe. After a short appreciation – "The Poet seems, as it were, to hover between Sacred Melodies and Anacreon; and his poetry reminds us of those solemn, languishing, pious airs which have of late become fashionable under the misnomer of sacred music, in which opera and devotion seem to meet half-way" (210) – the writer quickly sets to condemning the choice of the topic: "These angels are neither good enough for sinless spirits, nor depraved enough for sinful ones. [...] But profaneness is the inseparable and pervading quality of the poem. It is altogether a tampering with sacred things; a burlesque of the Scripture doctrine of angels, and an indirect apology for angelic sinners" (212). This review also praises Moore's poetical strength ("Moore is the first lyric poet of his day, and scarcely inferior to those of any other day," 214), and finally compares him to Byron's mentioned work:

Lord Byron's unfinished drama [– Heaven and Earth –] is better conceived than Mr. Moore's poem, has more in it of the genuine dialect of passion, and is more nervously written; but it betrays symptoms of an exhausted mind, and a malign, withering scepticism. (216)

The *British Critic* (issue 19 [June 1823]: 636f) likewise finds

unnecessary profanization in Moore's poems:

Much has been said about the impiety of the work. No doubt it is highly improper to write in such a manner on such subjects, and Mr. Moore's justification is too silly to deserve exposure. He ought to know, without being told, that the charge is, that he has profaned sacred subjects by profane associations. (646)

The most devastating critique was published in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* (issue 13.72 [Jan, 1823]: 63f). As usual, the article starts with deceptive praises: "We are happy to hail as a beautiful theme for the creation of genius. Every thing antediluvian is poetical" (63). Then follows a long analysis and comparison with Milton's angels, at the end of which the critic concludes as follows: no matter how beautifully Moore can write, it would have been better to display his sensualism in a non sacred topic: "Moore is not now, as he was once, a mere gloating sensualist. But his mind is, nevertheless, even in its most pure creations, the slave of animal beauty" (65).

According to the critic the poet simply swears when dares to mention the name of God in such poems. "A Greek or a Roman spoke with more real reverence of Jove, than this poet does of God" (ibid.). What is more, even an atheist would show more respect for the Lord than this poet does. It seems to the reviewer that Thomas Moore has picked up an instinctive habit to blaspheme, without even becoming conscious of it.

Many hundred other [profanizations] overload this poem. Some are good, some perhaps harmless, some slightly offensive, some grossly so, and many monstrous and shocking. [...] Our minds are either perpetually shocked or disgusted with Mr. Moore's inconceivable levity. [...] We believe the objection of all the readers of Britain, will lie against the general tone of the whole composition. Nothing can save that from entire and universal condemnation. (67-68)

Finally the reviewer advises – as a friend – that the poet had better write again songs instead of such complex poetry.

As this review was published in January, its Scottish puritan author could not know that the book would soon be republished four times to satisfy readers' demand. In spite of this, later that year the poet finally had enough of those condescending criticisms and finally decided to rewrite the poems, changing their apocryphal Judeo-Christian framework into an Eastern-Muslim one.

Edward Said in his famous *Orientalism* has just one sentence about Moore without being aware of the two versions of *The Loves of the Angels* and their contemporary reception:

Popular orientalism during the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth attained a vogue of considerable intensity. But even this vogue, easily identifiable in William Beckford, Byron, Thomas Moore, and Goethe, cannot be simply detached from the interest taken in Gothic tales, pseudomedieval idylls, visions of barbaric splendor and cruelty. (Said, 2003: 118)

Moore's collection discussed here contributes with interesting, although not necessarily typical information about the orientalism of English Romanticism.

4 Conclusions

What can be learnt from my above presented literary and cultural historical case study and the narrative of my research methodology? The topic demonstrates in what complicated ways does a philological discovery, such as the publication of the *Book of Enoch* influences the cultural history of a whole epoch, in this case encompassing theology, art, and literature. As we could see, the cultural history of Enoch in English Romanticism had close connections with the Biblical mysticism of Blake as well as a new wave of frivolous eroticism in the works of Byron and Moore. Last but not least we could gain insight into the less apparent motivations and mechanisms of orientalism, too.

I hope, no less interesting is the methodological presentation which demonstrates how these days a complex historical research must combine the use of library as well as digital source materials. Sadly, I have to add, such ideal circumstances are only given rarely to scholars coming from the ex-East Bloc, or if you want, the newly accessed EU countries. Naturally, the original source materials are accessible only in Britain, on the spot, so one needs a scholarship to have a chance to study them. But it is rather despairing that nowadays, when more and more digitalized original material becomes available on the internet (for example the *Early English Books Online* [EEBO]; the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* [ECCO]; or the mentioned *British Periodicals*) these can only be accessed through subscriptions, the price of which is astronomical. In our part of Europe there is no chance that either our university libraries or our governments could finance accession to these resources. Twenty years after the changing of the state socialist regimes and six years after the EU membership we can observe a quickly growing new, intellectual *iron curtain*, which this time not because of political, but financial reasons separates us from research opportunities and scholarly resources.

I do not see a chance for a quick change in this respect. While in the greater part of Europe such projects are government sponsored and freely offered on the internet, in the Anglo- and American world cultural archival

remains a commercial venture and thus their usage the privilege of the well off. English studies outside the rich English speaking countries has to face this difficulty and sceptically reconcile with the fact that while some decades ago it was the size and bookstock of our libraries which separated us from the forefront of scholarship, now it is the accessibility to databases that draws the line. Notwithstanding, eminent conferences such as this jubilee twentieth BAS convention in Timisoara prove that English studies are of high quality in this region, too, and attract admirable international resonance. I am proud to be part of this project.

List of Illustrations

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MEDIEVAL IMAGES OF THE CREATOR: GOD AS SCRIBE, GEOMETER AND ARCHITECT OF THE WORLD

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Abstract: In the Middle Ages, the image of God the Creator of the universe was influenced by both Platonic rationalism and Neoplatonic symbolism. As a result, in this paper I purport to discuss the extent to which the medieval iconographical representations of divinity reflected a two-edged pattern of thought which intermingled Christian ideas with pagan theosophy.

Keywords: artifex, order, measure, proportion, symmetry, world-soul

1. Introduction

In the Middle Ages “the created universe was thought to be one great symbolic mirror of divinity.” (Carruthers 2000:118) According to Saint Augustine (qtd. in Gellrich 1985:21), the world was believed to be “a vast script written by the hand of God” composed of *signa* (signs, symbols) and of *res* (things). Whereas things (*res*) like Plato’s ideas (*eide*) remain hidden, imperceptible to human’s imperfect mind, signs (*signa*) are ready accessible to rational interpretation and inquiry. Hence, the relationship between the visible and the invisible, the perceptible (*sensibilia*) and the intelligible (*intelligibilia*), the image and the exemplar was deemed highly symbolic and figurative. The continuity of the Christian symbolic world view was illustrated in the twelfth century by Hugh of Saint Victor who believed that:

The entire perceptible world is as a book written by the finger of God, that is, created by divine power, and individual creatures are as figures within it, not invented by human will (*placito*) but instituted by divine authority (*arbitrio*) to make manifest the wisdom of the invisible things of God. (qtd. in Jordan 1967:28)

Nevertheless, the image of God as *auctor* inscribing the Word with his own finger is far from being new in the tradition of medieval representations of divinity. This image has its roots in God's commitment on Mount Sinai to Moses and the people of Israel as it is conveyed by *Exodus* 31:18 (“When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God”) and re-inforced by *Deuteronomy* 5:22 (“These are the commandments the Lord proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me”).

So, in the Middle Ages, learning how to read the signs of this cosmic Book was not a process of inventing or creating meaning but of comprehending God's magnificence and transcendence as opposed to human's finitude and immanence.

2. Deciphering the work of the Creator: God as scribe

But understanding the hidden meanings which God had left for us to discover was not an easy process and this was mainly due to the inherent imperfection of the human mind. The shortcomings of the human mind in apprehending divine nature (*esse*) were also acknowledged a century later by Thomas Aquinas:

God as an unknown is said to be the terminus of our knowledge in the following respect: that the mind is found to be most perfectly in possession of knowledge of God when it is recognized that His essence is above everything that the mind is capable of apprehending in this life: and thus, although what he is remains unknown, yet it is known that He is. (qtd. in Gellrich 1985:65)

Once the difference between human knowledge (*scientia*) and divine wisdom (*sapientia*) is admitted, the only means of ascending to the transcendent is by deciphering the imprint left by God the scribe on the world, for God "has so ordered his creation, has so linked the lower to the higher by subtle signatures and affinities, that the world we see is, as it were, a great staircase by which the mind of man must climb upwards to spiritual intelligence". (Origen qtd. in Wiener 1973:64) Saint Bonaventure in his *Journey of the Mind to God (Itinerarium mentis ad Deum)* admits that "the material universe itself is a ladder by which we may ascend to God" (1993: I.2) and proceeds to trace the stages by which the human mind gradually attempts to meet its Creator. He sets the scene for his book by saying:

Following the example of our blessed father Francis (...) I withdrew to Mount LaVerna, seeking a place of quiet and desiring to find there peace of spirit. While I was there reflecting on various ways by which the soul ascends to God, there came to my mind, among other things, the miracle which had occurred to blessed Francis in this very place: the vision of a winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified. (...) While reflecting on this, I saw at once that this vision represented our Father's rapture in contemplation and the road by which this rapture is reached." (1993: 2)

Bonaventure uses the image of Saint Francis who received the stigmata from a six-winged seraph as a paradigm for the mystical ascent to God. The six wings of the Seraph represent six stages of illumination the

soul can pass to reach its Creator. Thus, the lower wings represent the first stage of creation, they are God's "footprints" (*vestigia*), images of the Almighty "creatures of this visible world who signify the invisible things of God." (1993: II.12) Being an image of the Creator or better "traces (...) in which we can see the reflection of our God," (1993: II.14) all created things should be approached in contemplation. But God is not to be found only outside, he is also within, and his traces can be seen in the natural powers he has bestowed upon humans. The two outstretched wings which run parallel with the crucified Christ represent mankind striving to reach divine glorification. Reflection, which is the activity of the intelligence, enables us to rise to the throne of the Supreme Being since we were 'gifted' with the Scriptures, the sacraments, Lord's teachings and the promise of forgiveness and eternal glory. Looking at the upper two wings is like "peering into the Holy of Holies." (1993: II.14) They represent divinity centered on the model of all creation - the Word made flesh, our Redeemer and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Mystical vision is the culmination of the ascent because, for Bonaventure, the highest way to reach God is not human reason but divine revelation. Therefore, the whole created universe is, once more, conceived as an exterior Book, a sacred script, in which the Creator can be discovered, while the inquisitive mind in search for its divine likeness is, by analogy, an interior Text in which the Creator can be approached by way of meditation and clarification (*manifestatio*).

3. The Neoplatonic legacy: God as geometer

Adopting a more radical position, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite assumes that no sign/symbol can give a positive knowledge of divinity because God is infinite and indivisible, transcending both being and reality; Dionysius is not a pioneer of the apophatic theology. His precursor, Gregory of Nyssa, believed that God could not be grasped by human intelligence because God is 'unspeakable'. Hence, we can affirm nothing of God because He is beyond intelligibility and no predicate truly applies to Him. However, Gregory believed that man can eventually ascend to God by passing through three stages of mystical ascent: the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive. In the unitive phase, the human intellect is filled by a darkness in which the mystic feels the presence of God through love, not through reasoning, that is, irrespective of the 'signs' that conducted the mind to Him. Gregory insisted that man can never grasp the divine nature in its essence using the powers of the intellect so that the final union with God must take place by a kind of unknowing or negation of knowledge.

In Plotinus' philosophy, this union would have resembled the relationship between *Nous* (Intellect) and the One. The Intellect is depicted

as striving to understand its transcendent principle, the One, which is, however, fully incomprehensible since it precedes the very existence of intelligence itself. Hence, the Intellect contemplates its source through the various windows of the Forms, thoughts of an immanent divine mind, structures which enable intellection to manifest. *Nous* becomes thus a sort of a porch or gate which allows the contemplative mind to gleam at the unity of the One through these intelligible structures, the Forms. Eventually, the relation of *Nous* to the One becomes a mystical union reached through contemplation, a 'drunken' and 'loving' state in which the Intellect experiences a state of total submission and self-effacement as if "drunken with nectar [or being] in love, simplified into happiness by having its fill." (Winters 1998:12)

Apart from the stress laid on negative theology, the Neoplatonic influence on medieval thought is even more evident in the symbolic value postulated for numbers. The most influential text throughout the Middle Ages was Plato's account of the Creation in *Timaeus*. According to Plato, the universe was created by the Demiurge (*opifex, artifex*) who acted as a 'master mathematician' (Jordan 1967:15) or 'divine architect' (Jordan 1967:29) to order out of pre-existing, chaotic matter (*hyle*) a perfectly proportionate, harmonized structure "effected on the basis of exemplars or models (Platonic Forms or Ideas)" (Conrad 1999:24) and set in motion by a rational soul, known as the 'world-soul'.

Starting from the assumption that the visible, sensible world is one complete whole in the form of a sphere, Plato states that the unity of its basic, constituents (fire, earth, water and air) is "of the nature of a continued geometrical proportion" (qtd. in Jordan 1967:17) a geometrical progression whose middle term, the mean, represents 'a perfect bond' for the extremes:

The middle term, the mean, is a perfect bond for the following reasons: as the first term is to the mean (2:4), so is the mean to the last term (4:8); conversely, as the last is to the mean (8:4), so is the mean to the first (4:2). Thus 'the middle becomes the first and last, and again the last and first become middle (4:2=8:4); in that way all will necessarily come to play the same part towards one another, and by so doing they will make a unity. (ibidem)

Accordingly, the basic elements of the universe are related to each other following a Pythagorean sequence, but "while plane surfaces are united by a single mean, two means (emphasis added) are required to unite solids." (Jordan 1967:17) In Platonic terms that would imply a perfect proportional distribution of the physical elements arranged symmetrically and equidistantly to each other so as to reach a perfectly biased and harmonious composition within a finite, well-proportioned shape:

The God set water and air between fire and earth, and made them, so far as was possible, proportional to one another, so that as fire is to air, so air is to water, and as air is to water, so is water to earth, and thus he bound together the frame of a world visible and tangible. (Jordan 1967:18)

Centuries later, Bonaventure would say that: "number is the principal exemplar in the mind of the Creator (...) [and] since all things are beautiful and in some way delightful, and since beauty and delight do not exist without proportion, and since proportion exists primarily in numbers, all things are subjected to numbers." (1993: II.10) The perfection of the universe was ultimately a question of mathematical estimation and theology a way of apprehending divinity through an elaborate calculus of probabilities and *mean-ingful* (sic) proportions.

4. The Christian re-contextualization of the Platonic thought: God as architect and builder of the world

The biblical counterpart to the *Timaeus*, the book of Genesis, reveals both similarities with the ancient text and points of departure from it. In the Creation account, there is indeed one supreme, eternal God who transcends the world and all of its creatures, but He did not create the universe out of pre-existing, chaotic matter carefully arranging it within proportionate shapes and harmonious blending. Everything immaterial and material was created directly by God through the divine act of speaking. Moreover, there is no indwelling force that gives life or orders the universe and no explicit or metaphorical reference to God acting as a Craftsman, Geometer or Architect in the process of creation. In contrast with the teachings of Genesis, Rudolph Conrad points out that:

... the Sapiential books and Psalms begin to exhibit the influence of Greek thought, especially platonic thought. God is now described on occasion as a craftsman (artifex in the Vulgate) in connection with creation, and the creation of the cosmos is spoken of from time to time in the metaphorical terms of the construction of a work of architecture. Indeed, the Creator is figuratively described as calculating the 'foundations' of creation, weighing out some of the materials of creation in his three fingers or in a balance-scale, and ordering all things in 'measure, number and weight'. (Conrad 1999:25)

The broad interest in creation theory and mainly in its Neoplatonic counterpart found a vehicle of expression in the miniatures of the time. One of the most famous and influential image that circulated in the thirteenth century is the picture known as "God The Architect of The Universe" or simply "God The Geometer" from the Vienna *Bible moralisée*, c.1220-1230.

It has long been debated whether this image of the Creator bent over an amorphous mass of matter in the shape of a sphere and holding a divider or compasses in his right hand had either a biblical source in *Wisdom* 11:21 and *Proverbs* 8:27 or an undoubtedly Platonic affiliation. According to previous scholars such as Erwin Panovsky or Otto von Simson (both cited by Rudolph Conrad in his article), this image was considered one among at least forty other extant undifferentiated pictures of the creator holding a pair of compasses and was identified by both critics as having a clear biblical origin. Even if there were some controversies regarding the true source of inspiration - Erwin Panovsky attributes it to *Wisdom* 11:21 where it is said that God, whose hand created the world, had ordered all things "in measure, number and weight" whereas Otto von Simson believes that the appropriate source is in *Proverbs* 8:27, the translation he provides being however, susceptible of some 'favourable' alterations: "God set a compass [circle] upon the face of the depth." - the general belief was univocally sustaining an orthodox theological reading.

Unlike his fellow-scholars, Rudolph Conrad argues first in favour of a differentiated set of iconographical representations of divinity based on the passive/active uses of the compasses. The example he provides is taken from Tiberius Psalter where God is represented holding a pair of compasses and a balance-scales but not using them actively in the process of creation. On the contrary, the *Vienna Bible moralisée* makes it very clear that the compass is not the instrument of a geometer abstractly circumscribing the space of creation but of a craftsman or *artifex* who employs it actively as an architect or master mason does, spatializing thought and objectifying vision. Ultimately, the critic states that "the presence of the compass is decidedly non-biblical, regardless of the possible indirect justification through *Proverbs* 8:27" (Conrad 1999:39) and "what is being narrated through the details of astronomical spheres and compass is nothing else than a Christianized creation of the world according to Plato." (ibidem)

In my attempts to find a similar image to justify the afore-mentioned binary opposition, (passive/active) I came upon a stained glass panel from the south clerestory of Great Malvern Priory dating from the fourteenth century. The panel shows God standing, his right hand raised making the gesture of blessing, while at the same time holding a pair of compasses or better propping himself up on their hinge, as if on a walking-stick. God looks at a disk or a sphere (now blank) enclosed in a cloud-like circle from which a stream of light descends on the ground below or it may as well ascend from the amorphous, yellow mass beneath, as the Platonic world-soul, to shape the circular world above. A caption below would have said, if complete, 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth.' (*Genesis* 1:1)

The image of the Deity effortlessly creating the cosmos seems to be a literal interpretation of both Genesis 1:1 and Proverbs 8:27 'God encompassed the waters with true law and circuit,' meaning that God gave a spherical form to the earth and surrounded it by the Ocean Stream. Moreover, unlike the image of the Creator in the *Bible moralisée* actively seen while circumscribing the surface of the world with his compasses and bending over it to set it in motion with his own hand, the later representation emphasizes the non-active, non-laborious performance. The thirteenth century illumination depicts God so caught-up in the intricacy of his toils that His right foot even exceeds the frame of the picture as if trying to find a firm spot to equilibrate the body or give extra-strength to rotate the sphere.

The fact that God has to "bend his back in the hard work of world-making" (1996:79) was contrasted by M. Camille with "the earlier medieval scenes of creation [in which] the universe was depicted as coming into being through the pointing finger of God's speech-gesture, as realized through God's word ('Let there be light')." (ibidem) Moreover, "the fact that God's creative act was visually associated with the technology of artistic production is of enormous significance for artistic practice in this period." (ibidem) God the geometer or architect of all things, creating the universe with his compasses and measuring the world with His scales was acting as a true mason or stonecutter, thus elevating the status of medieval artisans to the level of divine ennoblement:

Les poids et les mesures utilisés par les artisans étaient considérés comme établis par Dieu, et participaient de la structure de l'oeuvre du créateur, l'univers. Peser et mesurer sont des actes reflétant le geste de la Création et l'ordonnement du cosmos (...) l'artisan, fait à l'image de Dieu, est co-créateur avec Dieu, et peut dès lors mettre en oeuvre la sagesse et le savoir du dessein divin dans l'ordre et la mesure de son propre métier d'artisan. (McCague 1998:60)

5. Conclusions

In the Middle Ages, the images of God as Creator of the universe were influenced by both Platonic rationalism and Neoplatonic symbolism, both grafted on a firmly established biblical and Patristic foundation. In other words, both the literal (non-figurative) and iconographic representations of divinity reflected a two-edged pattern of thought which intermingled Christian ideas with pagan theosophy (mystical insight into the nature of God). The images of God as Scribe (the divinity who is inscribing the world with His finger), Geometer (drawing the circuit or circumference of the world) and Architect of the created universe were as common and irrefutable in the Age as was the belief in the triune nature of God and they

continued to co-exist at peace with one another until the dawning of the Renaissance.

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THE ROAD TO HELL IS PAVED WITH YELLOW BRICK: EMERALD CITY AS POP-CULTURE'S METAPHOR FOR DISILLUSIONMENT

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Abstract: Baum's *Oz* has both thrilled and puzzled generations since the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900. The paper will explore the utopian/dystopian connotations of *Emerald City* and *Oz* in connection with rock poetry, with Elton John's 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road' and Scissor Sisters' 'Return to Oz' chosen as examples of pop-culture's continuing fascination with Baum's flawed paradise.

Keywords: children's literature, pop-culture, postmodernism, rock poetry

1. Introduction: On Pop-Culture and Rock Poetry

Once upon a time, the world of academia was a proverbial tweed-wearing killjoy waxing lyrical on the beauties of Tennysonian metre, never to be tricked into lowering itself to the levels of popular culture exploration. Some decades later, enter Postmodernism and *voilà!* – *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* series becomes a legitimate focus of many an academic study and Bob Dylan is lauded as the ultimate poet. 'Postmodernism', as Angela McRobbie (1995:13) points out,

has entered into a more diverse number of vocabularies more quickly than most other intellectual categories. It has spread outwards from the realms of art history into political theory and on the pages of youth culture magazines, record sleeves and the fashion spreads of *Vogue*.

Trying to shake off the fuddy-duddy image of yore, criticism turned to the 'things of the moment' as props for serious intellectual analyses. Granted, much of this incentive lies behind the fact that popular culture slowly became the default, relegating its highbrow counterpart to the realms of something 'old' and 'boring' that newer generations couldn't connect with. One of the best examples of this situation is the late 20th century prevalence of rock and pop poetry in public consciousness over the traditional forms that had dominated the hearts and minds of audiences in the old salad days.

2. Why Lyrics Matter

Continuing in the tradition of troubadours and other such artists-entertainers, pop musicians took advantage of the fact that, in the mid-20th century era of affordable records and new technologies, traditional, written

poetry started to lose its mass appeal. The poet-superstar of earlier epochs (epitomised in Romanticism's Lord Byron) was no longer there, having been supplanted by a microphone-wielding showman, while words, previously filling the pages of books meant to be read in silence or enjoyed at recitals found their new home in songs, as lyrical accompaniment to the primary – melodic – content. Producer Gus Dudgeon says that 'people don't listen to songs for the lyrics' (*Classic Albums*:2001), which is partially true – otherwise no one would ever listen to anything sung in a language they don't understand – however, it must be said that, once people *do* pay attention to lyrics, they cannot *not* think about their meaning, or at least their emotional resonance. Once this process starts for the casual listener, it is only a matter of time before professionals start appropriating song lyrics for various research-related purposes. In the words of Simon Frith (1988:123),

In a culture in which few people make music but everyone makes conversation, access to songs is primarily through their words. If music gives lyrics their linguistic vitality, lyrics give songs their social *use*.

Thus, music and lyrics become part of wider socio-cultural study, not least in terms of being interpreted as indicative to or expressive of the plurality of meanings, contexts and truths. Once again, Frith (1988:107) points out that

[t]he most sophisticated content analysts have /.../ used lyrics as evidence not of popular culture as such, but of popular cultural confusion.

3. Children's Literature and Popular Culture

Academic study of song lyrics is, therefore, usually (though by no means exclusively) seen as appropriation of pop-culture for literary or sociological purposes. When it comes to the world of literature proper, there are some creative forms similar to lyrics, in that they encompass both art and entertainment, and can be described as more 'popular' than 'highbrow'. One of these is the ever-so-evasive (in terms of definition, at least) children's literature. 'Children's books', according to Peter Hunt (2007:1),

have been largely beneath the notice of intellectual and cultural gurus. /.../ They are overtly important educationally and commercially – with consequences across the culture, from language to politics: most adults, and almost certainly the vast majority of those in positions of power and influence, read children's books as children, and it is inconceivable that the ideologies permeating those books had no influence on their development. The books have, none the less, been marginalised.

Just like song lyrics, children's literature is a ripe playground for all sorts of scholarly pursuits – it has been the research focus of studies in fields ranging from sociology and psychology to literature and therapy. Both are often seen as pure entertainment, and although there are examples of both where such a view is justified (neither 'Love Me Do' nor the *Goosebumps* series have ever pretended to be particularly 'deep'), the view that neither can ever be anything more than easy pastime is short-sighted and condescending. And, of course, there have been numerous instances of the two bouncing off and taking inspiration from each other – from Lewis Carroll's presence in John Lennon's work to Led Zeppelin's take on Tolkien's world. If one was to look for an example of a children's book that has been so large a presence in public consciousness that people have almost forgotten that there *was* a book in the first place, and not a folk tale carved in stone, they need not look any further from L. Frank Baum's world of Oz.

3.1 The World of Oz

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900), the first in the series of many books about the magical land of Oz that Baum would eventually write, has had generations in its thrall since the moment it saw the light of day. Is there anyone not familiar with the story of a little farm girl from Kansas who gets whisked away by a tornado to the fairyland of Oz, where she meets three new friends lacking in self-confidence and together they set on a journey along the yellow brick road to the Emerald City in search of the omnipotent Wizard of Oz? The rub – for there is always a rub – lies in the fact that the said wizard is not powerful at all, but, as he himself says, a 'humbug' (Baum 1993:103), and the magical greenness of Emerald City is all mirrors and smokescreen, for its existence depends on green-coloured lenses everybody is made to wear. And of course, both Dorothy and her friends do not really need the wizard to get the things they desire, for they possess them already and he merely provides them with a placebo. The tale of pretty fantasy and ultimate self-reliance has struck a chord in the hearts of many; the case, however, can be made for the Emerald City as a nasty little dystopia, even if not deliberately created as such by its author.

Although at first glance a timeless tale of fantasy, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) expresses more about the age, as a period of disruption and uncertainty, than its author, who claimed himself to be non-political, probably intended. (Thacker-Webb 2002:85) This falseness [of the Emerald City and the Wizard himself] suggests a comment on American consumerism and the uneasy relationship between appearance and 'truth'. (Thacker-Webb 2002:89)

This uneasy relationship gets even rockier when Dorothy, who for a while settled for trusting even ‘The Great and Terrible Humbug’ (Baum 1993:107) loses what hope she had of ever returning home. Disappointment, sadness and loss all conflate and it is unclear if either appearance or ‘truth’ has got the slightest chance of resolving her situation. It comes as no surprise then that the wonderful, dazzling place comes across as a metaphor for disillusionment.

4. Rockers, Poets and Oz

Finally merging all of the previously mentioned concepts together, we can see how exactly Emerald City came to signify disillusionment to pop-culture artists. Since *The Wizard of Oz* is part of children’s fiction canon, and given Hunt’s idea that children’s fiction informs the development and ideological construct of all individuals who read it, it is not much of a stretch to posit that for the individuals who are familiar with Baum’s work and who, as creative artists, are looking for an apt representation of the double-edged sword that is any seemingly perfect place or state, Emerald City and Oz itself might serve as a particularly convenient metaphor. Add to that the fact that the presence of Oz was forever cemented in minds of audiences round the globe by the famous 1939 film adaptation, starring Judy Garland, and this metaphor is more or less a given for any pop-culture observer, connoisseur or aficionado. Two such examples from rock poetry are to be examined more closely in the remainder of the paper.

4.1 Goodbye Yellow Brick Road

The first of these is the titular song from Elton John’s seminal 1973 album, *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. Often lauded as John’s *Sgt. Pepper*, the album boasts such hits as ‘Candle in the Wind’, ‘Saturday Night’s Alright for Fighting’ and ‘Bennie and the Jets’, but the most memorable track off it is easily ‘Goodbye Yellow Brick Road’ itself. Music critic Stewart Mason calls the song ‘a small masterpiece of ‘70s soft rock’, claiming that ‘lyrically, the song is evocative of faded Hollywood glamour in the manner of *Sunset Boulevard*.’ (Mason *web*) The song consists of a series of what seem to be rhetorical questions demanded of an unnamed person; and complaints about the kind of existence the lyrical subject feels is not right for him. Throughout the song, there is a distinct feel of nostalgia – in the verses like

I should have stayed on the farm
I should have listened to my old man

we can see that the lyrical subject is regretting his decision to, presumably, come to the big city and that he is a young person, probably wide-eyed and filled with great expectations at the beginning, but now disillusioned and bitter. The ‘farm’ is an interesting choice of words, for it points to the connections between Dorothy Gale, the simple farm-girl protagonist of *The Wizard of Oz*, and our disappointed hero. When speaking of the book, Thacker (2002:88) states that

[c]ompared to the colour of the Emerald City and the liveliness of the characters encountered in Oz, a desire to return to the prairie is difficult to understand.

However, the protagonist of ‘Goodbye Yellow Brick Road’ offers his experience in the city in a much more negative light, when he says

I’m not a present for your friends to open
This boy is too young to be singing the blues

thus giving us a possible context of someone being in a relationship with an older person where he is regarded as a trophy, or perhaps referring to the high society in general, or both. The second verse reinforces the idea of an older, powerful lover who is not really in love with the lyrical subject, for, when he leaves as he is apparently threatening/deciding to do, said lover won’t lose much sleep over it:

It’ll take you a couple of vodka and tonics
To set you on your feet again
Maybe you’ll get a replacement
There’s plenty like me to be found

The disillusionment with this kind of life can best be seen in the chorus:

So goodbye yellow brick road
Where the dogs of society howl
You can’t plant me in your penthouse
I’m going back to my plough
Back to the howling old owl in the woods
Hunting the horny back toad
Oh I’ve finally decided my future lies
Beyond the yellow brick road

The motif of farm is again mentioned (‘plough’), and another one is reinforced – the one of returning to the sphere, if not the world of, childhood (‘hunting the horny back toad’ as a pastime activity ties in nicely with the

regret of not having listened to ‘my old man’ and ‘this boy’ being ‘too young to be singing the blues’). Another connection with *The Wizard of Oz* is present in the decision that the ‘future lies beyond the yellow brick road’ – this is in keeping with Dorothy’s realisation that the solution to her problems and the road to her happiness are actually not ‘somewhere over the rainbow’, but, on the contrary, that ‘there’s no place like home’.

While talking about the song, journalist Robert Sandall said that
The strength of ‘Yellow Brick Road’ or certainly something that contributes to its lasting appeal is the fact that it does actually reflect on the dark side of life and the dark side of celebrity. (Classic Albums:2001)

While it is certainly possible to interpret the content this way, and this interpretation *does* tie in rather nicely with the *Sunset Boulevard* theme, the actual author of the lyrics, Bernie Taupin, states that

I don’t think it was about disillusionment of fame, I think it was more about the battle I had of being a country kid coming to town, being originally a little out of my depth. But at the same time I think it could have been about the all-encompassing world of fame and rock and roll. Is it all that it’s cracked up to be? Possibly not. (Classic Albums:2001)

Or, in the words of one of the most respected British lyricists, Sir Tim Rice,

Often the fulfilment of the ambition can be worse than not fulfilling it. (Classic Albums:2001)

4.2 Return to Oz

‘Return to Oz’ is the closing number on Scissor Sisters’ 2004 debut album, entitled simply *Scissor Sisters*, and penned by the band’s frontman Jake Shears. The song takes its title from the 1985 film sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*, based on two subsequent novels in Oz lore, *The Land of Oz* and *Ozma of Oz*. In the film, Dorothy returns to Oz and finds it in a horrible state – everything is destroyed, the yellow brick road is desecrated and the people have been turned to crystal. This introduction itself is enough to show us that, no matter how cruel the world in Elton John’s ‘Goodbye Yellow Brick Road’, it cannot compare to the utter devastation that is present in ‘Return to Oz’. Shears himself said that the song was about the abuse of crystal meth in American gay community.

The first line of the lyrics – ‘once there was a man’ – starts off as a fairy tale; this, together with the title, may lead us to believe that the song

may be fantasy-themed, like the ones brought forth in the '70s by Led Zeppelin and early Queen. However, the next few lines shatter this illusion, and establish the theme of real suffering instead:

But when his night came to an end
He tried to grasp for his last friend
And pretend that he could wish himself health on a four-leaf clover

The last line also introduces the theme of terminal illness, something that will be mentioned again, in the middle eight:

Deep inside their sunken faces and their wild rolling eyes,
But their callous words reveal
That they can no longer feel
Love or sex appeal
The patchwork girl has come to cinch the deal

If 'sunken faces' and 'wild eyes' aren't enough to create an image of illness, the loss of any possibility to feel (presumably physical) 'love or sex appeal' points to an incurable STD, and the idea is driven further home with the introduction of 'the patchwork girl' who has come to 'cinch the deal'. The patchwork girl may refer to *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, another one in the series of Oz novels, but it could also be a reference to the AIDS Memorial Quilt, made of many patches, serving as a memorial and celebration of the lives of those who died of the disease. Given that the theme of the song is the abuse of crystal methamphetamine, which has, in recent years, been the number one cause behind the rising number of HIV infections among young gay people; it is not too much of a stretch to interpret this verse as referring to AIDS.

The chorus is, again, a sorrowful lament over the state of things:

Is this the return to Oz?
The grass is dead, the gold is brown
And the sky has claws.
There's a wind-up man walking round and round
What once was emerald city's now a crystal town.

The yellow brick road has turned from gold to brown, and the sky with claws indicates something threatening. The 'wind-up man', on the surface level, refers to Tic-Toc, a mechanical man Dorothy finds upon her return to Oz, but, on a metaphorical level, it might refer to people who can no longer function without external help ('winding-up') of drugs. Finally, the last line which describes the literal state of Emerald City filled with

crystallised figures of its enchanted denizens is, underneath the surface, a metaphor for the big city of one's dreams turning into a threatening place filled with drugs, pain and death. When asked about the meaning of the song, *Scissor Sisters* member Baby Daddy said

You'd have to ask Jake about it. I think he wrote it with Seattle in mind, with all the crystal meth tragedy over there. To me it's a song about San Francisco and to a lot of others it's about New York but it can be about anywhere. I wouldn't say that it was one specific incident, but I think everyone in the band and in our group of friends has been touched in some way by the problems it's talking about. ('The Crystal Prison' 2004)

Elton John's world, while undoubtedly harsh and disillusioning, seems quite warm in comparison with the world of Scissor Sisters. The reasons for this may lie in the fact that John's song deals with the personal, giving the listener hope that the lyrical subject will make it, having decided to seek his future 'beyond the yellow brick road'; while Shears' lyrics describe a communal problem that is slowly destroying many lives, leaving the listener with little indication that things will improve. The world of 2004 is certainly a lot different from the world of 1973. Still, the metaphor of Oz seems to work just fine for both of them. And Baum would probably be thrilled about it.

5. Conclusion

Our boring old tweed-wearer from the beginning may not be too happy with pop-culture's forms of expression being used together with 'real' literature (though he probably wouldn't consider children's literature to be 'real' anyway) in a single research paper, but he would soon be proven wrong. In a world where everything can be – and indeed is – a text worthy of exploration, one cannot simply choose to ignore the connections that are there for the taking and playing with. When it comes to both music and children's literature, entertainment and play are absolutely necessary for the proper enjoyment and understanding of the work in question. And after all, is there anything wrong with being entertained?

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SECTION TWO:

ELT STUDIES

THE CONTEXT HAS CHANGED – SO SHALL THE TEACHER

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***Abstract:** The present paper aims at showing that in the post-Bologna context the reforms in education led to a re-assessment of the roles of the teacher and his/her working environment. The positive impact on the lecture and the seminar is presented, and the possibility of engendering new types of relationships is described in an experiment.*

***Keywords:** literature, enhanced possibilities, experiment*

1. Introduction. The old and the new

Following the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the "commitment freely taken" to reform higher education, undergraduate university levels have been reduced to three years instead of the four which have long been associated with the Romanian tradition. Observing the "mainstream of change" certainly has its conveniences nonetheless, the consequences of such a change go deeper than a superficial shortening, at national level, of the period of study for a first degree. They have a direct impact on the curriculum, which can be further modified through the universities having acquired a rather controversial autonomy (Educational Law no.84/1995). The last link in the chain is the syllabus where, with the number of classes assigned to each subject greatly reduced, the full significance of the reform can be perceived. The contextual change brings about a host of adjustments that have to be achieved at individual levels and which are connected with both the altered teaching environment and the contemporary students whom the environment has triggered.

2. Coping with the changed context

Re-modelling the role of the teacher has been the issue for quite a few years. The problem that arises is that, due to the rapid changes nowadays, the future for which the teacher is preparing his/her students is to a great extent unknown to him/her. Under the circumstances, multifarious decisions have to be taken at each step and thus the teacher's metamorphosis will include modification, diversification, development and reform instead of preservation and sustenance of old, albeit well-established, values. How does the teacher of English and American literature cope with the fresh role he/she has been assigned?

2.1 The lecture

On the positive side, the teacher enjoys increased freedom. On the negative side, having fewer classes at one's disposal means that the step by step covering of the neatly prepared chronological and thorough list of authors and their complete works has lost ground to a recommendably wise selection of the most representative writers, works and trends. Indubitably, "representative" can be seen from multiple perspectives and the possibility of choice applies to lectures and seminars alike, starting from two basic assumptions: firstly that the chasm existing between the two has to a certain extent been bridged although, in case of the lecture, there normally is more reaction and less interaction expected on behalf of the student; secondly that the idea of a functional teaching/learning environment is inseparable from communicative tools and methods, used for the purpose of imparting knowledge but also for creating a challenging but stress free zone where students and teachers reach out for mutual benefit.

No doubt, giving up the ease of two hours' "comfortable" lecturing with no interruptions, objections, or questioning on behalf of the students (unless more or less obvious manifestations of boredom varying with the honest fatigue of too many classes per day were to be considered a source of annoyance for the lecturer), while apparently rocking the boat of the very status of the university teacher (at least the one my generation was accustomed to), has a host of advantages. Maybe the most conspicuous and contradictory one is that the new context, while restricting the amount of material presented as information, allows for the scope of the lecture to be largely expanded. Students should no longer be expected to be able to write down as many facts about the author and his background, literary and social, as their handwriting skills permit. This kind of information they can get by themselves, in the privacy of their homes, without attending a lecture. And the extent to which they accomplish this sometimes irksome task will ultimately make the difference between the cultured adult and the one who is the owner of a piece of paper asserting his field but nothing more. "It's only with great vulgarity that you can achieve real refinement," says Lawrence Durrell (Plimpton 1963).

Meanwhile the very existence of the internet and the wealth of information it gives easy access to leaves the teacher with the choice to skip most of the strictly informative part and initiate memorable lectures instead, which will be apprehended as complex and variegated cultural infusions. True, literature cannot be separated from culture and it is one of the best media for its expression. Gaining insight into the target culture and the behaviouristic mould of the society that produced the literary samples under scrutiny develops cultural perspicacity and encourages objectivity. It helps

students put things into perspective, enriches their cultural baggage and allows them to dwell on similarities and differences between the target culture and their own while acknowledging the former and understanding both of them better. Cultural competence induces empathy and respect. Achieving greater tolerance is a collateral benefit to the process.

The lecture thus becomes a wonderful opportunity to integrate elements of the seven arts alongside with the socio-political environment, which was usually the only lead-in when elaborating on a certain writer or trend. Such elements are viable components of a lecture on literature, while the use of PowerPoint presentations, short films, hand-outs, recorded tapes, or whatever else an energetic teacher can think of by way of illustration can add a lot of colour, dynamism, helps avoid boredom and arouses and increases interest in the presented material. The frame for personal growth is set up: isn't that the final purpose of a good lecture?

Some selections from a PowerPoint presentation (with slides left out for lack of space) on Nathaniel Hawthorne are offered below with the purpose of illustrating the points I made. Being the first lecture on American literature at the beginning of the 19th century and the only one in which the novel form reflects the Puritan beginnings, a larger canvas is presented.

Instead of introducing the background of Hawthorne's life span by speaking about it, a more interactive way was chosen. Two slides are shown with *news flashes* of the 1800s and the 1860s with the purpose of underlining the dynamic development of American society and revealing an incredibly wide range of information, which students can think about, comment on, compare with today's interests. For example the flash reading "The population increased more than 30% since the last census in 1790" will make them realise the rate of immigration in those times.

A slide related to the music of the period, which just like literature is inspired by social life, greatly enlivens the atmosphere since it contains hyperlinks which will allow students to later recognize the musical pieces as landmarks of American musical history. *Amazing Grace* is used for the 1800s and *Dixie* for the 1860s.

The purpose of introducing two slides on the art of painting is to show the diversification of the trends from portraiture commissioned by the wealthy (Gilbert Stuart) and historical and religious subjects (Benjamin West) in the 1800s to landscape painting (J.F.Cropsey), folk art (Edward Hicks), realism (Winslow Hommer) in a slow passage towards *impressionism* (George Innes) towards the middle of the century. Sources are given for copyrighted material which is in itself a lesson to be learned.

Two slides always arouse interest and comments: the one on fashion and the one on education, the latter containing a quote by Jefferson (1816)

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be" and the 3 "r's" – the skills-oriented program.

There are quite a few sites offering biographical details about Hawthorne's life. Therefore understanding and defining his personality from his or others' comments is a much more interesting approach. Quotes from N.H. Pearson, R.H. Davis, W.D. Howells, H. Melville and Hawthorne's work are used for this purpose, *e.g.*

"There [in Raymond, Maine], as Hawthorne later put it, "I first got my cursed habits of solitude"; but there also with rod and guns in hand, he grew to love unshackled freedom and solitude... at the age of nine he suffered an injury to his foot which lamed him for nearly three years. This early confinement may, however, have strengthened his love of reading." (Norman Holmes Pearson)

Instead of the summary to *The Scarlet Letter*, just a short sentence is given: "In 17th century Boston, a young woman commits two sins, adultery and pride, both of them signs of irremediable decay in the Puritans' view and she is punished by the community and her husband alike." An understanding of the Puritan world and its values is more important than dictating a full summary. Interestingly enough, the work of a turn-of-the-century Iowan painter, Grant Wood, came to best represent the American pioneer spirit, although Iowans at the time were angry that *American Gothic* represented them as "pinched, grim-faced, puritanical Bible-thumpers" (Fernandes 2010). The painting makes the subject of one of the slides together with its sculptural version erected in Chicago. This is followed by a presentation of life in the Puritan period, their strict moral beliefs and conduct and by another culturally rich moment engendered by the next slide eliciting the distinctive features of T.H. Matteson's (1813-1884) paintings showing moments of the Salem Witch Trials and exhibiting the European Gothic tradition and those of Grant Wood (1891-1942), a regionalist painter whose paintings have traits in common with naive art.

Returning to *The Scarlet Letter* its main themes and its symbolism are mentioned. Bibliography is given for further research along the lines. In my experience it's always better to give students workable bibliographic resources, even if internet addresses, then letting them ramble and come up with their own. Other works by Hawthorne are named and connected to the already mentioned themes thus strengthening the ideas students already have about the author's domains of interest.

Indeed, with such tools at hand, falling back on the old, traditional forms of lecturing in which imparting information was the one and only purpose would mean giving up the cornucopia of opportunities that change two boring hours into a thriving activity during which students make

connections, judge for themselves, form opinions and draw conclusions thus placing the new information on an increasingly large canvas which becomes less easy to forget since they had to think through the material while working on its placement.

2.2 The seminar

What becomes of the seminar under the circumstances? The seminar is more formative than informative and, while reading literary excerpts is part of it, more time should be spent thinking and analyzing than reading. The seminar is also the place and time when the focus should be switched from literature itself to material about literature and personal response is not only made possible but triggered and solicited. This will not happen without guidance and previous knowledge of literary theory, therefore seminars build one upon another and the teacher is supposed to act as a facilitator of the relationship the student establishes with literature in general and the text in particular. Only then can he/she be asked for an informed response to a literary excerpt.

The interactive process that goes on during such classes is based on what Coady (1979:7) identified as its three basic factors: the conceptual (meaning intellectual) abilities, background knowledge (that is the students' cultural endowment which allows them to understand and interpret their own world, while accepting the existence of others) and process strategies (that is such reading strategies as skimming, scanning, intensive and extensive reading). A harmonious integration of these elements generates the conditions for a qualitative change: students are now able to create their own model vision of the world that is they develop "the ability to withdraw from individual experience and peculiarities of personal perception of a situation" and "to simultaneously view the situation from the vantage point of other participants and an impartial observer" (Khomenko, Sokol 1999). Dilemmas may be caused by differences in the cultural ethos that are perceived as obstacles in the reading/understanding process but such situations are rare and can be put down to the quality of texts belonging to a time period far from the students' present. Becoming aware of cultural differences is the inherent gain of such classes.

Widdowson (1979:46), connecting literature with language teaching, noticed that literary discourse is interpreted following the same procedures that are used for any type of discourse. Literary language is still language even though sometimes atypical and more difficult to interpret, especially if detached from the student's immediate context. The result is that what Widdowson calls the reader's "interpretative procedures" may become confused and overloaded. What this means is that the reader has to infer,

anticipate and negotiate meaning from within the text to a degree that is not required in non-literary discourse. When it comes to interpretations of human motivations there are no right or wrong answers to the extent to which they are allegiant to common sense. The purpose is to understand logical meaning in the cultural context to which students are exposed. Good seminar choices and practices were described in Cooper (2010) therefore they will not be further insisted on. What is relevant is that students are willing to partake in the experience if they clearly detect their role. Genuine interest on behalf of the teacher can act as a confidence and enthusiasm booster.

2.3. The experiment

Endowing students with tools that are of paramount importance for their future life and activities should be the core interest of the teaching process. I have long tried to find a way of showing students what to expect from a career in teaching and future students what they can expect from university life before they actually embark upon it, in order to prevent them from making uninformed choices, which soon prove to be a complete disappointment or, in the best case, different from what they expected. With this purpose in mind, between 2009-2010, I worked in parallel with a group of twelve second-year students from the English section envisaging a career in teaching (further called Group A) and fourteen students taking intensive English classes in highschool (further called Group B).

The *aim* of the experiment was: a) to create a connection between university and highschool for common further benefit; b) to develop awareness in both categories of students as to their potential once they set themselves precise tasks they want to accomplish; c) to inform Group A about what they can expect in the classroom and Group B about what they can expect should they apply for the English section; c) to create, for both groups, real-life working environments which they can perceive as being agreeable and enjoyable and they can reproduce in their later experience.

Preparation. At the beginning of each term students of the English section get a selection of literary excerpts and they choose one author they would like to study intensively in addition to the announced syllabus. Since their choice was N. Hawthorne, both groups were exposed to the same materials from two different textbooks introducing the author and his work.

Development. The first task was for both groups to determine which textbook material they liked more and why. One of the textbooks presented a one-page long informative material on the writer and his work, two long excerpts from *The Scarlet Letter* accompanied by more than eighty vocabulary explanations and reading comprehension tasks to both excerpts,

disguised as "multiple choice" or "analysis" but both types asking students to find information in the text. The teacher's guide offered the exact lines for the answers. The lead-in and the tasks called "Out" were very similar relying on students' experience or information they got from books or films but very limited in scope, completely open and therefore of not much consequence.

The lesson in the second textbook started with a lead-in already asking students to use their imagination and thinking skills since they had to find connections between the past, present and future, on the one hand, and the part and the whole, on the other, an activity closely connected with the way the rest of the lesson was organized. A first short excerpt from *The Scarlet Letter* (108 words) was used to demonstrate three major points: firstly that opening passages are often dense with information and reveal, to the attentive reader, a great deal about the rest of the novel (in this case the time and place of the action, the main characters and their different positions in the context of the narrative were revealed, while the characters witnessing the events in the background were hinted at); secondly that authors make significant choices all the time when presenting their works to the reader; thirdly that between the reader and the author there is a permanent process of negotiation as to the meaning of the work. The summary of the novel and the Puritan background were introduced by help of tasks asking students to infer, scan, fill-in gaps. A second literary excerpt was used for stylistic analysis: by working with the text students became aware of the traits of the *romance*, the dramatic and unrealistic quality of the text balanced by the archaic language, the use of the supernatural world, of symbols and archetypes, of the elements of Medieval Allegory, Romantic vision and Realistic setting characterizing Hawthorne's world. The two fragments were accompanied by 22 vocabulary explanations (mostly referring to archaic language) and a lot of extra material in info boxes, project work, etc.

Both groups of students preferred the second textbook. Group A easily recognized the qualities of the *communicative approach* to teaching. They noticed qualities such as:

- real communication skills are involved together with language skills
- there's a great variety in the tasks and the way they are presented
- information is never presented for the sake of it but takes the form of tasks that make it easy to remember
- personal response is triggered
- imagination and thinking are challenged, etc.

Group B arrived at the same conclusion by help of a questionnaire they filled in and which contained questions of the type: Which lesson:

- offered more opportunity to practice your communication/language skills?

- allowed you to freely express your opinions?

- contained a greater variety of tasks? etc.

The second task was different for the two groups. For Group A, divided in three four-student sub-groups, it involved devising a number of three tasks, each group, which would be part of a lesson on the same author but on a different work. Since they had to study the work in order to do that, three tasks were considered enough work. The task of Group B was to attend the class and evaluate the work of their elders.

The teacher's suggestion was *Mosses from an Old Manse*, the short story collection allowing for more freedom in the choice of tasks but, after reading some synopses of Hawthorne's other works, Group A decided to work on *The House of the Seven Gables* and came up with quite original ideas, some of which are given below.

I. One sub-group handed out fragments from the Author's Preface with the following instruction: *Hawthorne preferred to call his novels romances. Read the excerpts below and 1. find the traits of what he calls a romance; 2. try to guess what the novel is about.* From the excerpt:

(This tale attempts) to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. It is a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight... (p.xxi).

Group B inferred that 1) the romance inherited romantic qualities (Romantic poets dealt with far away times and places) and 2) that the novel may refer to the story of several members of the same family.

From the excerpt:

He (the author) trusts not to be considered as unpardonably offending by laying out a street that infringes upon nobody's private right, and appropriating a lot of land which had no visible owner, and building a house of materials long in use for constructing castles in the air (p.xxii).

Group B 1. concluded that the space in the novel was concrete but of the author's invention while the atmosphere Hawthorne devised was "airy" (by this they meant immaterial "like ghosts and dreams"); 2. advanced the idea that the house and its place will play an important part in the novel.

II. Another sub-group, also considering the traits of the *romance* important, elicited them from fragments of the novel itself. *E.g.*

The Pyncheon from two centuries ago, in common with most of his contemporaries, professed his full belief in spiritual ministrations, although reckoning them chiefly

of a malignant character. The Pyncheon of to-night, who sits in yonder armchair, believes in no such nonsense (p.365).

Group B again came up with the author's interest for the past, the connection with the spiritual world and the story of several generations.

III. Another task asked students to read five short excerpts from the book (referring to the five main personages) and *1. to describe the character of the person the excerpt is about* and *2. to devise a story explaining the relationship between them*. From quotes as the one below it was not a difficult thing to speak about personality traits, compare and contrast them.

Little Phoebe was one of those persons who possess, as their exclusive patrimony, the gift of practical arrangement. It is a kind of natural magic that enables these favored ones to bring out the hidden capabilities of things around them; and particularly to give a look of comfort and habitableness to any place which, for however brief a period, may happen to be their home (p.91).

IV. Another sub-group also asked Group B to *Discuss possible relationships between these members of the same family, the Pynchons* but they came up with the excerpt containing Hepzibah's outburst against her cousin, Judge Pyncheon, whom she accused of some "black purpose" against her brother Clifford (p.298).

V. Two versions of the summary of the story (produced by the students themselves) were devised by two different subgroups. One in jumbled paragraphs and a second in jumbled sentences, the latter being a more successful version in Group B's appreciation.

VI. A similar task was devised by a third sub-group who jumbled the paragraph from Chapter I where the author introduces the characters and the space where the events will unfold as well as the situation at the beginning of the novel (p.27).

VII. An original idea was to hand out Matthew Maule's actual curse: "God," said the dying man, pointing his finger, with a ghastly look, at the undismayed countenance of his enemy, - "God will give him blood to drink!" (p.5) and to ask students to discuss what could have triggered such behaviour and to give other examples of curses having been put on people. Since nobody came up with "Grimaldi's curse" on Monaco's ruling house, the students were happy to share the information, thus creating a moment of relaxation in the class.

VIII. While revealing information about the Puritans was not considered necessary (which was actually a good choice since this trait is much less obvious in this novel), the way information about Hawthorne's

life was conveyed was not a very original one. Students used a gap-fill exercise also giving the missing words.

Although in a discussion with Group A it became obvious that they had identified some of the symbolic elements in the novel (the arched window, Alice's posies, Chanticleer and his two hens, Colonel Pyncheon's portrait), these were not used in any task.

Conclusion. In the discussion that followed the lesson, both Group A and B admitted that the lesson was a worthwhile experience. Group B were happy to be asked an opinion as to how the lesson was carried out by the older students. They suggested an exercise in which symbols were matched with their correct excerpts from the text. They agreed the story was less enthralling than the one in *The Scarlet Letter* but they thought the exercises were interesting. Group A were delighted by the authority they were invested with and readily accepted comments. They both inquired whether it was possible to do other activities together.

3. Conclusion

The teaching/learning environment in the last few years gives invaluable opportunities for both teacher and student development and performance. They both become more creative and involve more of their potential in generating an enjoyable working atmosphere. The teachers of literature have at their disposal the vivid world of many social backgrounds and countless time spans which they can turn into as many valuable experiences for their students which become adventurous and long lasting. In this enterprise, the teacher-student relationship is of cardinal importance, except that in the new context teachers are not used as sources of information and evaluators of how much of that information was rote learned. They offer the counselling and guidance which, if given in an appropriate way, the students will happily admit they need. Endowing students with the appropriate tools in a likeable way will prompt them to be receptive and to readily respond. The experiment, although it was not conceived to produce strictly measurable results, showed that students were perfectly able not only to identify traits defining one of the contemporary trends in teaching, *the communicative approach*, but also to reproduce them in completely original and workable tasks. To both groups, university and highschool, the experiment proved profitable and pleasant. Since in the teachers' effort to impart valuable information, only too often communication vanishes, such experiments as the one described solve the perennial problem of togetherness in the joint effort.

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BUILDING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

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***Abstract:** Being "culturally competent" certainly represents a basic condition for any person who wants to interact effectively with people of different cultures. This is the reason why both the English language teacher and the translator trainer must provide the students with suitable input meant to develop their cultural competence. The paper will look at the similarities and the differences that these two types of training involve, discussing them both from a theoretical and from a practical perspective.*

***Keywords:** English teaching, culture teaching, cultural competence, translator's inter-cultural awareness*

1. Introduction

It is now widely agreed that filling our students up with English grammar and vocabulary, polishing their pronunciation and developing their communicative skills does not always ensure that they will be competent users of English outside the classroom. The mere focus on structures and forms is not enough if we do not associate it with real, valid and meaningful content whose role is to prepare language learners for intercultural communication in an increasingly multicultural world.

In this context, the great emphasis that the modern foreign language teaching methodology lays on raising the students' cultural awareness comes as no surprise. This happens because language is indeed used to convey meaning, but meaning is determined by the culture. As Chastain (1988) explains, communicative competence is a language concept common to all languages, and speakers of all languages are more or less familiar with the rules governing when to say what, with whom and in which situation. However, the particular patterns of social interaction are specific to each culture (Chastain 1988: 298). Making a similar point, Brown (1994) considers that language and culture "are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (165). Other methodologists, such as Gao (2006) or Wang (2008), go as far as to consider that foreign language teaching is foreign culture teaching, and, consequently, foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers.

It seems, therefore, that an important part of our job as English teachers is to help our students gain some degree of functional ability not only in the language, but also in the culture. In other words, teachers should

work towards developing their students' cultural competence and the present paper will discuss some possible manners in which this goal can be achieved. However, it must be stressed that there are at least two important challenges which turn this particular task of the English teacher into a very complex one. Thus, on the one hand, building the students' cultural competence involves more than transmitting knowledge: the students are required to construct their own meanings rather than have educators simply transfer information about people and their culture (cf. Kramsch 1993). On the other hand, this task must cater for needs specific to various situations of language use: even if most teachers of English are aware that their courses must have a cultural component, it is not easy to establish what exactly this component should consist in, or how it should be dealt with. Some possible solutions regarding the manner in which these challenges can be overcome are offered in what follows.

2. What should we teach when we teach culture?

Even if everybody talks about it, "culture" is one of those concepts which are not very easily defined. Consulting the specialized theory in order to find a definition of culture that would be useful for my approach to this concept, I realized that foreign language methodologists have tended to focus only on one narrow aspect of culture, according to the point that they were trying to make. Since my purpose is to highlight the complexity of the concept of culture in order to point to the difficulties encountered by the English teachers in this respect, I will start from the dictionary definition for this concept. Thus, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2006: 382) defines culture as:

- a) (in a society) the beliefs, way of life, art, and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a particular society
- b) (in a group) the attitudes and beliefs about something that are shared by a particular group of people or in a particular organization
- c) (art/ music/ literature) activities that are related to art, music, literature, etc.

For many years, the cultural aspects of foreign language teaching referred to history and artistic products, that is to aspects covered by definition (c). More recently, methodologists have started to recommend a concept of culture understood as the ways in which the society constructs the meaning of the people's lives and gives it expression, which is covered by definition (a). It seems that the meanings rendered by definition (b) have been more or less ignored by the English language courses, although, as I

will explain here, they refer to aspects of great importance for any competent user of a foreign language.

Taking all these into consideration, it is obvious that the question “What culture should we teach?” cannot be given a simple answer. In trying, however, to come up with some answers in this respect, I will formulate the question in more specific terms: which are the concrete situations in which our students, as competent users of English, might need this cultural knowledge? I consider that, in broad terms, the answer to this question must make reference to three such situations, although I am aware that they do not cover the whole range of possibilities:

- Our students want to be native-like – in which case, the social, historical, and artistic culture is of great help.
- They intend to study in an English-speaking country – which involves knowledge of academic culture.
- They want to be able to offer appropriate translation solutions – which means that they need good inter-cultural awareness.

The “type of culture” that each of these situations involves, as well as some practical suggestions for dealing with it as part of an English language training programme are discussed in more detail below.

2.1. Social, historical, and artistic culture

This is the area with which both teachers and students most frequently associate the idea of teaching and learning culture during a language course. This happens because various topics covered by this general label have traditionally represented the cultural material of the English textbooks (if there has been such material) or of other teaching materials. However, for a more thorough study, this type of information represents the focus of various content-based language courses (e.g. British culture and civilization, British institutions, British literature, etc.).

The topics discussed during an English language course refer, on the one hand, to aspects that regard the way of living in a society, the customs and traditions that give a group its identity, such as: family life, daily routines, eating, good manners, money, leisure activities, earning a living, humour, folklore or specific non-verbal communication. These topics are generally labelled as “small c culture” (Chastain 1988, Kramersch 1991) and involve a functional knowledge of the foreign-culture system, similar to the knowledge of the foreign language system.

On the other hand, the topics involve aspects of high culture, literary classics and other works of art, which are considered to represent the “large C culture” (Chastain 1988, Kramersch 1991). Some of these topics are: administrative and political institutions, national holidays and festivals,

religion, commonly known history or the arts. Although useful and interesting, the knowledge specific to the “large C culture” is considered to contribute only indirectly to the students’ ability to function linguistically and socially in the foreign language culture.

There are at least two main reasons why students want to learn about such aspects. Firstly, they are interested in the way of life specific to the people who speak the language they are studying. They want to know what these people are like, how they live and which are their most remarkable artistic achievements, comparing this information to aspects of their own culture. Secondly, students are interested in finding out as much as possible about the foreign culture for a more practical reason: they hope that, in case of direct contact with an English-speaking community, such information will be of help in reducing the effects of the culture shock that normally accompanies the process of an individual’s acclimatizing and adjusting to the new way of life.

What can the English teachers do in order to help their students in this respect? Of course, it is impossible for them to offer their students reliable information about each and every of the topics mentioned in the list above, list which is not even exhaustive. What they can do, however, is to raise the students’ awareness with regard to these aspects and, in this way, to help them come to terms with realities (Jordan 1997: 104). Here are some possible techniques for raising cultural awareness (adapted from Jordan 1997: 105):

- a) *Media materials* (newspapers, news broadcasts, etc.): they are a good source of cultural information, because they give a flavour of the potential problems encountered in the everyday life.
- b) *Discussions*: instead of giving information to students in a plenary session, the teacher can address some topics (e.g. taboo subjects/ language, euphemisms, body language, hospitality customs, etc.) under the form of group discussions. Prior to the discussion itself, the students can be given some time to do some research and to get informed about the topic in question.
- c) *Culture quizzes/ tests*: Bowers (1992) offers as an example a culture quiz divided into four parts representing different sources of culture: *memories* (e.g. What were the names of the Beatles?); *metaphors* (e.g. What does it mean to say that an Englishman’s home is his castle?); *maxims* (e.g. Whose rule is this – that the customer is always right?); and *myths* (literary, religious, historical, etc., e.g. Can you identify the pairs? Romeo and ..., David and ...). A different type of quiz can encourage the students to explore the local environment and to get acquainted with aspects of the local culture in a short time: thus, working in pairs and being given a certain time limit (e.g. a day, a weekend), the students are required to answer questions regarding the location of certain public buildings or services, train timetables, or the meaning of some public signs.

2.2. Academic culture

Although it is a common practice today that students from various countries go to universities abroad, it must be admitted that entering a new academic culture is not only an enriching experience, but also a challenging one. Obviously, the needs of such students involve much more than a very good knowledge of the language that they are going to use abroad: they must be also prepared to deal with difficulties determined by the different academic environment. In other words, those who want to study abroad must get familiarized with elements of academic culture, which consists of a shared experience and outlook with regard to the educational system, the subject or discipline, and the conventions associated with it. These conventions may refer to (cf. Jordan 1997: 98-103):

- the roles of student and academic staff and their customary behaviour – for example, students from cultures based on close family groups and small communities (e.g. Southeast Asian countries) frequently tend to solve problems as a group. The uninitiated Western teacher might assume they are “cheating”, therefore explanation and help are necessary
- plagiarism: in many universities, it is viewed as a serious disciplinary offence. Consequently the concept must be explained and practice must be given in making bibliographic references. For example, in some countries, especially in Asia, there is considerable respect for the printed word: it is quite normal for students to quote from authorities without acknowledging the source; moreover, criticism of published works is unacceptable and this is the reason why students will often present extracts from books or articles in an uncritical way
- academic behaviour: if we consider in detail the routines of the academic life, we will realize that there are many conventions that native speakers take for granted, but which may be sources of misunderstanding and confusion for the foreigners. For example, in UK, if a student is late for a seminar, an apology is normally expected, often with a reason for the lateness; however, if a student is late for a lecture, a quiet entry is expected and an apology is not usual. Another example: appointments are normally necessary to discuss with a teacher about research or studies; ad hoc meetings are to be avoided.
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It is necessary that both students and teachers should be aware of their own cultural norms with regard to aspects like the ones mentioned above. Additionally, appropriate and adequate information about the target academic context is crucial. But how can the teachers at home be of help in this respect? As a very general suggestion, they can devise activities based on authentic materials, the various instruments used for promoting the foreign academic institutions (e.g. websites, leaflets, etc.) representing an extraordinary resource in this sense. For the sake of illustration, I refer here to the site of the University of Glasgow (www.gla.ac.uk), which contains a special section devoted to their future students called “Preparing for study: student and staff views”. Some of the materials provided there might be

exploited by teachers all over the world in their attempt to help the students interested in that university to get better trained from a cultural perspective (cf. <http://www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/lbss/forstudents/international/preparingforstudy/>):

- a student's video diary offering details about a day in the life of an international student
- a quiz based on important information about learning and teaching at Glasgow
- a student and staff discussion in which some international students share their impressions of study at Glasgow
- international students' views and advice about classes and preparing for assignments and exams

2.3. Translator's inter-cultural awareness

Today, translation is very much part of our everyday life. It is used for multilingual notices which are present in various public places, for instructions issued by exporting companies, for tourist publicity, for official documents, such as treaties and contracts, for reports, articles, correspondence, textbooks to convey information, advice and recommendations for every branch of knowledge. Consequently, it is very likely that many of our students in English will have the opportunity – at least occasionally – of using their knowledge and skills in a translation situation.

An important element of what is generally referred to as translation competence is represented by the translator's ability to offer an appropriate treatment of the culturally-embedded words, phrases and structures presented by the source text. In other words, the translator must decide on the most appropriate manner of rendering into the target language elements such as proper names, various titles, euphemisms, cultural allusions, units of weight and measurement, etc. This decision-making process involves three stages. Firstly, translators must be aware of the cultural implications of a particular utterance; then, they are supposed to decide in each particular case whether they can or want to preserve that cultural load; finally, they must decide on the best manner of rendering that element into the target language.

I will use for illustration the following fragment, which is taken from Wodehouse's *The Code of the Woosters* (cf. Kussmaul 1995: 68). The novel presents the typical way of life of the well-to-do British middle and upper classes, and, consequently, its cultural dimension is of great importance. The fragment consists in a dialogue between Bertram and his butler:

“I reached out a hand from under the blankets, and rang the bell for Jeeves.

‘Good evening, Jeeves.’
‘Good morning, sir.’
This surprised me.
‘Is it morning?’
‘Yes, sir.’
‘Are you sure? It seems very dark outside.’
‘There is a fog, sir. If you will recollect, we are now in autumn – season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.’
‘Season of what?’
‘Mists, sir, and mellow fruitfulness.’
‘Oh? Yes, I see. Well, be that as it may, get me one of those bracers of yours, will you?’

(Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters*, in Kussmaul 1995: 68)

The most important cultural problem in this fragment is represented by the butler’s quote from Keats: “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness”. So, first of all, the translator him-/herself must recognize the importance of that utterance (it actually indicates that the butler is more educated than his master) and, then, decide on the manner in which it should be dealt with in the target text. Its simple translation into Romanian would not be an appropriate solution, because the target audience would most probably not recognize Keat’s poem, since it is not part of their culture. Similarly, using a quotation from a target language poet does not result into an appropriate translation equivalent, because it undermines the purpose of the text, which, as mentioned above, is that of describing a typical British situation (cf. Kussmaul 1995: 68). This means that the best solution that the translator has at his/ her disposal is that of preserving the function of the phrase in question, by making the source of the butler’s words explicit (for example, “după cum spunea Keats, Sir”, “un citat din Keats, Sir”, or simply “Keats, Sir”).

It must be stressed that the cultural competence is not at all restricted to literary matters, since pragmatic texts of various types are often culture-bound. In such non-literary contexts, translators have to decide whether names of people or institutional terms not known in the target culture must be explained or adapted, if allusions have to be made explicit or even dropped in translation (cf. Cozma 2010 for examples of activities meant to raise the students’ awareness of cultural references).

In the previous section, I mentioned the fact that “large C” culture contributes indirectly to the students’ ability to function linguistically and socially in the foreign language culture. However, for translators this is not true, and the situation presented above represents a good example in this respect. In other words, a good translator must be ready to deal with any type of cultural reference, no matter if it is of artistic nature, or if it involves

a particular aspect of the daily routine. It must be also noted that intercultural competence can depend just as much on knowledge about one's native culture and how it is linguistically represented in the foreign language as it does on an understanding of the foreign culture (Olk 2009), so a competent translator must be able to offer an appropriate treatment of the various elements specific to his/ her own culture.

3. Conclusions

At a time when the role of learning a foreign language is that of preparing the students for living in a multicultural world, methodologists emphasize the importance of intercultural understanding as an important goal of language education. Both in general English classes and in translator training programmes, teachers are supposed to help their students get familiarized with various facets of the culture in which they want to function as competent foreign language users. If certain aspects of the "big C" culture seem to be already part of the foreign language syllabuses and textbooks, the "little c" type of culture still needs to be emphasized.

However, are teachers "equipped" to teach elements specific to the real way of living, the customs and the traditions of a society that maybe they themselves often know only from indirect sources? It would be quite unrealistic to expect a language teacher to cover all the possible topics that might help their students to become functionally competent in the foreign culture. What teachers can do, however, is to raise the students' awareness about the importance of the cultural matters, and to train the skills by which they can access cultural information when needed. This is in line with the idea expressed by a second year student of mine, who, referring to the needs for culture teaching from the trainees' perspective, said: "Teachers should advise us how to do research and how to deal with this kind of problems, because, quite often, the dictionary is not the solution."

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RETHINKING LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

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***Abstract:** The paper discusses some fundamental concepts and issues in language pedagogy in the context of recent developments in our understanding of language, knowledge, learning, and verbal communication. It is shown how some basic assumptions in (language) pedagogy are inadequate and how some of the resulting issues may be resolved.*

***Keywords:** communication, education, grammar, knowledge, language, learning*

1. Some introductory remarks

In this short paper, I will attempt to explain why both pedagogical theory in general and language pedagogy in particular need to be rethought from the fundamentals and I will also indicate some possible directions in which to go. One may have mixed feelings about this almost unrealistically ambitious task. On the one hand, there is little satisfaction concerning the growing suspicion or, possibly worse, the conclusion that a theory is in crisis in the sense of Kuhn (1970). It is pleasing, however, that not only can we clearly identify some of the major causes of crisis but it is also fairly easy to indicate directions in which we can go in order to explore possible solutions to some elementary problems in our understanding of education. Solutions to some of the major problems are surprisingly straightforward. This is reassuring when it is easy to gain the impression that almost nothing is right and that, therefore, concepts and principles conventionally and almost universally accepted require radical revision. Below, I will refer to what is fundamentally wrong and about how some fundamental errors and misunderstandings could be rectified in language pedagogy in particular and educational theory in general.

Let me make a final remark, before we move on, concerning radical changes, sometimes called conceptual changes, in any particular theory (cf. Nahalka 1997a, b). Such changes are always painful because they involve abandoning fundamental assumptions and principles, which may not be easy if you feel strongly about them and have worked long and hard on them. Some conceptual changes are sometimes so radical that they amount to a complete redefinition of a science. Linguistics, for example, is no longer the science it used to be before the 1950s and 60s, when it became a branch of cognitive psychology. Furthermore, it has undergone several additional radical changes since then to the point that it has become what is now known as biolinguistics (cf. Chomsky 2004, 2005, for instance). Such

inevitable paradigm shifts occur regularly as a natural part of progress in science (cf. Kuhn 1970).

It is doubly relevant for pedagogy to understand and respect the inevitability of recurring radical changes in understanding. On a personal level, such changes in the knowledge of an individual constitute what is called learning (cf. Nahalka 1997a, b). As everybody knows, students are repeatedly expected to do precisely that – radically restructure their understanding of one or another aspect of the world, such as physical motion, the shape of the earth, human communication, the structure and functions of language, and countless other matters under the weight of compelling evidence and in accordance with their teachers' desires. Everything a teacher of physics does, for example, is dictated by one ultimate goal – to get the students to understand how their naïve, though absolutely natural, beliefs about the physical world are inadequate and replace them with what is considered an adequate theory of physical phenomena. It is therefore only appropriate for pedagogical theory to be ready to do the same – radically restructure itself if and when it is apparently required. A call for radical restructuring may come in various forms, which range from a general dissatisfaction with teaching and learning results to serious contradictions, absurd predictions and other inadequacies in pedagogical theory. There are many more similar issues than will be discussed below.

2. Returning to the fundamentals

Whenever a science or a theory is apparently in crisis, it is generally taken to be a symptom of some fundamental error, misunderstanding or inadequacy involving its basic concepts and assumptions and the questions or problems formulated in terms of those concepts and assumptions. This is the inference that motivates the complete revision of a particular theory, which involves radical modifications to its foundational concepts and principles and occasionally the surprising conclusion that some of its basic concepts and assumptions are incoherent or meaningless and, therefore, need to be discarded.

To mention just one example, which is incidentally highly relevant for language pedagogy, take the notion of language. It turns out that it is either far too abstract for it to be of any use in linguistic theory or, quite simply, there is no such thing: “the common sense notion of language is hopeless” (Chomsky 2004:131, see also Chomsky 1980). One dramatic consequence of this conclusion, in conjunction with some other considerations that we need not discuss here, is the complete redefinition of linguistics. It is no longer the science of language, which is beyond

anyone's understanding in the current state of science, but the study of a specific form of speakers' knowledge, called grammar, which enables them to construct and understand an infinite number of potentially infinitely complex sentences. On standard assumptions concerning the goals and subject matter of psychology, this leads to the concomitant conclusion that linguistics is a branch of cognitive psychology (cf. Chomsky 1980, for example). Furthermore, as the study of mental states and processes naturally raises questions about the "organical structure of the brain," some questions of language are ultimately questions of human biology, the realization that underlies the biolinguistic approach to language, already mentioned in the preceding section (cf. Chomsky 2006:185).

Let us now turn to the fundamentals of educational theory in general and language pedagogy in particular. What are the fundamentals? Some of them are basic concepts and assumptions on which pedagogical theory is immediately based. These include the concepts of learning, teaching, and knowledge, and assumptions about the goal of education and the subject matter of pedagogical theory. The latter is an answer to the following question: What is pedagogy the study of?

In addition, any coherent theory of education involves some more general assumptions, which we can call its background assumptions. Some of these concern the nature of knowledge and its attainment by humans, how what we call knowledge of the world relates to the world, the nature of human experience, which raises questions about what exactly experience is or what it is that is experienced, and many other questions generally termed epistemological.

All work in any science is fundamentally based on assumptions about the nature of knowledge. As few scientists outside epistemology or cognitive science ever discuss their general epistemological commitments explicitly, those remain largely implicit (for more discussion, see Czeglédi 2008 and references cited there). But, for obvious reasons, educational theory cannot afford to be inexplicit about its assumptions concerning the nature, structure, and attainment of knowledge, variably called learning or acquisition. It is therefore unfortunate that traditional pedagogy often remains informal and equivocal concerning the epistemological assumptions it apparently adopts (cf. Horváth 2004, for example).

Another set of "background assumptions" concerns communication, primarily verbal communication, again, for obvious reasons. A theory of verbal communication centers on questions of how meaning is expressed in messages and how such meaning is understood. The common belief is that a message contains its meaning, which is thus carried to the receiver. If this is adopted in pedagogy, it naturally supports the belief that knowledge is

transferrable from teacher to student or writer to reader, for instance. If, however, it turns out that an utterance does not contain its meaning, then it predicts that it is not carried from sender to receiver, which immediately refutes the belief in knowledge transfer. This, in turn, will have dramatic consequences for our understanding of teaching, the goal of education, the learning process, etc.

Serious work in any science presupposes an understanding of standard metatheoretical conditions, such as consistency, explicitness, explanatory adequacy, etc., which apply to formal theories in science in general. Formal theories in empirical sciences, such as physics, psychology or linguistics, for example, must, in addition, meet the condition of empirical adequacy. (For some discussion of how these conditions apply to linguistic theory, for example, and how the biolinguistic approach attempts to meet them, see Chomsky 1965, 2005, and 2006. For some remarks on how conventional pedagogical theory fails to meet them, see Nahalka 1997a).

Let us now turn to some fundamental concepts and assumptions in language pedagogy. For reasons too obvious to even mention, any theory of language education is based on assumptions concerning questions of what language is, how knowledge of a language is acquired, what grammar is and how it relates to a notion of language, what verbal communication is, how use of language relates to a speaker's grammar and other domains of knowledge, among other things. Equally clearly, the work of any language teacher is also determined by their implicit or explicit understanding of these matters, in addition to their beliefs about what language pedagogy is, how it relates to questions of language teaching methodology, and a host of other questions, which we must set aside now.

3. Some central issues

After a brief survey of some central concepts and issues, let us explore some of them in more detail. Their selection is more or less arbitrary, dictated largely by space restrictions.

3.1. Language pedagogy and language teaching methodology

Let us begin with the issue mentioned immediately above, teachers', teacher trainees', and teacher educators' beliefs about how language teaching methodology relates to language education. As many of us are aware, both teachers and students in initial teacher education often hold a simplistic view, which puts an equation sign between language pedagogy and foreign language teaching methodology. To make matters worse, this is

shared by some education-theoretic experts and teacher educators. The brief and admittedly sketchy survey above should suffice, without any further discussion, to show that this is a misunderstanding. Foreign language teaching not only involves much more than a teacher's methodological competence but, in fact, the latter is of secondary significance, at best. (For more discussion of the issue, see Nahalka 1997c and 2003.)

There is growing awareness that both teachers and students in teacher education are "somewhat hostile to theory." This, in conjunction with the "commonly held view at all levels of the profession... that practical classroom skills are what matter most," accounts for "the virtual absence of serious opposition to the introduction of practice-led and competence-based initial training" in teacher education (cf. Lawes 2003:24). As Lawes's remarks and some more we will make later about competence-based teacher education (CBTE) suggest, competence-based education in general and CBTE in particular are very likely based on some serious misunderstandings.

The general misunderstanding is that foreign language teaching is competence-based rather than theory-driven, which amounts to completely ignoring all the fundamental issues briefly sketched above, as well as many other matters not even mentioned, whose understanding is a prerequisite for language pedagogy. It is ironic in the present context that educational theory feels increasingly strongly about developing learners' metacognitive abilities, while this does not seem to apply to their teachers. In Bruner's words, "Explaining what children do is not enough; the new agenda is to determine *what they think they are doing* and *what their reasons are for doing it*" (Bruner 1996:49, emphasis mine). If Bruner and others are right in asserting that developing students' understanding of the reasons for doing what they do helps them become more successful learners, who will perform and function better, then CBTE is either completely wrong or the teaching profession is a mysterious exception, which may be pursued without what Peschl (2006:121) calls a "profound and deep understanding" of the phenomena that it involves. As already noted, EVERY classroom teacher has SOME understanding of most, if not all, of those issues, and their views, which may remain largely implicit for reasons just discussed, WILL have an effect on their teaching, regardless of whether they are aware of them.

If this is correct, two important conclusions follow, part of the main thesis of this short essay. One concerns language pedagogy. It should be a coherent theory, based on such fundamental principles that allow a consistent account for all the issues and phenomena that teaching and learning a foreign language involve, some of which we have briefly

sketched above. Another conclusion follows for teacher education. Briefly, it must be theory-based. What that means is that it needs to address all the relevant issues and offer students assistance in developing a good understanding of the entire complex of phenomena and the problems they raise, rather than focus primarily or exclusively on developing their classroom competence, commonly called methodology.

3.2. Knowledge and learning

Perhaps the most serious question that properties of human knowledge and learning raise is what is known as Plato's problem: "How comes it that human beings, whose contacts with the world are brief and personal and limited, are nevertheless able to know as much as they do know?" – as formulated by Russell (1948/2009:xiv), also cited in Chomsky (1988:3–4).

If the central empiricist doctrine, attributed originally to Aristotle, that "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses" is correct, then the amount and quality of understanding we have of the world ought to be impossible. No one ever experienced quantum mechanics, gravity, or the grammar of a language. These are explanatory hypotheses of phenomena, which are in part observed, in part inferred. Where do such explanatory hypotheses come from?

Given the inadequacy of the empiricist account of knowledge and learning, unless a superior hypothesis is proposed, the only remaining alternative is miracle. Before we turn to elements of such a superior hypothesis, let us briefly consider a special case of Plato's problem, what is called the logical problem of language acquisition (LPLA). It is termed "logical" because, again, as with the more general problem, if a child's knowledge of language comes entirely from experience, then logic dictates that no human child ought to be able to do what any healthy six-year-old child can in fact do – say and understand sentences they have never heard before.

One central problem in LPLA is known as the poverty of stimulus problem. This means that the empirical data available to the child as linguistic experience is insufficient and of too poor quality for the child to be able to work out the rules of grammar from them. For example, no one ever explains the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC) to any child, nor do we ever point out a sentence that violates it, except to students of syntax, which is a completely different matter. Yet, every healthy speaker of English, or any other language, for that matter, knows not to violate it. How do they know that, when there is no evidence in the environmental input for the ungrammaticality of sentences violating CSC? The only plausible

explanation for this is to assume that such elements of knowledge are not learned from experience, perhaps not learned at all. This applies more generally to processes commonly called learning or acquisition of knowledge. The attainment of knowledge is more like “organic growth,” governed by organism-internal principles and made possible by conditions internal to the organism, than any sort of “intake of information,” if there is such a thing at all (cf. Chomsky 2005:7).

As suggested by the formulation of Plato’s problem and LPLA cited above and the brief remarks about them, human knowledge, including knowledge of language, and the attainment of knowledge, including its special case known as language acquisition, are empirically vastly underdetermined. Informally, what this means is that the traditional empiricist dogma, still apparently dominant in as well as outside pedagogical theory, which claims that all of our knowledge is rooted in experience, is untenable. Setting miracle aside as an implausible alternative, the only way to account for the properties of human knowledge and learning is by attributing to humans some unique faculty that makes the acquisition of knowledge, apparently unique to the species, possible at all.

One special case is language, another one is logic. Given LPLA and given that man is the only species capable of acquiring the knowledge of a language, humans must be assumed to possess some biologically endowed faculty, called the faculty of language (FL), which makes language acquisition possible (cf. Chomsky 2005). As Smith (2000:x) puts it, “That something linguistic is innate is self-evident from the fact that babies do – but cats, spiders and rocks do not – acquire language.”

As Crain and Khlentzos (2008) show, logic is innate too, as anyone can easily convince themselves by observing the behavior of any healthy child. Children, in particular, are irrefutable evidence because they are unlikely to have attended a course in propositional logic. Therefore, if they show signs of an ability to make inferences, especially in situations they have never before encountered, it always testifies to their knowledge of how to do it, which, for obvious reasons, cannot come from learning from experience.

If in doubt about the hypothesis, an easy way to test it is to make a child a conditional promise and see how they react when the condition is not met and, therefore, the promise is not performed. If they do not complain, that is evidence that they understand what is technically known as a biconditional in formal logic as well as the sort of inference that may be drawn from it. Furthermore, if such a promise takes the standard linguistic form of an *if-then* conditional, which may be logically interpreted either as a conditional or as a biconditional, which differ sharply in the sort of

inferences that can be drawn from them, then the child's behavior testifies to their understanding of that intricate logical difference as well.

Few teachers or textbook writers apparently realize how relevant it is to foreign language teaching. As everyone knows, both the structure of linguistic expressions and their use in verbal communication are restricted by principles, commonly called rules. Equally clearly, the goal of foreign language teaching is to enable students to understand and apply those rules in their use of the second language (L2). What few teachers and students notice is that the rules of L2 and its use are often presented in ambiguous and misleading forms, which pose problems of interpretation similar in nature to the case discussed in the preceding paragraph. As already noted, much depends on whether a conditional or a biconditional reading is assigned to a rule of grammar or communication, which is sometimes presented, sometimes merely suggested to students in various forms they are expected to understand correctly. Obviously, if such a rule is misunderstood, errors in the structure of expressions or their use are expected. For example, if a rule is intended to express a logical conditional, as many are, such as the rule that says that the English present perfect is used to express the present result of a past action or experience, for instance, and students take it to represent a biconditional, sometimes called a definition, errors are bound to occur.

As suggested in the preceding paragraph, and as any teacher, consciously or unconsciously, expects, students of a foreign language can not only assign logical interpretations to rules presented or suggested to them by their teachers or in their textbooks, but can *construct such rules for themselves*. Where do those rules come from, and how are they constructed?

As repeatedly noted above, neither the rules of grammar, nor the rules of language use may be directly observed in expressions or their use in communication. They are simply not there. Expressions and acts of verbal behavior are data, which young children make use of in language acquisition, but the rules or principles of grammar or language use are not. The latter are mental constructs, whose construction is made possible by innate faculties, apparently unique to the species, as noted above.

This holds more generally. Loosely speaking, data are a matter of experience but the knowledge of rules and principles of language, communication or nature are not. Knowledge is not sense data but a structured system of concepts, rules, principles and the like, whose function in part is to account for whatever the organism is able to perceive. Whatever knowledge is composed of is internal to the mind, which is apparently endowed with a faculty, or a set of faculties, that makes knowledge construction possible. The ability of an organism to construct systems of

knowledge and the knowledge so constructed will contribute to the organism's adaptive interaction with external conditions imposed on it by its environment. For example, FL enables a newborn baby to "interpret part of the environment as linguistic experience" (Chomsky 2005:6). This automatically explains in large part why human children do but cats or spiders do not acquire language, as Smith (2000) noted (see above).

Importantly, it also implies that experience, if a particular thing is capable of it at all, never delivers "true knowledge" of the physical world, but is itself the function of organism-internal properties. This explains why cats, puppies, and small children "experience the world" very differently, why different people's interpretations or experience of essentially identical situations may sometimes be dramatically different, and why rocks have no experience at all of what is physically the same world for all of us. Briefly, what is called experience is a form of knowledge construction made possible by innate properties of the experiencing organism, which is always shaped by whatever knowledge it has already constructed.

The informal remarks just made very briefly summarize the central principles of what is known as constructivism, an epistemological hypothesis on the nature and attainment of human knowledge, the major alternative to empiricism (or miracle). Whichever of these two hypotheses is adopted as a "background assumption" in pedagogical theory, important conclusions follow. As was repeatedly suggested above, one's general assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge, which are typically in part implicit, are decisive about the content and structure of particular theories of one or another aspect of the world, regardless of its topic of inquiry. It is important to note, however, that something like its converse also holds. Advances in a particular science may have important consequences for our general assumptions about the nature of human cognition. We have seen, for instance, how recent developments in linguistics suggest that conventional empiricist assumptions concerning knowledge and learning are fundamentally in error. (For more discussion of the matter and of how generative linguistics is completely consistent with a constructivist theory of knowledge and learning, see Czeglédi 2008. For a discussion of some broader metatheoretical implications, see É. Kiss 2007.)

From a language-pedagogic perspective, it should be clear that what is desired is a theory of foreign language teaching and learning that is consistent both with a general theory of knowledge and learning, i.e., an epistemology, which, perhaps in part implicitly, is always inevitably adopted, and with any other theory that is relevant to it, sometimes called its "auxiliary sciences," such as a theory of language and a theory of human communication.

3.3. A central issue in communication theory

Space restrictions preclude any detailed discussion of problems of human communication and many other remaining issues on various levels of language pedagogy. Although much turns on one's communication-theoretic assumptions in pedagogy in general, all we can do here is indicate one central issue concerning the expression and understanding of meaning in human communication and its implications for pedagogical theory.

The general, typically implicit, informal view on which verbal messages are assumed to contain their meaning predicts that such meaning may be transferred in spoken or written form to a hearer or reader. But if signs "do not contain meanings," because what we call the meaning of a sign is something that "develops within human beings," "rather than something 'received'" by a hearer or reader, as if packaged in a verbal message, then a completely different prediction emerges: meaning or knowledge is not transferrable from one participant to another in acts of communication (cf. Barnlund 1970:87–88). Instead, it is constructed by every individual for themselves and is never to be shared in the conventional sense with anybody else, in complete congruence with standard constructivist assumptions and in sharp conflict with traditional views in educational theory.

4. Concluding remarks

To paraphrase one of the main theses of this short essay introduced in section **Error! Reference source not found.** above, what is apparently missing and called for is a coherent theory of language pedagogy, which is consistent not only with general principles of education but also with all other relevant "auxiliary hypotheses" and "background assumptions," minimally including a theory of language, a theory of communication, and a theory of knowledge and its acquisition.

Such a complex theory of language pedagogy could, and I believe should, replace the simplistic attitude to foreign language teaching, which incorrectly identifies a foreign language teacher's understanding of the profession with their methodological competence. A rigorous and truly principled revision of the fundamentals, even if it takes a complete and radical restructuring of the theory of language education and, perhaps, of educational theory in general, promises, among other things, a meaningful alternative to the current approach, sometimes characterized as "principled eclecticism," which is little more than an unfortunate, because self-contradictory, play on words and therefore a hopeless pseudo-attempt to resolve, or rather pretend to resolve, the many apparent inconsistencies, some of which have been exposed in the present paper.

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ENGLISH AND THE WORLD OF WORK: ENHANCING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ENGLISH MEDIUM EXAMS

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Abstract: In this paper we will overview the range of work-related examinations available in Timisoara focusing on their relevance, recognition and candidature. We will also present a case study on the views of some students and young professionals who have decided to sit these examinations.

Key words: work-related examinations, students, future career

1. Introduction

It does sound redundant, futile and clichéd to argue that good knowledge of English is practically a must for getting a rewarding and fulfilling job nowadays. This is particularly more so as far as the Romanian context is concerned, especially since Romania's joining the EU. Good knowledge of English accompanied by IT skills and a driving license can definitely be considered a prerequisite for a successful (inter)national career. However, a new trend has been set fairly recently: the emergence of English medium career related examinations. These examinations seem to enhance the employability chances of the persons who have managed to pass them. One obvious reason is that they add value to the 'just speaking English fluently' variable in the process of job hunting. In other words, besides providing proof of English language proficiency, such examinations or tests enable the test takers to show their knowledge and/or skills in a particular work related field thus convincing their prospective employers of their suitability.

In this paper we present the career-related examinations administered by British Council Bucharest which are administered in the Western part of Romania. We will tackle issues such as their structure, recognition, candidature and present opinions and attitudes of some of the persons who have decided to sit them.

2 The examinations

As follows we will introduce two kinds of career related examinations which are different in terms of the kinds of test they instantiate. The first ones, proposed by Cambridge ESOL, are proficiency tests, that is, they are not based on particular courses or textbooks. The second ones are achievement tests as they are based on completing a study programme.

2.1 Cambridge ESOL examinations

General information about the content, structure, assessment and administration of all Cambridge ESOL examinations can be obtained at <http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/index.html>, while specific information for Romania, about examination dates and registration at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/ro/romania-examene.htm>. Support and resources for preparation can be obtained at <http://www.cambridgeesol.org/resources/index.html>

Of interest for the study discussed here, as shown before, are those examinations which are career oriented and are available to be taken in Timișoara: Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), Business English Certificates (BEC), International Legal English Certificates (ILEC) and International Certificates in Financial English (ICFE). They are going to be discussed next.

2.1.1 Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT)

TKT is a relatively new certificate from Cambridge ESOL (it was introduced in May 2005). It is available internationally and it is suitable for teachers of English worldwide. As a test of knowledge it tests concepts related to theories of language learning and teaching, English language systems and language skills, English language use, learners and learning and the practice of English language teaching and learning. Consequently, TKT is neither a test of language proficiency.

The test is suitable for pre-service and novice teachers of English, teachers changing track, or English teachers wishing to get a valid life-long certification, teaching English to primary, secondary and adult learners, be it either non-first or first language English speakers. In fact, TKT is an ideal test for all teachers, whatever their background and teaching experience might be and it is also suitable for people who would like to teach English but do not yet have a teaching position. TKT has no formal entry requirements, however, an intermediate level of English - Level B1 of the [Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#) the internationally recognised benchmark of language ability e.g. B1 (Cambridge ESOL's lower intermediate level PET or an IELTS band score of 4) – is a prerequisite. Thus, TKT tests candidates' knowledge of teaching, not their proficiency in English or performance in the classroom.

The classical TKT has three free standing modules with 80 multiple-choice questions each, which can be taken in one session or separately, in any order. Each module is free-standing and there's no aggregate score. Task types include matching and multiple-choice, among others. There is no

listening, speaking or extended writing in this test. Module 1 tests subject matter knowledge needed by teachers of English, such as knowledge about language systems, skills and subskills, the range of methods, tasks and activities available to the language teacher, factors in the language learning process. Module 2 is concerned with lessons planning, consulting reference resources to help in lesson preparation and selection and use of materials, activities and teaching aids. Module 3 focuses on identifying the functions of learners' language, categorising learners' mistakes and options available to the teacher for managing learners and their classroom in order to promote learning

KAL is the acronym for Knowledge about Language It tests a candidate's knowledge of the language systems needed for the planning and teaching of their lessons. It tests knowledge of how the different features of English work from a teaching perspective. It also focuses on the teacher's awareness of the language needs of learners, and the difficulties involved in learning a second language.

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning and it tests a candidate's knowledge of planning, teaching and assessing curriculum subjects taught in English (such as Mathematics, History, Geography and so on)

Young Learners' TKT (YL) tests concepts relating to young learner learning and developments and the principles of teaching English to young learners, how to plan young learner lessons, the practice of teaching and assessing young learners.

TKT Practical is a new TKT module which gives teachers certification for their practical teaching abilities. It complements the range of teaching tests and awards offered by Cambridge ESOL and can be taken together with other TKT modules or on its own. The test takes the format of an observation of 40 minutes of teaching: either one 40 minute session or two 20-minute sessions, of which one can be peer teaching.

All TKT tests are available on dates requested by test providers and results are reported in four bands, with candidates gaining a certificate for each module taken.

The TKT story in the region can be considered truly a success story. Thus we started small in 2009 but grew up fast. The table below illustrates this growth.

Table 1: Growth in the TKT modules sat in Timișoara

TKT session	May 2009	Nov. 2009	May 2010	Nov. 2010	Febr. 2011	April 2011	May 2011
No. of modules	9	15	25	38	41	8	48

Total No of modules/year		24 in 2009		63 in 2010			97 in 2011 (so far)
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As can be seen from the above, TKT is becoming more and more popular in Timisoara, as both student teachers and practising teachers from both state schools and private language schools started to understand its worth. Unfortunately, things do not look so bright with other Cambridge ESOL career related examinations, as shown next.

2.1.2 Business English Certificates (BEC)

It has become quite obvious that nowadays, more than ever, good knowledge of English is paramount to succeed in international business and commerce. If one can show that s/he has relevant business related language skills, one will have a great advantage in the job markets and much greater flexibility especially if one wants to work abroad. Thus, BEC are internationally recognised qualifications that show employers your skills for using English in the workplace. BEC is an ideal English language exam if you are preparing for a career in business. There are three different levels of BEC: BEC Preliminary, BEC Vantage and BEC Higher. The BEC tests are, as all Cambridge ESOL examinations aligned with levels of the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#). Thus BEC Preliminary corresponds to level B1 (lower intermediate), BEC Vantage is B2 (upper intermediate) while BEC Higher is C1 (advanced level). In brief, BEC can help you demonstrate that you have learned English to an appropriate standard and can use it in a business context.

As far as the BEC candidature in the region is concerned, it is obvious that BEC has not proved to be as popular as the TKT. Though it has been on the market for more than ten years and it has been marketed accordingly, the number of persons who manifested interest in these certificates has been rather minimal as compared to the other Cambridge ESOL exams whose candidature has constantly (and in some instances spectacularly) grown. Thus in Timisoara there has been an average of ten candidates per year.

2.1.3 International Legal English Certificates (ILEC)

English is also essential for any legal staff working in international contexts or with international matters. Cambridge ILEC was created to meet the needs of both employers (who need to know that the staff they employ can communicate with clients and peers from other countries) and lawyers as well. It is also suitable for law students intending to follow courses which

may include a significant English language content or are entirely English medium based either in their own country or abroad. ILEC assesses English language ability at Levels B2 and C1 of the CEFR. The exam consists of four separate papers testing reading, writing, listening and speaking. The Speaking test is conducted face-to-face by Cambridge ESOL Oral Examiners. Test results are normally reported approximately six weeks after the test date. Levels of performance in the exam are distinguished by a range of passing and failing grades. The passing grades are B2 Pass, C1 Pass and C1 Pass with Merit. All candidates receive a Statement of Results showing their overall grade and their performance on each of the four papers. Candidates who achieve a passing grade will also receive a certificate awarded by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations.

2.1.4 International Certificate in Financial English (ICFE)

Developments such as International Accounting Standards (IAS) are creating international career opportunities for professional accountants. It is essential for individuals who wish to succeed in the international business community to possess first-rate English language skills and the ability to converse with accounting and finance professionals. To meet the demand for helping finance professionals demonstrate they have the financial English skills they need, University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations and ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) have combined to develop the International Certificate in Financial English (Cambridge ICFE).

This certificate can be used as proof of the ability in English necessary to work in an international finance context or to follow a course of accountancy or finance study at university level. ICFE is similar to ILEC both when it comes to the levels of performance on the CEFR and the reporting of results.

As far as the candidature in the region is concerned, neither ILEC, nor ICFE have yet been taken in Timisoara, but they can be offered if there is enough interest and at least 10 candidate register for a certain date. They have, however, been organized in Bucharest.

2.2 The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) examinations

ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) is the global body for professional accountants. They aim to offer business-relevant, first-choice qualifications to people of application, ability and ambition around the world who seek a rewarding career in accountancy, finance and management.

The ACCA Qualification will help its takers' career progress in any organisation. It is a secure, straightforward and well-established route to professional status - allowing the use of the 'ACCA' letters on successful completion of the programme. Employers worldwide will understand and respect this qualification. Holders of ACCA will be in demand for their finance and accounting knowledge and skills regardless of employment sector. Within the ACCA Qualification there is a strong focus on professional values, ethics and governance - skills which are essential as the accountancy profession moves towards strengthened codes of conduct, regulation and legislation with an increasing focus on professionalism and ethics in accounting. As part of the ethical development towards ACCA membership, the takers will be required to complete a Professional Ethics module in addition to passing 14 exams (nine of which are eligible for exemption) and three-years' relevant practical experience. ACCA operates over 400 examination centres in more than 170 countries at each examination session. Special facilities can be arranged for disabled students, and where appropriate - for example in remote areas or where religion places restrictions on attendance at regular examination centres - ACCA will consider requests to set up alternative examination centres. More information about ACCA can be found at <http://www.accaglobal.com/>

In Romania ACCA exams are administered by British Council in four of its Centres: Bucureşti, Iaşi şi Cluj twice a year in December and May. These two sessions last for eight days and the candidates can register for one examination per day. In addition to the three previously mentioned centres, in December 2010 Timisoara has been accepted by ACCA and British Council as a new administration centre for Romania. The interest in sitting the ACCA examinations in Timisoara has been unexpectedly high right from start. To illustrate this present we present as follows the candidature scheme for the Decembre session of exams.

Table 2 The number of candidates entered per day at the, Timișoara centre, December seesion

Date	Number of candidates
Monday 6 December 2010	23
Tuesday 7 December 2010	17
Wednesday 8 December 2010	22
Thursday 9 December 2010	19
Friday 10 December 2010	10
Monday 13 December 2010	48
Tuesday 14 December 2010	36

Wednesday 15 December 2010	7
Total number of exams sat	182

For the next ACCA session of exams in Timișoara we expect a significant growth in candidature which will pose a problem as far as the venue is concerned. Unfortunately the number of places which suit the ACCA requirements (whether they are universities, schools or hotels) available in Timișoara is limited and it would be a shame to restrict candidature for such reasons

3 Candidate's views

In a study on Romanian student's attitudes toward Cambridge ESOL examinations in general Frențiu and Goșa (2007) put forward the positive nature of these attitudes.

Almost all the respondents consider Cambridge ESOL examinations both relevant and useful. The majority of the respondents find them relevant because they test all four skills and reflect their true level of English. They find them useful mainly because of their international recognition and for their future careers. (Frențiu and Goșa 2007: 299)

The qualitative mini-study presented as follows tried to see whether the same attitudes are put forward by test-takers who have chosen to sit the career related examinations administered in Timisoara. To this end, a number of test-takers were selected on a voluntary basis to give their views on the examinations they sat via unstructured interviews, thus seeking to elicit answers in the respondents' own frame of minds. In the following sections we will summarise the main points they made.

3.1 The case of TKT

The results of our study on some of the test-taker's views confirmed Gherdan and Goșa's (2009) findings when referring to the reasons why 24 teachers decided to sit TKT in the spring session of 2008 in Oradea. They observe:

For these teachers, TKT provides a means of confirming the teaching knowledge they have gained from their experience in the form of a world wide recognised certificate. The reasons also referred to the developmental and career opportunities it entails, in spite of their costly nature. (Gherdan and Goșa 2009: 408)

Here are some illustrative quotes from our study:

I think it will be extremely useful for my future teaching career, not only for what I need to learn for it but also as a certificate. I believe I will have better chances to get a job as a teacher, especially abroad.

The questions I had to answer really helped me think about my teaching, the strategies that I use and about my effectiveness as a teacher. I really think that preparing for going through the test made me a better teacher.

What's more, some of them mentioned that TKT filled a need that existed on the examination market:

I think that all foreign language teachers must have the knowledge tested in the three modules of TKT, if they want to be successful in their teaching careers.

Thank you, Cambridge ESOL for this test, it was about time you came up with it

As far as the level of difficulty is concerned, the test takers took quite opposite views. Thus some considered it very easy while others very difficult. The difference had to do with the teaching experience: more experienced teachers found the test much easier than beginner or student teachers. One student teacher observed:

It wasn't easy, oh dear, I had to prepare hard for it since I haven't taught a single hour in my whole life.

While a fairly experienced teacher of a 10 years of practice noticed that:

Piece of cake, my teaching experience and my common sense really helped to get a good result. I didn't study much for it.

All in all, it can be said that there exist predominantly positive attitudes towards the content and usefulness of TKT.

3.2 The case of BEC

The BEC test-takers mainly referred to four aspects: test difficulty, preparation, price and usefulness. All respondents mentioned how important it is to prepare for this exam since they find themselves on unfamiliar territory with it as well as finding it rather expensive. The following quotes were considered salient in this respect.

Deciding to sit BEC wasn't easy. I was worried that the business vocabulary might be too difficult since I don't have any work experience.

The exam is expensive so I had to make sure I'd pass.

Preparing for this exam was essential, knowing what to expect really helped, especially since for us Romanian business English is not much focused on.

I decided to take my chances with it though I'm not sure if it will help me at all in my career. Not many employers have heard about especially here.

Sadly though, as can be noticed in the last quote, most of the respondents are uncertain about this exam's currency and recognition and therefore they manifest doubts about its usefulness and this might provide an explanation for the lack of popularity of BEC exams in Romania and in the region.

3.3 The case of ACCA

The first thing to be observed was that most of the ACCA candidates in Timișoara were supported financially by their employers due to costs. Very few people can actually afford it in Romania though they think it really useful.

It is a very useful programme but very expensive. I don't think many Romanians can afford it.

The coursebooks and everything are so expensive, I couldn't have afforded them by myself. I was lucky my employers paid for them.

Another aspect raised by the respondents refers to the level of difficulty. Most of the respondents consider it as being 'demanding'.

It is almost impossible to sit more than 3 exams per session if you want to pass

It is a demanding programme and you have to plan carefully what to sit and when.

For this reason and for other reasons, such as saving time and money all respondents are pleased that these exams can be held in Timisoara as well.

I really appreciate the fact that I can sit these exams in Timișoara, it was so tiresome for me to live in Timisoara and having to go to Bucharest or Cluj to sit them, not to mention the money...

To sum up, our ACCA respondents think highly of the entire ACCA programme, they view it as very useful for their careers in spite of its costly nature of the programme and its level of difficulty.

4 Concluding remarks

After overviewing the career oriented examinations administered by British Council in Timișoara namely their structure and candidature, we presented the views of some of the candidates referring to these examinations: Cambridge ESOL's TKT, BEC, ICFE and ILEC, and ACCA. The mini study revealed that the respondents have mainly positive attitudes towards almost all of these examinations as they consider them very useful for their careers, though expensive and demanding. Moreover, they do appreciate the fact that they can take these exams in Timișoara because having this opportunity enables them to save time, money and effort.

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IN PURSUIT OF AUTHENTIC ORAL COMMUNICATION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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***Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to raise the EFL teacher's awareness regarding the impact of the language s/he uses in class on the communication skills of her/his students. Its aim is to draw attention to those practices which are deeply rooted in the language classroom and which may prevent learners from becoming proficient communicators in the target language. The paper focuses on both problems and possible solutions that research in the field of classroom conversation analysis has revealed and it is part of a research study on EFL classroom conversation analysis.*

***Key words:** L2 acquisition, teacher talk, authentic conversation, IRE/F sequence, "motherese"*

1. The EFL Classroom in Romania

The teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Romania has undergone a series of transformations in the past twenty years, especially since emigration, travelling, and information technology are just some of the factors pushing for the development of teaching methods towards the more modern ones, that have set English language teaching farther and farther away from the grammar translation method and from considering that their role is merely to equip the learner with as much information as possible (in the case of English with thorough vocabulary and grammar knowledge) in order for the latter to have all the tools at hand if and when these are needed.

It is people aged 35 or older in Romania who were exposed to the heavy grammar input and very little communication practice. A simple comparison of the structure of an English language textbook used in schools in the 1970s and 1980s with one used in the 1990s reveals several major gains for the younger students. Old textbooks relied mostly on presenting learners with long texts, without any pre-reading tasks to engage the students in expressing beliefs, making assumptions or adopting attitudes towards a topic. Moreover, these texts were followed by vocabulary lists, a few reading comprehension questions (that did not focus on different reading techniques – skimming, scanning) and a lot of exercises to practise structures that could be identified in the text and then rehearsed through drills. There were no tasks or very few that were aimed at building speaking skills, the exercises that were closest to this aim were of the following nature:

“Translate into English:

A: Ai citit *Plugul și Stelele*?
B: Încă nu. Dar tu?
A: Eu am citit piesa.
B: Și ți-a plăcut?
A: Mi-a plăcut. Dar e cam tristă.
B: Am auzit și eu că e tristă.
A: E o tragedie din timpul luptelor poporului irlandez pentru libertate.
B: Fiindcă veni vorba: când și-a câștigat Irlanda independența?
A: După primul război mondial, în 1921, și cu mari sacrificii.”
(Dragomirescu-Nicolescu et al., 1969:159)

By contrast, in a 2001 English language textbook a lesson on the topic of advertising begins with a series of questions meant to engage students in a conversation on the topic before an actual input – the text (“What is the first thing you notice about the advertisement? What kind of customer is it aimed at? Are car advertisements the same in your country?” (Wilson, 2001: 4)). With the following exercises the students are given more opportunities to exchange views, clarify information, consider relevant issues related to the topic of advertising (slogans, successful advertising) and the lesson culminates with a communication task (dealing with someone who’s trying to sell something). In other words, the newer textbooks focus on training effective communicators and hence the importance for learners to experience communication on their own and to participate in the negotiation of meaning, rather than focus solely on the mastery of language forms.

Yet, despite the fact that the “one man show” teacher slowly gives way to the facilitator, frontal interaction is often redirected, analysis gradually replaces rote learning and textbooks focus on improving skills (the favoured method is still CLT - Communicative Language Teaching) after a ten year period of English language study, when these students reach the university training stage they are still far from being the proficient speakers one might expect. Perhaps this is so because many teachers have not given up deductive teaching methods, and control most of the classroom conversation, by not allowing students to play an active role. Or perhaps this is so because even “when teachers explicitly plan to foster ‘conversation’ in the classroom, this conversation tends to become testing institutionally defined curriculum material” (Hayes and Matusov, 2005: 340).

On the other hand, one must not think that CLT “is exclusively concerned with face-to-face oral communication, as the principles of CLT apply equally to reading and writing activities” (Celce-Murcia, 2001:27). Yet in CLT “the teacher facilitates classroom communication and in this role one of his/her major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication. During the activities he acts as an advisor,

answering students' questions and monitoring their performance [while students] are, above all, communicators" (Larsen, 2003:128-129).

2. Elements which affect the quality of oral communication in the language classroom

It has been argued that the oral exchanges in the context of L2 acquisition can be called "classroom conversation", since they lack so many of the features of authentic conversation. Paul Seedhouse has demonstrated that the assumption according to which "teachers can be trained to replicate genuine or natural conversation in the L2 classroom" is false in most of the cases. Moreover, he states that conversation in the context of L2 instruction is only a distorted version of its real life equivalent (Seedhouse, 2004:70-73).

There are several factors which may reduce or affect to a certain extent the authenticity of classroom conversation namely, an artificial context, the nature of the communication tasks, the teacher's scripted performance, the interaction pattern and an unequal power distribution. My claim is that if teachers are made aware of the aspects of their instruction which prevent natural conversation from happening they can train themselves to make the necessary changes.

A first problem is *the context* of the language classroom and the reason why conversation and oral communication in this setting are not perceived as authentic. Teachers and students alike are aware of the fact that the circumstances in which communication takes place are different from everyday life. The students are there to learn how to use a certain language, but they very seldom use it and when they do, this isn't because English is the only channel to get their message across – they can always resort to L1 (Romanian in our case). Therefore, students and teachers enter a parallel universe, where one pretends the other can only understand a certain language and where they can not only assume a different identity, but also a different behaviour.

The continual game of pretending, or playing roles, otherwise a typical CLT activity (its practice being encouraged by many methodologists and set tasks in textbooks), may create confusion in the mind of the learner if the setting (the context) and the rules governing the assumption of a different role are not entirely clear and may even result in artificial exchanges. Let us consider the following example:

T: What are you?

L: I am a student.

T: No, not you, what is she? (pointing to the textbook)

L: Student.

T: Well, it looks like a school, but if she is not a teacher she's not going to work in a school... She's a lawyer... (Johnson in Ellis, 2001:364)

This student believes that the teacher is asking a “genuine” or referential question and responds accordingly. But according to discourse analysts the teacher has flouted Grice’s maxim of truthfulness, since his/her question does not in fact expect an honest answer.

Other similar elements which play on the artificiality of the conversational context of the classroom are very tasks set by the teacher. For example drills focusing on turning affirmative sentences into the interrogative form may require asking the student to produce nonsensical utterances such as “Am I a child?”, “Am I a boy?”, as opposed to tasks such as “Find out 5 new things about your desk mate’s hobbies and record the questions.” In other words, the structure of the task dictates not only the outcome, but it may also bring purposefulness to an exchange and increase the sense of real life-like communication sequence.

Furthermore, let us consider the following very common situation: a teacher asks the students to imagine that they are travelling abroad and want to find their way to a certain hotel. Even if it is very likely that the students may find themselves in a similar situation in the near future or may have already experienced it on their own, this is still perceived as a scenario created by the teacher or by the text-book, in which students simply play a role. The awareness of the artificiality of the context is bound to generate a different type of discourse from that of a student who is on holiday in London, has just arrived there by train and has to find his way to The Blakemore Hotel in Westminster on foot. Even if the students practising the “asking for directions” function were given detailed information about the context (London), the characters (whom they meet) and the reasons for choosing a particular destination (The Blakemore Hotel) and means of transportation (or lack of one in this case - on foot), their discourse would still be very different from that of the student who has to deal with the pressure of finding the right words, with the fear of losing face or even with having no other reliable source at hand but their memory. With the latter, hesitations, repetitions, rephrasing and even pauses are more likely to occur. It is up to the teacher to change such speaking tasks into a meaningful experience of giving/asking for directions by changing the task so that it recreates a conversational context and sets the ground for a genuine conversation to occur. This would involve for example the following scenario “M. you have just finished school and when you get in front of the school you run into P. who is trying to get to the Opera House and asks you for directions. Let us hear your conversation.” The fact that students can

relate to actual places and routes they are familiar with completely changes the degree of authenticity of the exchange.

Another reason why the classroom setting may hinder natural occurring conversation is that teachers are trained, starting with the practicum, to plan and prepare their lessons in advance, which implicitly causes some of the *discourse* they later produce to appear to be *scripted*. In fact, with beginner teachers who do not have a good mastery of “classroom language” it is not uncommon to actually write down the most frequent instructions on their lesson notes. I have not only witnessed trainees use such scripts, but I have done it myself, being advised by the mentor not to make mistakes when it came to delivering instructions. I remember that mistakes such as “Open your books *to* page...” or “Turn *at* page...” were mentioned and critically commented on during the evaluation and assessment stage of the lesson taught.

Apparently, the advisability of prior learning of these instructions is not reduced only to Romania, as I have previously thought. The following message was displayed on a site designed to help beginner teachers prepare for class (<http://esl.about.com>). This is Kenneth Beare’s recommendation:

“Here is a list of some of the most common phrases used for asking questions in the classroom. *Learn the phrases and use them often!*”

Asking for something	Asking about words	Asking to repeat
Can I have a pen, please?	What's "(the word)" in English?	Could / Can you repeat that, please?
Do you have a pen for me?	What does "(the word)" mean?	Could / can you say that again, please?
May I have a pen, please?	How do you say "(the word in your language)" in English?	Pardon me?
	How do you spell "(the word)"?	
	How do you pronounce "(the word)"?	
	Where's the stress in "(the word)"?	
Apologizing	Asking for help	Saying Hello and Goodbye
Excuse me, please.	I don't understand.	Good morning / afternoon / evening!
I'm sorry.	Can you help me, please?	Hello / Hi
Sorry about that.	Is this right / wrong?	How are you?
Sorry I'm late.		Goodbye
		Have a good weekend / day / evening / time!

Of course, experienced teachers are not under discussion when it comes to rehearsed classroom instructions, but rather when analysing the amount of imperatives they use and their choice of vocabulary. Although almost every book on teaching methodology recommends that the teacher should approximate or identify the students' language proficiency in order to linguistically adapt their input to the required level, more often than not teachers use oversimplified vocabulary.

Even if various studies advocate the benefits in terms of speed and quality of the linguistic development, the downside of this practice in mixed-ability groups is an inherent loss of interest among the high-achievers. A controlled amount of occasional difficulty in the input however, is bound to stir the curiosity of learners and eventually help them improve their own vocabulary.

To continue the presentation of the reasons why classroom conversation is sometimes not perceived as real life-like we have to look at a feature of the classroom language of both experienced and beginner teachers: *repetition*. According to Trevor Wright the key moments of "teacher talk", explanation and task setting, "need to be presented and re-presented in a variety of alternative ways, using different tones, registers and examples [...] You must *plan* more than one way of saying and showing key ideas. [...] This is easy for English teachers but it needs *preparation*" (Wright, 2005:163). Although faced again with the problem of rehearsed discourse in contrast with naturally occurring conversation, planned repetition is recommended not only in the two stages mentioned by Wright, but it may be a natural response in conversation.

However, not all repetition implies that the spoken message is not an instance of authentic communication, as is the example of the teacher teaching The Present Perfect Tense. There is a difference between repeating an oral sequence once or twice because in the process of communication something did not function well and the intentional repetition of a teacher, who desires his/her students' linguistic perfection so much that he'll have them practise a sequence for a very long time. The Audio Lingual Method (ALM) is one teaching method which has encouraged such classroom language on the part of the teacher, by asserting that the only way the teacher could help learners to acquire a specific language was through a lot of repetition of oral sequences, with an emphasis on the accuracy of pronunciation and intonation patterns. Of a series of teaching methods exemplified on a video tape I have to say that the ALM has stirred the biggest counter reaction among the teacher trainees watching it. I have made this observation while teaching different groups of student teachers over a four year period of time and the reaction was the same with all groups: the

excessive repetition was perceived as tiresome and boring very early within the lesson.

Discourse analysts and communication theoreticians explain that repetitions may function as system constraints in the language classroom environment, being a natural part of the oral discourse. A repeated "Hello" produced by the teacher, with extra stress the second time demonstrates that the channel open signal either wasn't perceived at all (was acoustically inadequate) and thus a second, "repair 'hello'" is needed <the students did not notice, nor hear the teacher because of the noise during the break>, or that Grice's norm of truthfulness is flouted by the listeners <students are angry with the teacher and do not cooperate or respond accordingly, as a method of making a statement >.

Similarly, in the case of a teacher who wants to check whether the message is received, the repetition of the question or a part of the discourse to which no answer was given as a back-channel signal is only natural. If the listeners do not react at all when the teacher says: "So I've decided to change the marking system", the teacher will normally repeat the sentence and the students would probably encourage him/her to go on with an "Uhuh".

Furthermore, repetitions may function as a turnover signal for example the repetition of a student's name to indicate that the teacher's turn has ended and now the student is invited to respond. Yet, naming the receptor (student) is not typical of authentic conversation. In this case, a step towards the production of a more natural conversation is volunteering, although this too has its limitations (most often only the confident students will engage in conversation).

Deborah Tannen discusses several roles repetition plays in conversation, from evidencing a speaker's attitude, to an evaluative effect and finally refers to functions of repetition in conversation such as: "getting or keeping the floor, showing listenership, providing back-channel response, stalling, gearing up to answer or speak, humour and play, savouring and showing appreciation of a good line or a good joke, persuasion, linking one speaker's idea to another's, ratifying another's contributions and including in an interaction a person who did not hear a previous utterance" (Tannen, 1994:50-51).

To continue with issues regarding authenticity of the conversation in the classroom we have to look at the *structure of a teacher student exchange*. The problem was the presence of a fixed pattern, often called "teacher talk" and this includes an IRF/IRE cycle (teacher initiates conversation, student responds, teacher gives feedback/evaluates the answer). According to some analysts this is another proof of the lack of

authenticity in the case of classroom conversation. To make this pattern clearer let us have a look at the transcript of such an instance of classroom conversation as mentioned by Chaudron in Ellis (2001:363):

T: There's a lot of rain, but when you have a lot of rain, what do you have then?

L: Thunderstorm?

T: No, what grows when you have a lot of rain?

LL: Forest.

T: Yeah, forests.

However, a fixed structure was one of the similarities identified by Elliot (1996: 150-151) between mother talk and teacher talk, the language of a mother and her child at home and that of a teacher and his/her students. There are other characteristics of „motherese” which are missing from an adult conversation or that are considered deviant. Baby-talk includes special vocabulary (tummy, choo-choo), deviant use of pronouns in phrases such as “now mummy is going to give baby his dinner” – dispensing with all pronouns except for third person. And there are a few other distinctions worthy to be noted, like: high pitch, exaggerated intonation, shorter length utterances, fewer verb forms and modifiers, fewer subordinate clauses, more verbless utterances, more content words, fewer function words, more interrogatives and imperatives. If one takes into consideration all of these deviations mother talk bears as compared to regular speech the parallel with foreign language learning will be reduced to the IRE/IRF pattern.

In this respect the school setting is somewhat different from a natural language acquisition context due to the treatment of the SL (second language) learner as opposed to a child naturally learning L1 at home. The fact that the teacher evaluates an answer or gives feedback (“yeah”, “no”) puts a certain pressure on the learner, while a mother who asks questions such as “What is this?” and then uses a “yeah”, does it to encourage the child to produce more language or to give correct answers. Children in normal family environments are rewarded for their success and only rarely penalised for failing; this is usually overlooked. The child's refusal to say something is his/her way of penalising those overambitious parents, who are driven by a desire for their child to know more than others, thus regulating pace, extent and the timing of the lesson. Pupils, on the other hand, experience learner autonomy only, at best, at a later stage of linguistic and intellectual development.

Regarding this last stage of the IRE/IRF cycle, Sarah Culican focuses on the problem of open questions addressed to underachievers, who do not have the skills to decode the message so as to provide a good answer

and thus they are not presented equal opportunities to be involved in classroom activities and be able to read and write age-appropriate texts that the curriculum covers. Hence she suggests an “alternative pattern of discourse” adopted in Australia to replace the inhibiting IRE/IRF sequence, namely the “scaffolding approach”. This implies preparing the student for his/her intervention by helping him/her decode the elements of the task by following three steps: prepare, identify and elaborate (Culican 2007:16), a pattern that bears more resemblance to the mother – child interaction.

Example sentence: ‘In the blackness, the sounds of soft gobbling came from behind the locked door.’

An example of teacher dialogue in the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle:

The first sentence tells us what the boy telling the story heard [sentence preparation].

The sentence starts by saying [position cue] that it was completely dark, and that the boy couldn’t see anything at all [meaning cue].

Can you see the words that tell us how dark it was?

[students respond]

That’s exactly right. It says ‘In the blackness’ [affirm]. Let’s highlight the words ‘In the blackness’ [highlight].

Why do you think the author tells us that the boy is surrounded by blackness?

[students and teacher discuss, for example...]

Do you think it’s more frightening than if Jennings just said it was dark?

Remember how he was lying in bed before and it was so dark that he felt really spooked? And that he didn’t want to stay at his aunt’s in the first place? Have you ever felt spooked staying over at someone else’s house? So how do you think he would be feeling now?

A final argument in the discussion of the authenticity of classroom conversation is that the very **role the teacher** assumes may prevent genuine communication from happening in the SL classroom. The control a teacher exerts as a figure of authority in the classroom will trigger a specific effect on the part of the students. For example learners ask questions, “but they do it because this behaviour is previously invited by the teacher” observes Markee (2000:46), therefore the response is not the natural reaction to an oral sequence, but rather a suggested, imposed reaction. What is more, the teacher’s control may even destroy authenticity where it does surface as you can see in the transcript of an outing (Hughes in Wray, 2001: 53), when the teacher interrupts the natural conversation between the students by repeatedly asking them questions. Wray explains this as a reaction of the teacher to something perceived as a “red herring” (“students’ talking at a tangent”) although this too, is a learning process. Thus, the intervention of

the teacher is reduced to a series of seven questions meant to redirect the students' attention in this oral exchange:

T: I really enjoyed that, didn't you?
Ian: I did, I really did.
Sarah: I especially liked all they little baby snails.
David: I like they things, look, they...
Ian: Worms
Leanne: I hates worms... yuk... I hates them all slimy
T: Well, they can't help being slimy can they?
Louise: Why have they got slimy bits? Snakes 'ant got slimy bits like they. When that man came from his zoo with snakes he told us they weren't slimy.
David: I touched a snake.
Ian: I touched a frog.
Leanne: I held the little owl and he pecks me.
T: Well, why have worms got slimy bits? Louise asked us an interesting question here. Can anyone...?

Even the suggestions and invitations made by the teacher, such as "Let's play with the turtles now", do not function as in real conversation, since the students do not have the freedom to choose differently. The students cannot turn down the teacher's invitation saying "I'm awfully sorry, but I can't because my mother told me not to play with animals..." Such an excuse will not exempt the student from doing what everyone is supposed to, but may determine the teacher to accommodate the rules/task to this individual need and respond with "It's all right. You don't have to touch it, but have a closer look while someone else is holding it."

The different power relations account for this lack of control on the part of the student; it is the teacher who chooses the topic of the discourse and therefore directs the oral communication sequence. Such unequal power distribution in the classroom is exemplified in the following sequences presented by Seedhouse (2004:471-473):

T: Now I want everybody (.) to listen to me and when I say you are going to say after me, (.) you are going to say what I say, (.) "we can try".
T: I've got a lamp. a lamp. <say after me> I've got a lamp.
LL: I've got a lamp.
T: (.) I've got a glass. A glass, <say after me> I've got a glass.
LL: I've got a glass.
T: I've got a vase, a vase, <say after me> I've got a vase.
LL: I've got a vase.

T: I've got a hammer. what have you got (Tjartan)?
L6: I've got a hammer.
T: can everybody say I've got.
LL: ((whole class)) I've got.

T: fine. I've got a belt. What have you got? (1.0)Kjertsi?
 L7: (.) hmm I've got a telephone
 T: and listen to me again. (.) and look at what I've written. (.)
 I've got a hammer, <just listen now> have you got a hammer?
 L: yes
 T: raise your hand up now Bjorn=
 L13: =yes
 T: I've=
 L13: =I've got a hammer
 T: You've got a hammer and then your answer yes I have (1.0) yes I
 have, <I've got a belt>, have you got a belt Vegard?
 L14: er:: (.) erm no
 T: (.) yes you are going to answer only with yes.=
 L14: =yes=
 T: =yes
 L14: (.): (.): I have
 T: I have. fine. I've got a trumpet.

Notice that although learner 14 does not have a belt, the teacher requires a “yes” answer in order for the student to practice a specific structure.

However, learner autonomy is now gaining ground and as far as the setting goes, there are teachers who deliberately choose to take the students on field trips in order to allow students more freedom of expression and eliminate some of the constraints of the classroom setting. It is worth mentioning here the research of Jennifer DeWitt and Jil Hohenstein on teacher – student talk on school trips and in the classroom (DeWitt et al. 2009: 454-473); the research underlines the difference between triadic discourse and the non-triadic discourse, with the latter occurring more often on these school trips and being similar to “dialogic” talk, in that “it is less teacher-dominated and may allow students to offer their points of view” and “more opportunities to control the discussion” (2009:460).

3. Conclusions

In the matter of authenticity of the classroom conversation a teacher has the delicate job of having to maintain a balance between the formal structures and the less formal talk, between the IRE structure that teachers inherently resort to and more dialogic discourse (Hayes et al. 2005: 348), a form that is closer to meaningful real life-like conversation. A teacher cannot simply give up planning the lesson and rely solely on his/her intuition to teach it because s/he wants to encourage the production of natural conversation and expose students to authentic language. An instructional context *is bound to be* different from other real life environments where one may have to produce language (a shop, market,

staff room, etc.) so the transmission of the language requires a different approach when teaching or modelling it. However, since the aim of language teachers is to train competent users of a certain language, they should try to simulate as many *real life-like* contexts and situations so that students may use their language knowledge.

Moreover, the materials to be used in class should be authentic, even if this involves a greater effort on the part of the teacher. If relevance is one of the criteria a teacher uses when selecting materials, they can avoid situations when artificially-constructed discourse deprives learners of the chance to check their own language knowledge. Instead of asking a student to conjugate the verb “to be” in the interrogative form, using the contextualisation “I am a girl” and expecting to hear a sequence of nonsensical language “Am I a girl? Are you a girl? Is she a girl?”, only to practise a structure, the teacher should resort to a task such as “Close your eyes and try to guess who these three colleagues are by asking Tony questions like ‘Is this a girl?’ ‘Is she tall?’ to which he can only give Yes/No answers.”

Taking into consideration these changes in L2 (second language) acquisition, classroom oral discourse is a direct result of teaching practices that involve less “teacher talk”, with the teacher providing a model and a change of the traditional teacher-student interaction in order to obtain “quality in student talk” and hence “quality learning, which cannot be achieved without certain teacher behaviour” (Mitchell, 2008:171).

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THE USE OF *YouTube* VIDEOS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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***Abstract:** The article presents the particular case of using *YouTube* videos in teaching Business English seminars. Emphasis will be on special characteristics of *YouTube* videos, these particularities of *YouTube* videos are enumerated and discussed along with the advantages brought by these particularities in the language classroom. The study also shows the impact of *YouTube* videos on adults learning the English language.*

***Keywords:** impact, language classroom, particularities, response, videos, *YouTube**

1. Introduction

We live in a time in which the use of technology, especially of visual technology, has conquered all fields of activity. “Television is an inherently attractive and compelling medium with great potential for motivating learners. No teacher alone can reproduce the variety of situations, voices, accents, themes and presentation techniques that are a feature of this medium.” (Hill 2004: 8). It is therefore necessary to introduce such tools in the language classroom in an attempt to modernize the learning process and make it more attractive. Even though videos and multimedia have been available since 1960’s, only in the past decade, due to the drop in costs of these tools, educators have been able to introduced videos in the language classroom. However a decrease in costs alone does not justify the adoption of video techniques, the advantages of video materials have been already presented in specialized studies since the 1980’s (Lonergan 1984), but mainly in the 1990’s (Stempleski and Tomalin 1990, Allan 1991, Cooper, Lavery and Rinvoluceri 1991, Broady 1999).

2. Objectives

The study analyzes the features that make *YouTube* videos an excellent resource for the English language classroom, pointing out the benefits of exploiting these authentic videos and including their use among language learning techniques in English seminars.

Another objective, deriving from the main one mentioned above, is to present the benefits that the exposure to *YouTube* videos brings to all English language learners. For this reason, the article presents the reactions of students to *YouTube* video materials. The students’ progress and attitude towards *YouTube* materials is essential to prove the impact of this teaching technique.

The study serves a broader pedagogic purpose, of advocating for a wider adoption of *YouTube* videos in the English languages classrooms, of convincing educators that this technique does not only bring a positive reaction in the adult English language learner, but could constitute a technique which the learner could take outside the classroom and use independently either for the improvement of the English language skills or for non-linguistic purposes, but indirectly leading to an improvement of the English language skills.

3. Method

The study has been conducted on 2nd year students at the Faculty of Economics for a period of one year. For 10 out of 13 weeks in the first semester, and for 10 out of 14 weeks in the second semester during Business English seminars, a short video downloaded from *YouTube* has been used in the classroom with the purpose of enhancing English language learning among these students.

The number of students subjected to this experiment was 70, but the actual number of students present at each seminar varied weekly, an average of 50 students being recorded. Furthermore, according to attendance records only 20 % of these students have been present for all 20 targeted seminars in which *YouTube* videos have been used, the rest 71% of the students having an average attendance of 16 seminars, 9% of the students have attended less than 5 targeted seminars.

Students' reactions to the *YouTube* videos have been analyzed in terms of immediate response (observation form), targeted response at the end of the seminar (questionnaire) and non-targeted response (general feedback sheet) at the end of the course. Notes regarding students' attitudes and reactions to the selected videos have been put down during each seminar in an **observation form**, as an observation method for the immediate impact of the video material on the students. In addition to this method, at the end of each semester of the one-year-experiment, another tool of analysis has been used, namely a **questionnaire** has been submitted to the students regarding all types of activities undertaken during the English seminars. The questions targeted the four main activity types common in any language class: reading, speaking, listening and writing. In completion to the questionnaire, which has been specific but limiting and containing targeted questions, the **general feedback sheet** has been less specific allowing more freedom for personal opinions, the students being asked to write the positive and the negative aspects of the course and of the seminar.

The observation forms have been completed by the teacher on a weekly basis, the questionnaire has been administered to the students at the end of the two semesters, and the general feedback sheet has been filled by the students at the end of the academic year. The three different types of documents being completed at different moments in time with various frequencies, both by the teacher and by the students, and requesting both targeted and non-targeted opinions ensure a great degree of objectivity of the analysis.

In order to point out the benefits of using *YouTube* videos on the English language classroom, I have included used in the structure of each seminar, a short *YouTube* video matching the topic of the seminar. The experiment has taken a whole academic year and it consisted in several activities: firstly the activity of selecting the video from the *YouTube* site, secondly the development of activities that precede or succeed the actual watching of the video, and thirdly the watching of the *YouTube* video.

4. Particularities of *YouTube* videos

A major advantage of video materials in general is the fact that they possess innovative features which make the learning process appealing to learners. Videos can focus on information that cannot be readily presented in a traditional classroom because of constraints such as size, location, costs. By contrast with videos especially created as part of a language course, the video material considerably increasing the price of that course, *YouTube* videos are free and raise no copyright problems.

Another main advantage of videos is the fact that they grant simple access to native speakers' language in a natural context. By contrast to videos especially created for the language learning classroom hence artificial, *YouTube* videos constitute authentic linguistic material. An authentic video material undoubtedly offers more exposure to genuine interaction than a made one, provided that the video has been selected properly for its particular purpose.

YouTube videos have a number of features that can constitute an advantage by contrast to tapes especially created for language learning. Before continuing the discussion, mention must be made here of the fact that in this study those *YouTube* videos containing fabricated material for English language learning have been excluded from the beginning.

Firstly, *YouTube* videos are available to any language teacher without any costs, anyone can download and use a video without having to spend money on producing a certain material. In addition to this matter of reduced even zero costs is the fact that no copyright issues appear when using such materials.

Another important feature of *YouTube* videos is the great variety of materials educators have at reach. Whatever the content of the lesson, whatever the targeted topic, *YouTube* is a great resource for educators with more than just a few videos to choose from. The great variety of videos offers educators a better chance of finding the most suitable or the most relevant material for that particular group, than any other course built on levels of proficiency.

YouTube now contains enormous amount of videos from diverse fields of activity and on numerous topics. These videos being placed on a site, they are easily accessible outside the language classroom. The student can access a video already presented in class and watch it as many times as s/he considers necessary, or s/he can choose a different video to complete what has been done in class. Just as bibliography is recommended for further reading, watching a certain video material can be suggested to the students in class. Watching videos independently is important as students get accustomed to doing this in the future without being told to do so by a language teacher. Sherman (2003:66) speaks about the benefits of doing independent work with documentaries as an extension of classroom activities.

5. Findings of the experiment

The findings of the experiment have been gathered and then processed according to the three tools used to measure the impact of *YouTube* videos on the target group. The three tools - 20 observation forms, 2 questionnaires and 1 general feedback sheet – provided sufficient evidence to prove that *YouTube* videos had a clear impact on these language learners.

If the teacher's observation forms noted the students' immediate response to each particular video, the students' impression, opinions and attitudes towards the video material used in class have been evaluated through the questionnaire administered to the learners at the end of the academic year. Furthermore, a general feedback form, targeting both the course and the seminar has been taken into consideration when analyzing the impact of the *YouTube* videos and of the activities related to them.

A. The observation forms. Firstly this impact has been analyzed and weighted during every seminar, at the end of the year resulting in 20 observation forms. The observation form, specially created for this purpose by the teacher, has been completed after each seminar based on students' immediate reactions and comments after watching the *YouTube* video.

The observations form focused on students' behavior in respect to all the activities involving the *YouTube* videos. The following elements have

been analyzed in the observation form: students' behavior when informed about the source of the video, students' behavior during the projection of the video, students' behavior after the video, students' attendance for the hour in which the video activity was scheduled.

The students' reactions have been noted collectively, but also individually whenever something worth the attention occurred. A detailed record of all elements connected to the video materials has been kept in the comments section of the observation form. These included questions asked by the students regarding the video materials, opinions about the degree of difficulty of the video material, feelings of liking or disliking towards the *YouTube* videos, etc.

An important element always attentively kept under close scrutiny in the observation form has been student attendance. In order to make an accurate analysis of the student's attendance at the targeted seminar hour, several factors are to be considered. Some of them refer to the time of day, the topic of discussion and to the teacher's requirements regarding compulsory attendance.

The findings revealed that attendance increased in the time interval assigned to the projection of the video material. Between 11 and 12 o'clock, the time interval assigned to this activity from the beginning of the academic year, an increased level of attendance has been recorded. For the total of targeted 20 weeks, the attendance was higher in 85 % of the cases. That is in 17 weeks from a total of 20 weeks, the number of students was higher during the hour assigned to the projection of the *YouTube* video and the other activities related to it.

Attendance Record- academic year 2008/2009

Business English Lecture and Seminar

Week no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Lecture	41	47	42	43	43	41	47	45	47	42	35	36	37	40	41	32	33	35	39	41
Lecture	43	47	45	46	47	42	48	42	48	47	37	39	39	40	43	36	36	38	41	45
Seminar (video)	48	49	50	52	55	49	52	56	50	51	40	42	43	45	47	41	42	43	47	49
Seminar (info lab)	45	43	44	42	51	43	53	50	47	46	43	40	39	39	42	44	39	38	41	43

The students were informed about the weekly structure of the Business English course and seminar, including of the fact that usually the first seminar hour would be dedicated to viewing short videos on various Business English subjects. However on three occasions, due to various reasons, didactic and non-didactic ones, the hour assigned to watching the *YouTube* video has been changed to a later or an earlier time. On each one of these occasions, the observations forms contained comments with students' reactions to this fact. These reactions varied: *disappointment* (students who showed up for the first hour of seminar, but found out that the

short film had already been watched, expressed their disappointment for not being present); *inquiry* (some students asked if they can get the video from the teacher or if the video was available on the Internet. Receiving an affirmative answer, they insisted on been given all the necessary details in order to access the video on their own or provided a memory stick on the spot for obtaining the video); *concern* (after the teacher had changed the time of video watching twice without notice, the students started to ask questions about the time when the video was going to be presented the following week, in this way making sure that they would not miss it the next week); *curiosity* (the students who were not present for the viewing of the *YouTube* video either asked their colleagues how was the film, if they liked it or not, or they asked the teacher what was the film about, etc.

Another element always accounted for in the observation forms has been student's attitude during the projection of the video by contrast with other seminar activities. Attention, body moments, emotional reactions, talking with their peers, gestures, etc. have been noted in the observation forms as a general impression made to the teacher by the group, but also when something singular or uncommon happened during the projection of the video.

After analyzing the observation forms the following findings must be mentioned regarding: **attention**, the students have watched the majority of the videos with undivided attention (signals: complete silence in class and all eyes pointed to the screen); **body movements**, the students reduced their body movement to a minimum (signals: complete stillness during the video projection); **talking to peers**, the students did not engage in conversations with their peers at all. If there were brief moments of verbal exchanges between one or two pairs of students these were referring or were related to the video (signals: eyes on the screen and whispering a few words to a peer); **emotional responses**, when amusing elements or shocking statistics appeared in the video material the whole group laughed or gasped, thus not only giving proof for their understanding of the video material, but also of their emotional implication in watching the video (signals: immediate emotional response to the information contained in the video); **gestures**, usually gestures were associated with brief verbal exchanges, occasionally students pointed to the screen while whispering into a peer's ear (signals: the gesture itself); **disruptions**, students reacted promptly to eliminate the source of disruption. On one occasion a student started coughing and realizing that the noise made by the cough would ruin the activity she left the room. In another occasion during the projection of the video a student made some comments about the video in a loud voice. The peers instantly

admonished him and reduced him to silence (signals: the *shhh* sounds urging to silence).

Cumulatively all these elements noted in teacher's observation forms, increased attendance during the seminar in which the video material was dealt with, students' attitudes after missing the *YouTube* video and students' positive reactions during the projection of the video, students' willingness to give their opinions about the information contained in the video only one conclusion can be drawn, namely that video material, specially *YouTube* videos, have a positive impact on students.

B. The questionnaires. Another means of analyzing the impact of *YouTube* videos on adult language learners of English have been the questionnaires administered twice on the course of the one-year-experiment. The two questionnaires, one administered at the end of the first semester and the other at the end of the second semester, were identical in structure and content. The questions targeted both the usefulness of the activities, as well as the way in which the students perceived them in terms of liking and disliking them.

The number of the students being 70, the total number of completed questionnaires is 140, and the results are given in the tables below:

How do you consider the R/S/L/W activity?	not interesting				indifferent				interesting				very interesting			
	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W
	3	7	4	12	16	25	7	32	67	63	47	71	54	45	82	25
1. How useful do you consider the R/S/L/W activity?	not useful				rather useful				useful				very useful			
	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W
	2	8	4	11	20	27	13	23	60	50	20	64	58	55	103	42
2. How much time should be allotted in class to the R/S/L/W activity?	less time				same time				more time				considerably more time			
	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W	R	S	L	W
	10	9	2	8	57	9	8	25	69	49	35	68	4	73	95	39

As one can see from the table, 82 students (58.57%) considered the listening activity, namely watching of the *YouTube* videos, very interesting, in contrast with the other three activities which were mostly labeled as interesting. Moreover, consistent with question no.1 were answers to questions no. 2 and 3 which prove that students not only find this activity interesting, but also very useful (73.57%) and would like to be allotted considerably more time (67.85%) during the seminars.

In order to determine students' preference for the seminar activities, in the same questionnaire, they were asked to make a top of the four activities corresponding to the four skills (S, R, L,W); they were asked to give 10 points to the most beneficial, 7 points to the second best, 4 points to

third place, and 1 point for the least beneficial learning activity for the improvement of their English skills. Assuming that their opinion may change from one semester to the other, depending on the topics of discussion, and wishing to ensure greater relevance the section below was included in both questionnaires. The results gathered are given in the following table:

1. Which of the R/S/L/W activities do you think brought more benefits to the improvement of your English skills?	R	S	L	W
	446	725	1211	698
2. Which of the R/S/L/W activities did you like most?	R	S	L	W
	472	602	1687	319
3. Which of the R/S/L/W activities would you prefer doing outside the English seminars?	R	S	L	W
	570	448	1798	264

The first place in the top, in terms of benefits, was occupied by listening, namely by the *YouTube* video watching, with a total of 1211 points followed from a distance by speaking with 725 points and thirdly by writing with 698 points, whereas reading comes fourth, with only 446 points.

As far as liking and disliking are concerned, the students considered listening as the activity they liked best, with 1687 points, whereas second best was speaking with considerable lower 602 points. For the third and the fourth place a change is recorded from the previous benefits top, as reading is preferred to writing being placed third and, writing being the least preferred activity of the students.

When analyzing the answers to the third question, the winner of language classroom activities is once again listening, more precisely watching *YouTube* videos, with an overwhelming 1798 points. Relatively close to each other come speaking and reading, but students prefer reading with 570 points to speaking only 448 points for the activities outside the English seminar, a reversed situation by contrast with question number 2. Writing comes fourth with only 264 points.

The information obtained from the second section of the questionnaire points out clearly that listening, implicitly watching *YouTube* videos in the English seminar was perceived by the students as the most beneficial activity (39.31%) for the improvement of their English skills. More than that they also considered it as the most pleasant seminar activity (54.77%) and furthermore they would like to continue doing it outside the language class (58.37%).

C. The general feedback sheet. The third tool used to investigate the impact of *YouTube* videos on the target group is the general feedback sheet.

By contrast with the questionnaire, this tool gives the students total freedom to express their personal opinions about the course and the seminar.

The comments referring to the *YouTube* videos were numerous and suggestive, there have been 61 comments in 70 general feedback sheets. Some students made one, two and even three comments referring to the video material. Similar remarks appeared in various feedback sheets, the majority containing a positive perception of the video material rendered either through descriptive adjectives or through a description of positive feelings towards video watching. There have been a few negative remarks about the videos, still they did not refer to the activity itself, but to the quality of the sound, to the difficulty of the vocabulary.

The table below contains the remarks about the *YouTube* videos organized according to the words and expressions used by the students to refer to them, as well as the number of times these words appeared in the general feedback sheets and the kind of feedback (positive or negative):

#	Words and expressions used to refer to <i>YouTube</i> videos	Occurred	Feedback
1.	Really/ truly enjoyed the videos	12	+
2.	Videos were interesting/ educative/ captivating	10	+
3.	Used to watch again/ search for the seminar videos on <i>YouTube</i>	5	+
4.	Looked forward to watching the videos every seminar	6	+
5.	Worried about missing the video watching activity	3	+
6.	Language of the videos was too difficult	5	-
7.	Quality of the sound could have been better	4	-
8.	Preferred video watching to any of the other activities	3	+
9.	Watching <i>YouTube</i> videos made the class interesting/ modern	3	+
10.	Could not follow/ understand the videos well enough	5	-
11.	Ability to understand the videos was limited in the beginning but it got better	2	+
12.	Liked the discussions/ conversations after watching the videos	2	+
13.	Learnt a lot from the videos	1	+

The comments did not refer strictly to the video watching activity, but also to post-watching activities, like listening comprehension and the discussions following it. Most of the feedback regarding the video material was positive. Students confessed they liked the activity in itself, they found the videos interesting and captivating. Some acknowledged the fact that their abilities to understand the videos got better, others that they learned many interesting things from the videos. Another set of worth-mentioning comments are those referring to the modernity of the seminar. Students perceived the use of *YouTube* videos as technique that brings modern technology in the class, thus liking the language class even more.

However there have been several negative remarks about the videos especially about the difficulty of understanding them, students either seeing it as an external problem (sound quality) or as a personal problem (insufficient knowledge of English). Nonetheless, positive or negative as the feedback was, simply through the fact that the students made so many comments about the *YouTube* material, clearly indicates that the videos constituted a high interest element for the entire target group.

6. Conclusions

All three tools used to investigate the impact of *YouTube* videos on English language learners showed that such activity is successful in class. Both as immediate reactions, as well as in the long run students appreciate video watching activity in their language class.

The observation forms constitute sufficient evidence to speak for students' great interest in the activity. Their reactions in class during watching the video, as well as their high degree of involvement in the post-listening activities show that *YouTube* videos captivated and motivated the audience. The student willingness to speak and answer listening comprehension questions indicate that, the benefits brought by this type of activity go beyond improving listening skills.

The semestrial questionnaires prove that students enjoyed the *YouTube* videos and considered watching them a very interesting and very useful activity. More than that, by contrast with the other types of classroom activities such as speaking, reading and writing, video watching is considered an activity that should be allotted more time in class.

The general feedback sheets, through numerous remarks referring to *YouTube* videos, also pointed out the positive impact of video material on students in the long run. Due to the videos the language class is viewed as modern and interesting. More importantly, the students confessed to watching the videos again outside the class, as they could look for the videos on *YouTube* by themselves.

The findings of the experiment point out to the fact that using *YouTube* videos in the language classroom is highly beneficial. Such activity has proved successful in this experiment and therefore it needs to be adopted more widely by teachers and students in the language learning process. Students like the use of modern learning techniques and prefer them in classrooms to other traditional methods. In the same time students like watching to movies, statistics find this activity among their favorite pastimes, so why teachers should not take advantage of this huge resource of short videos provided by *YouTube*. They do not raise copyright problems

and they are available on any number of topics and they could be carefully selected for any age category.

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ALTERNATIVE METHODS IN TEACHING LITERATURE. TRANSFORMING THE LITERARY CANON

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***Abstract:** Traditional methods are still in fashion in teaching literature in Romania. Our research wants to emphasize the practice and analyses of some alternative methods of teaching literature, in order to transform the literary canon. Students at the West University of Timisoara participated in the research and were asked to evaluate these methods.*

***Keywords:** alternative methods, canon, creativity, teaching literature.*

1. Introduction

In the foreword of his famous work referring to post-modern literature, Ihab Hassan reconfirms a feature of modern literature: “Modern literature writes the future of mankind in an invisible hand.” (Hassan 1982:XII). This is one of the reasons for which the past century questioned more and more the role of literature in relation to the evolution of the society and, furthermore, the role and the necessity of a re-discussion of the concept of the literary canon (Bloom, 1994).

The history of the 20th century literary poetics mentioned some essential transformations regarding the relation between literary text and the reader, starting with the school of the “close reading” in the 20’s, animated by T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards, the “New criticism” of the 40’s, the structuralism of the 60’s, represented by major figures, such as R. Barthes, G. Genette, T. Todorov, to Derrida’s deconstructivism, or to the post-structuralism of the 70’s.

The role of literature began to diminish in a society which emphasized the concept of multiculturalism, the extension of the principle of political correctness, leading to its deconstruction and the loss of the aesthetic principle. This is the fundament of recent studies, such as that of William Paulson, *Literary Culture in a World Transformed. A Future for the Humanities* (2001). The author starts from the natural question that refers to the future of the humanities, especially that of literature. “Literary culture” is associated, nowadays, more and more with specific groups, that have the same aesthetic tastes, or the same common interest, of an academic nature, for example.

“To speak of literary culture, says W. Paulson, is to refer, in the first place, to the organized and semi-organized groups for whom literature matters, and to the structures and attitudes that define these groups and set their boundaries. One such community is the institution to which I belong professionally: academic literary

studies, primarily housed in departments of English, comparative literature, and foreign languages. Traditionally devoted to “language and literature” these disciplines are now often engaged in a wider range of intellectual activities with connections to such fields as anthropology, history, film studies, and women's studies. (This shifting and broadening of interests shows that an institution arising out of literary culture need not always maintain an exclusive relation to literature.) Academic literary culture is but one manifestation of the more general phenomenon of communities and institutions organized around the production, diffusion, criticism, and commentary of books.” (Paulson 2001:3,4)

Therefore, we must be aware of a capitalization of literature, an extension that should make it more accessible. There is a risk of loosening the aesthetic boundaries of the literary canon and this is felt in the academic environment, as well:

“Scholars and teachers need to bring forth practices and institutions that will help make literary culture pertinent to articulating experience, knowledge, and desire in the world as it is today, not as it was in the nineteenth century when the contours of literary culture were becoming familiar, or in the late 1960s when literary education received the impetus for its last major reconfiguration.” (Paulson 2001:149)

In other words, teaching literature in an academic environment should approach the problem of the literary canon not necessarily from a new perspective, but from an actual one. Setting a dynamic canon in the centre of literary studies, one that should consider its aesthetic value, the supreme principle of literariness, leads to reading the classics in a new formula. But not only the literary discourse should suffer a radical transformation, but also the methods used, so that university literary studies are not *industrialised*. Working with small groups of students, using dynamic debates, extending the discussion to a cultural field, stimulating intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, these are just a few ways of revitalising literary analyses and actualising the canonical authors. Biographical criticism did not depreciate in time, but it extended its field towards a “cultural model” (Carter and Long 1991), allowing the students to broaden their perspective and understand more complex issues.

Even the use of contradictory, experimental methods, such as creative writing ones, may stimulate a certain type of rethinking the literary phenomenon within. The risks are assumed as long as the ultimate goal is that of stimulating discussion and critical thinking, as:

“Students are sharp enough to recognize a difference in depth, one that works both ways sometimes, depending on the talents of the teachers. ‘Ignorant men of genius are constantly rediscovering “laws” of art which the academics had mislaid or

hidden' (Ezra Pound, *The ABC of Reading*, NY, 1934). Let it lie; nobody expects perfection either way. The very finest practices in creative writing deliver strong literary achievement and incisive critical reflection on the social and historical context of the new work; our best writers are our most incisive critics and self-critics." (Morely 2007:21)

To conclude, we may distinguish two main theoretical approaches involved in teaching literature (Carter, McRae 1996): the traditional study of literature, *product-based teaching*, the canonical approach, and the use of literature as a linguistic resource, or *process-based teaching*. The first one involves an aesthetical reading of texts and the use of metalanguage and critical concepts, being accessible only to advanced learners, while the second considers literature language in use which is exploited for language learning purposes. *Process-based teaching* or, as it has been named by other methodologists, *the language based approach for teaching literature* (see Carter, Long, 1991) is founded on working with language, different techniques being applied for the understanding of the texts and, afterwards, for the creation of new texts. The canonical approach could be revitalised by using the methods, the activities and the perspective of the modern one, without excluding the traditional elements and the focus on aesthetic values.

2. Practical approach

These ideas led to a research topic that referred to the efficiency of modern, alternative methods in the field of teaching literary canonical texts. The participants in the study were the students in the 2nd year, Romanian and English, Faculty of Letters, West University of Timișoara. The methods used were the experiment (introducing new, modern activities for teaching literature, asking students for feedback), observation and retrospection. The activities were based on literary texts (Romanian and English literature) and also aimed at creating literary texts (poems, stories).

In what follows we will present the methods, activities, texts used and the students' reaction to the modern perspective on traditional literature.

Debate

The activity was based on communication, on two different points of view, shared by two groups of students. The topic chosen belonged to Romanian literature: lyrical representations of the space in I. Pillat's *Balcic* and I. Barbu's *Isarlik*, a traditional and a modern poem. There were two groups of students and two speakers. The other members in the group contributed to the collection of ideas and intervened, when necessary.

Strong points:

- method that involved many students;

- developed critical thinking;
- helped students see the positive and negative aspects as well;
- developed competition;
- involved team work.

Weak points:

- large number of people in a group;
- not all had the opportunity to speak;
- other topics were discussed;
- not enough time to discuss;

Pyramid

A poem was chosen to be discussed: Ion Barbu's *Isarlik*, a masterpiece of Romanian literature. There were several stages through which it passed: individual work, pair work, group work and whole class discussion, therefore a pyramid discussion being created.

Strong points:

- individual work allowed thinking time;
- comparing ideas during pair/group work and completing ideas;
- increased participation of the students;
- the conclusion was reached together;
- team work;
- freedom of expression;
- deep understanding of the text – different points of view.

Weak points:

- no information offered before the seminar;
- the way groups were organized;
- some students were still afraid to express their opinions – not everybody was involved;
- analysing just one text during a seminar – time consuming activity;
- organisation problems – everybody wanted to express a personal opinion.

Re-arranging a poem

The activity consisted in rearranging the poem, William Carlos Williams' *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* in lines and stanzas. The worksheet contained the poem written continuously, the objective of the activity being that of understanding that modern literature has no boundaries.

Strong points:

- interesting activity, new and challenging;
- good opening activity;
- students were obliged to focus on the meaning of the poem;
- written individual activity, giving them students time to think the poem over.

Weak points:

- some students considered it boring.

Re-writing a poem

The activity was based on the same poem and asked the students to replace words in the poem with their own, therefore transforming the poem. The activities were solved individually or in pairs.

Strong points:

- creative, fun;
- work on vocabulary;
- suitable for different levels.

Weak points:

- some students considered the task difficult.

Writing a poem

The students were asked to write a simple poem, called a meeting poem. The poem was rather short, the students' task being to write just six words. A model was given:

Susan Bassnett
 Super Breadmaker
 Simply Bewildered
 Still Breathing
 Susan Bassnett (Bassnett, Grundy 1993).

Strong points:

- imaginative, new;
- useful as icebreaker;
- short;
- vocabulary work.

Weak points:

- vocabulary: difficult to find words starting with a certain letter.

Re-writing a tale

Students were asked to re-write a tale (short version), by making it modern, changing different elements, such as the characters, the plot, or even the language of the story.

Strong points:

- funny, interesting;
- advantage of group work;
- useful – work on language (speaking and writing).

Weak points:

- no materials – the text of the story.

Describing an event and retelling it

Students were asked to recount an event and write a short description of it. Then they worked in groups formed of three students: a teller (tells the story), a listener (listens) and a documenter (takes notes). After the story was told, the variants were confronted.

Strong points:

- creative, interactive;
- useful: language work based on writing, speaking and listening;
- involved all students.

Weak points:

- the stories were similar, therefore boring. A suggestion was to let the students choose their topic.

3. Conclusions:

The positive aspects were the fact that students enjoyed the activities, finding them new and creative. The work on language was also valued and both types of activities (based on literary texts and aiming at creating literary texts) were believed to be interesting and useful. They also appreciated the team work and the interaction, the exchange of ideas. There were some negative aspects, as well: some students considered some topics boring or too difficult and there were some problems regarding the organization of groups. In view of the predominant positive elements, the students' curiosity, which was awakened, bringing them closer to literature, we may say that the experiment was a success. The teaching of canonical texts should be redesigned, allowing modern elements to be included.

Just as Bassnett and Grundy stated, “there is a need for a methodology change in the teaching [...] *literature*, to bring it more into line with the learner-centered collaborative approach of the communicative method” (Bassnett, Grundy 1993:1). An *aesthetic reading* (McKay, 2000:194) cannot be done without an examination of the text which should

be followed by its interpretation at a more subtle level. Besides confidence, enjoyment and the development of language and individuality, modern methods give students a larger perspective: that of literature and of culture. These activities are “designed to promote sensitivity and to develop interpretive skills by exploring awareness of patterns of language from the inside” (Carter, Long 1991:90).

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SECTION THREE:
LANGUAGE STUDIES

TRANSLATING IDENTITY: RETHINKING, RIGHT WORDING AND RECONCEPTUALIZATION

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***Abstract:** The paper aims at proving that the reconciliation of the global and local identity and difference is made possible through translation. Retaining local specificity becomes so much the more difficult when writing in the language of the “other”, as translation presupposes different cultural practices. The greatest problem is how to recreate the source text cultural background for the target readers.*

***Keywords:** identity, reconceptualization, rewording, transcultural flows, translinguistic flows*

1. Introduction

The international networks, the interactions and interconnections between people(s) and the flows of representations through communication in general and through translation in particular make the study of language in the processes of globalization necessary. Such interactions, networks and flows require adequate approaches to linguistic identity and to cultural identity.

Firstly, linguistic identity can no longer be considered in terms of code-switch and language choice, as it was in the earlier interactional approaches (Gumperz 1982, LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985), because identity is fluid, i.e. it is constructed by speakers in interactions using language resources that are not theirs. In this respect, we share Omoniyi and White's (2006:2) opinion that identity is not fixed, that it is “constructed within established contexts and may vary from one context to another.” The contexts within which identity is established are marked by socio-cultural variables and are expressed through language. Among the six characteristics of linguistic identity, Omoniyi and White (2006:2) mention that identity, as a salient factor in every communicative context, “informs social relationships and the communicative exchanges that characterize them.” They also argue that there are more identity options in any interaction: “[...] more than one identity may be articulated in a

given context, in which case there will be a dynamic of identities management.” The idea is shared that all these characteristics of linguistic identity are also common to English as a lingua franca (ELF), or English as a global language (EGL).

The concept of English as a foreign language (EFL) has already changed due to its status of lingua franca. It goes hand in hand with the concepts of leadership and power in the context of dynamic interaction among nations, among people. The status of the English language as the dominant international language in the world is due to the phenomenon of globalization. This has some effects which have to be taken into consideration when speaking about multilingualism, diversity and unity. The dominance of English is closely related to globalization. One of the handiest explanations is that it is simply a means of reaching a wider audience, not a ‘linguicide’, i.e. an intentional stifling of local languages. As a matter of fact, the so called ‘linguicide’, or murder of local languages means deculturation of peoples, ignoring the values, beliefs, and concepts of minor languages, on the one hand, and of native ethnic minorities, on the other.

Thus, a new perspective on ELF/EGL is brought up which is different from the traditional one in which differences from native speaker (NS) English norms are regarded as deficiencies. On the contrary, such differences are considered to be identity-driven, i.e. non-native speakers (NNSs) are aware of NS norms but do not observe them in order to express their shared identity with a NNS interlocutor.

This generates the concept of ‘crossing linguistic borders’ which is essential in debates on linguistic identity. Therefore, identity “is not the only reason for code-switching” (Jenkins 2007). Moreover, the linguistic flows across borders do not imply homogenization but reorganization of the local. Our suggestion is to label them as *translinguistic flows*.

Secondly, in more recent studies, identity is considered in terms of the effect of power relations on the negotiation of linguistic identity (Heller 1992, 1995).

A very important aspect of power relations in negotiating linguistic identity is the use of ELF/EGL. We agree with Jenkins (2007:201) that “there is a second tier of power relations in ELF interactions, i.e. among ELF speakers themselves, to the extent that they see ELF varieties not as equals but as hierarchical. Thus, power is, at present, likely to be a major influence in the way many ELF speakers both categorize/affiliate themselves and ascribe identities to each other.”

2. Transcultural flows

We consider the term *transcultural flows* interesting as it is used by Pennycook (2008:6) “to address the ways in which cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts.” Pennycook also argues that this is not merely a question of cultural movement but of “take-up, appropriation, change and refashioning. While not ignoring the many detrimental effects of globalization on economies and [...], I am interested centrally here in the cultural implications of globalization, the ways in which cultural forms spread and change” (Pennycook 2008:6). This take-up involves new parameters of meaning that cannot be referred to as simple adoptions of either global or local practices.

Therefore, the term *transcultural flows* is not the same as the phenomenon of ‘crossing the linguistic borders’, but it has much to do with the processes of rethinking, remaking, rewording and, what is more important and most difficult, of reconceptualization and cultural (re)production. In other words, *transcultural flows* do not refer only to the movement of cultural forms across boundaries and communities but also to the local take-up, appropriation and reconceptualization of these forms. Consequently, linguistic identity and cultural identity are seen in terms of fluidity, i.e. the movement and flows across borders, and in terms of fixity, i.e. traditions, customs and local cultural expression. Thus, they are at the same time fluid and fixed, since they move across communities, nations and borders, on the one hand, and are rethought, remade, re-created in the local, i.e. localized and reconceptualized, on the other. As Pennycook (2008:8) puts it, “[C]aught between fluidity and fixity, then, cultural and linguistic forms are always in a state of flux, always changing, always part of a process of the refashioning of identity.”

In a context of change and flow, the reconceptualization of language and culture has to render linguistic and cultural forms authentic.

The ways in which the flows of cultural forms produce new forms of localization, on the one hand, and the ways in which the use of global Englishes produces new forms of global identification, on the other, are really worth studying considering both the culture-specific elements and the principle of unity in diversity. Furthermore, diverse identities are given new parameters of meaning. This is so much the more interesting as Fairclough argues that “1. there are real processes of globalization, independently of whether people recognize them or not, and of how they represent them, and 2. as soon as we begin to reflect upon and discuss these real processes, we *have* to represent them, and the ways in which we represent them inevitably draw upon certain discourses rather than others” (Fairclough 2006:5).

3. Translation: integrating new concepts in the TLC

Cronin (2003:133) points out the very important role of translation within globalization, considering, on the one hand, that one of its primary functions is “to replenish the intertextual resources of a culture”, and that, from the traditional perspective, the main responsibility of the translator is to give an accurate representation of the source text, on the other.

Venuti’s (1998) concept of *translingualism* refers to breaking or destroying the assimilatory and domesticating tendencies of reducing and even removing difference through translation. To put it differently, the boundary between languages can no longer be easily maintained. Thus, seen from this perspective, translation is a transgressive phenomenon because it “transgresses rather than maintains distinctions between languages; in the transcultural field of flows and appropriations, translation is not so much a process of encoding and decoding across languages but of making meaning across and against codifications” (Pennycook 2008:55).

Furthermore, Pennycook argues that, besides signalling the opacity of language, translation opens up questions of difference, since there are concepts whose meaning do not hold across languages, “terms which get us some distance and fall apart, concepts which in their supposed commonality and globality may conceal levels of difference that need to be opened up” (Pennycook 2008:56).

Such a perspective seems to have been assimilated by translators, the so-called linguistic and cultural mediators, negotiators, go-betweens, or builders in their task of providing people with a linguistic and cultural bridge in bilingual and bicultural communication, i.e. of decoding and recoding messages encoded in a different communicational system.

However, using English as the dominant language implies access to a dynamic context context of socio-cultural interaction. In translation, given the interactional relevance of such macroconcepts as culture, on the one hand, and the nature of translation itself as intercultural communication, on the other, the translator plays the double role of the two interactants belonging to different national cultures.

Judging the two different socio-cultural and historical contexts,

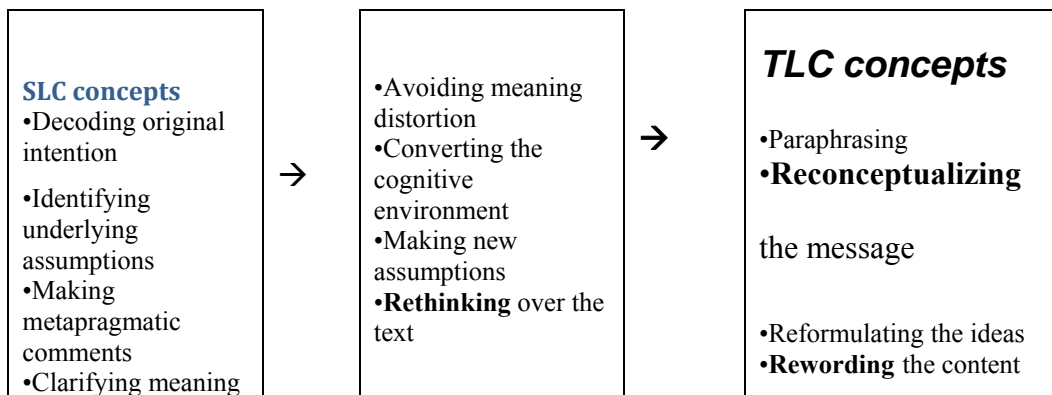
(s)he makes certain assumptions about concepts, categories, situational activities, etc. These assumptions need to be negotiated with a view to the right rewording and reconceptualization.

The translator as a linguistic and cultural bridge builder brings together two different societies, two worlds differing in concepts to a lesser or greater extent. On the one hand, (s)he has to be aware of the status of the two language cultures as belonging to the class of powerful or minor languages, or high-/low-context languages. On the other hand, (s)he has to bear in mind the danger of understanding such concepts in (a) different way(s) or even of misunderstanding them.

The position of the bilingual and bicultural negotiator implies objectivity, equal judgement of the values and concepts in both source language culture (SLC) and target language culture (TLC), clarifications of meaning, finding the most appropriate solutions in the ways of rendering the concepts specific to the SLC, making new assumptions before reformulating the message(s) and reconceptualizing what is specific to the SLC in order to match the TLC context.

For the purpose of this study, we consider Sperber and Wilson's (1986:45) idea that "it is understanding (not misunderstanding) that is mysterious and requires explanation" to be extremely important.

Therefore, the translator's task is to integrate SLC concepts into the TLC. All this can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



Integrating new concepts in the TLC

Thus, in a different cultural setting, wrong rewording, ambiguous or erroneous reformulations may be caused more frequently by differing understandings rather than by misunderstandings. This may be due to the fact that we have a different mental model of some shared concepts or of the same concept(s), or we may not have any such model.

Considering that the target readers (TRs) are not familiar with the cultural environment of the source text (ST), metapragmatic comments,

paraphrases, clarifications of meaning are necessary for the right wording of the message in keeping with the necessary reformulations and reconceptualizations.

Some concepts may be new to the TRs and the common understanding as to their definition and meaning may vary. Furthermore, there may be cultural reasons for that. Thus, due to the cultural differences, such concepts may not be understood or may be misunderstood. Besides the culture-specific elements, a very good example may be the metaphors which are culture-bound, i.e. closely tied to a specific culture.

As regards the relationship between translation and linguistic and cultural identity, translation can be seen as a form of linguistic and cultural practice which preserves the identity of the “Other”. On the other hand, the losses and gains of the transcultural encounter may be “a challenge to any conception of culture as monolithic, bound and independent” (Gonzales and Tolron 2006:vii-viii). We consider the relationship between translation, identity and cultural diversity to be closely connected with Ricœur’s (1992) concept of “oneself as another” which proves that it is impossible to locate the self or to express one’s subjectivity without reference to another individual. We would also think it interesting to relate Ricœur’s notion of the “kingdom of the as if” to translation. Thus, just as this notion “allows writers to blur the binaries between fictional and real experiences, [...] an intersection of untranslated words and phrases between a foreign language and a dominant one creates a bilingual or a plurilingual writer-reader pact” (Shafiq 2006, in Gonzales and Tolron 2006:5).

In other words, the TLC cannot always provide right/exact reformulations of the concepts in the SLC, but approximations: e.g. *Cu capul pe butuc* → *To the block*; *Cei doi înjurau și sorbeau din mers țuica luată de Simensky...* → *The other two went on swearing and drinking Simensky’s brandy as they went*; *...să facă pe fideaua cu mă-sa* → *...she should play the saint with her mummy*; *puse gaz pe foc preoteasa* → *the priest wife teased him*; *cei ce-mi freacă mie ridichea n-au trecut de abac* → *those who boss me haven’t got beyond the bead frame*; *Dacă nu împac și capra și varza* → *If I don’t make both ends meet* (see the Appendix: ST₁, ST₂, ST₃, ST₄). The idea is shared that “[T]he transfer of meaning can never be total between systems of meaning”, as Bontilă (in Gonzales and Tolron 2006:143) puts it.

Moreover, there may be no corresponding reformulation, but a different wording and a (very) different reconceptualization in the TLC: e.g. *Lingura și strachina, mămăliga-i gata* → *Another spell of military life is awaiting you*; *După ce a terminat țuica...* → *When he’d finished the tzuica*; *tu-i pomana mă-sii* → *damn it*; *să-mi culegi cucuruzul...* → *să nu-mi sufli în*

ciorbă → you just harvest our corn..., don't stick your nose into other people's affairs; *E plictisitor ca moartea deșteptul ăsta* → He's boring (-), this smart Aleck is; *luhău* → (-) (see the Appendix: ST₅, ST₆, ST₇, ST₈, ST₉, ST₁₀).

We agree with Bassnett (1980:23) that "to attempt to impose the value system of the SL culture onto the TL culture is dangerous ground."

The rewording and reconceptualization can also be made by using the explicitation strategy with culture-specific elements: e.g. *la petromax* → in the light of a kerosene lamp (see the Appendix: ST₁₁).

As Venutti (2000:344) suggests, "translation problems can arise not only from deficiencies in the receiving society, but also from a surfeit of linguistic options." Generally speaking, translators point out the greatest difficulties in prefaces to their work, "outlining the deficiencies of the target language (TL), deficiencies arising from sociological, geographical, or historical variation in the SL."

This aspect may be related to Pratt's (1987:61) contact model: "A linguistics of contact will be deeply interested in processes of appropriation, penetration, or cooptation of one group's language by another." Extending Pratt's model to cross-linguistic boundaries, we would add the processes of reconceptualization and rewording. In this respect, good illustrations may be offered by the text samples in the Appendix.

Therefore, given that language is a vehicle of culture, a literary translation is a transaction not between two languages only, but between two cultures with different concepts. Besides, different cultures construct their images of writers and texts. As Bassnett and Lefevere (1998:13) put it, texts "become cultural capital across cultural boundaries."

4. Conclusions

Due to the cultural differences, some concepts may not be understood by the TRs, or may be misunderstood. Being identity-driven, such differences cause wrong rewording, ambiguous or erroneous reformulations, as well as different interpretations, hence different reconceptualizations. In different cultural settings, but considering the phenomenon of globalization and the translinguistic and transcultural flows, the reconceptualization of language and culture has to lead to the authenticity of the linguistic and cultural forms.

The translator's task is to bring together two worlds differing in concepts to a greater or lesser extent, integrating the SLC concepts in the TLC.

Appendix

ST₁: “Forța e totul. Constantin Cantemir, tatăl marelui Dimitrie, a fost analfabet și totuși a urcat pe tronul Moldovei! Răzvan Vodă a fost un biet țigan și ce acte de vitejie a făcut! Dar **plină e istoria de asemenea exemple!** În schimb, pe Brâncoveanu unde l-a dus cultura lui? **Cu capul pe butuc!** Credeți cumva că autorul Mioriței a studiat la Sorbona sau măcar la București?”

ST₂: “Mergeam în urma lor, **împiedicat, nefamiliarizat cu drumul desfundat, plin de gropi și bolovani, incomodat de întuneric,** târând după mine întreg cimitirul, **morții** de sub pământ și cei de deasupra; cei doi înjurau și sorbeau **din mers țuica** luată de Simensky în vreme ce mie îmi venea **să plâng, să cânt, să fug,** să nu mai știu de nimic.”

ST₃: “Și dacă e să o luăm direct, pe șoseaua națională, să facă pe **fideaua** cu mă-sa, nu cu mine!

Ei, aia-i **din alta stofă, puse gaz pe foc** preoteasa.”

ST₄: “Ce vină am eu că cei ce-mi **freacă mie ridichea** n-au trecut de **abac?** Spune? Ce fac? Mă port ca un gânditor măcar din generația trei pe patru de calculatoare, sau mă acomodez? Dacă nu **împac și capra și varza** vine un altul și nu se știe dacă nu preferă **abacul Felixului** sau **aibiem-ului,** pricepi?”

ST₅: “**Lingura și strachina, mămăliga-i gata!**”

ST₆: “**Pedeapsa-i ruptă din rai. Un Vlad Țepeș ne-ar lipsi, că lemne s-ar găsi...**”

ST₇: “După ce a terminat **țuica,** Socoliuc a izbucnit iarăși în plâns până a adormit”.

ST₈: “Pe-aici se suferă, nu glumă, **tu-i pomana mă-sii!**’, mi-am zis descumpănit. Când am întrebat-o ce are, m-a privit cu ură de parcă aș fi fost propriul ei destin: ‘Ce- mi dă mie **viața**

TT₁: “Power is everything. Constantin Cantemir, the father of the great Dimitrie, was illiterate, and yet, he got on the throne of Moldavia in the 17th century! **Prince** Răzvan was a mere Gypsy, and see what deeds of valour he was able to do! While if you consider **prince** Brâncoveanu, where did his culture take him? **To the block!** Do you think that the author of ‘Miorița’ had studied at the Sorbonne, or at least in Bucharest?”

TT₂: “I was walking behind them, **in the dark, tottering, unfamiliar as I was with the uneven road full of rocks and hollows,** dragging the whole graveyard with the **dead** in it and above the ground after me. The other two went on swearing and drinking Simenski’s **brandy as they went.** I felt like **crying, singing, fleeing** far away so as to forget everything.

TT₃: “To put it as straight as the national highways, she should play the **saint** with her mummy, not with me!

Eh, that one **comes from a different stock,** the priest wife **teased** him”

TT₄: “Is it my fault that those who **boss me** haven’t got beyond the **bead frame?** Say, what am I to do? Shall I act like a thinker belonging to the third generation of computers at least, or shall I adapt to them? If I don’t **make both ends meet** somehow, another will come and he might prefer the abacus to the **Romanian computer Felix** or the IBM, get me?”

TT₅: “**Another spell of military life is awaiting you!**”

TT₆: “**Chastisement comes from heaven. We could do with a ruler like Vlad the Impaler. Then we’d see that there is enough wood for the pales...**”

TT₇: “When he’d finished off the **tzuica,** Socoliuc began crying and finally fell asleep.

TT₈: “‘They do suffer some round here, **damn it!**’ I said to myself embarrassed. When I asked her what the matter was, I got a glance full of hate as if I had been her destiny: ‘What does this **shitty life**

asta de rahat?”

ST₉: “... mie să-mi culegi **cucuruzul**, să-mi crești gaina, iepurele și capra, să-mi repari drumul și să **nu-mi sufli în ciorbă**.”

ST₁₀: “Trebuie combătută influența ...excesului de alcool, că beau spirt sanitar, **luhău** și nu numai că-s tâmpiți dar rămân și chiori...E plictisitor **ca moartea**, deșteptul ăsta...”

ST₁₁: “Ședința s-a ținut la **petromax**, se tăiase curentul, dar, **cu sau fără lumină**, adunătura de babe și copii nu reacționa în niciun fel.”

give me?’”

TT₉: “... you just harvest **our corn**, **breed our chickens**, **feed our rabbits and goats**, repair my road **and don't stick your nose into other people's affairs**.”

TT₁₀: “You have to fight the influence of ... alcoholism – for they drink methylated spirit, **(-)**, and get blind too besides being stupid...He's boring **(-)**, this smart Aleck is ...”

TT₁₁: “The meeting was held **in the light of a kerosene lamp**, because of a **power failure**, but, with or without any light, that crowd of hags and children showed no response.”

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IDENTIFYING AND ANALYSING PROFESSIONAL GENRES' PECULIARITIES FOR TRANSLATION PURPOSES: A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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***Abstract:** Genre analysis developed in the late 90s (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993) and soon afterwards, the relevance of professional genres to translation was stressed out (Trosborg 2000). However, even if most translation theorists acknowledge the importance of genre peculiarities for translation (Schäffner 2000), up until now, no methodology has been developed indicating how genre analysis can be integrated into a translation process. This paper, which is part of a larger theory-building research (Dejica 2010), presents a tentative methodology for identifying and analysing genre peculiarities for translation purposes.*

***Keywords:** genre analysis, translation process, translation methodology*

1. Introduction

The process of understanding and analysing the source text for translation purposes is common to every translation methodology and is to be found in every translation model, even if various translation schools approach it differently.

As soon as Genre Analysis became a discipline in its own rights (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993), the relevance of analysing and understanding genre peculiarities for translation purposes was highlighted by a series of translation scholars (Schäffner 2000), especially because such peculiarities are to be found in every language or culture systems and because they are most likely to pose translation problems.

This paper contributes to the development of genre analysis for translation purposes and presents a tentative methodology for identifying and analysing genre peculiarities for translation. In the first two parts of the paper the concept of genre is explained and its relevance to translation is presented. Then, in the third part, a tentative methodology for identifying and analysing genre peculiarities for translation purposes is put forward and each step of the translation process is exemplified on a text. The methodology suggested here is applicable to the translation of professional genres.

2. The concept of genre

The word genre comes from the French (and originally Latin) word for 'kind' or 'class'. The term is widely used in rhetoric, literary

theory, media theory, and more recently linguistics, to refer to a distinctive type of text. In linguistics, genre is defined in a number of different ways by different linguists. For Swales (1990),

A genre comprises a class of communicative events the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community. The genre names inherited end produced by discourse communities and imported by others constitute a valuable ethnographic communication, but typically need further validation. (Swales 1990:58)

According to this extended definition, genre is defined as a class of communicative events having a shared set of communicative purposes and similar structures, stylistic features, content and intended audiences. In addition, Swales notes that a genre is usually named and recognized by members of the culture in which it is found.

Bhatia (1993) continued and extended Swale's work on genres. For him,

A genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which

it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form, and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s). (Bhatia 1993:15)

According to this definition, Bhatia agrees that each genre is an instance of a successful achievement of a specific communicative purpose using conventionalised knowledge of linguistic and discoursal resources. However, as stressed out by Trosborg (2002:23), Bhatia considers that ‘Swales underplays psychological factors and, in that way, undermines the importance of tactical aspects of genre construction, a factor which plays a significant role in the concept of genre as a dynamic social process, as against a static one.’

Another linguist who contributed with his view to defining the concept is J. R. Martin (1985):

A genre is a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity, in which speakers engage as members of our culture.... Virtually everything you do involves you participating in one or other genre. Culture seen in these terms can be defined as a set of generically interpretable activities. (Martin 1985: 25)

Martin points out that speakers use language to accomplish culturally goal-orientated tasks and in so doing are obliged to use genres. Thus when shopping, a shopper converses with a sales person in a particular genre to achieve his/her purchase. Less technically, as Martin puts it, genres may be ‘how things get done when language is used to accomplish them’. This leads to the acknowledgement that there are as many genres as there are recognisable activity types in a culture. Some examples, following Martin (1985), are:

- Literary genres: poems, short-stories, romantic novels, whodunits, ballads, sonnets, fables, comedies, tragedies, etc.
- Popular written genres: instructional manuals, newspaper articles, magazine reports, recipes, etc.
- Educational genres: lectures, tutorials, report/essay writing, leading seminars, examinations, text-book writing, etc.
- Business genres: business letters, advertisements, brochures and booklets, catalogues, annual reports, meetings, minutes, etc.
- Legal written genres: statutes, contracts, deeds, wills, briefs, etc.

- Other genres: personal letters, press releases, sermons, obituaries, weather reports, etc.

I use Martin's classification to make a difference between literary genres and other types of genres, i.e. educational, business, etc., which I call in this article *professional genres* as in Bhatia (2008:161-162). This differentiation is similar to the one made by translators when referring to literary and non-literary or pragmatic texts.

3. The relevance of genre analysis to translation

The way I see it, the relevance of genre knowledge to translation is twofold: on the one hand, when translating, translators could use knowledge on existing genre classifications, i.e. as above, in Martin (1985), business genres: business letters, advertisements, brochures and booklets, catalogues, annual reports, meetings, minutes, etc., and on the other hand, they could (or *should*) take into account genre peculiarities or characteristics, i.e. those aspects which are particular to specific genres as opposed to other genres in the same language, or those aspects of a particular genre which are similar or different in the source and target languages. These two aspects which are different but interrelated, e.g., one must take into account genre peculiarities when classifying genres, are detailed in what follows.

3.1. Genre classification

According to Trosborg (2002:14), 'all cultures have a genre potential, i.e. linguistically-achieved activity types recognised as meaningful in a given culture. Any changes in activities of such type will normally result in a change of genre'. In a previous article, Trosborg (2000:190) claimed that 'translators in particular have to be aware of the fact that although the same genres may exist in different cultures, they may in fact be – and often are – structured or composed in different ways.' She considers that genre conventions are culture-specific and exemplifies this claim by stating that the genres 'weather report' and 'death announcement' exist in a Danish as well as in a British context, but they observe quite different conventions in the two cultures.

Attempts to classify text types had been made even before the concept of genre existed as such. An example would be in literature where divisions were made between poetry, prose and drama, each of these genres displaying further sub-classifications, i.e. tragedy and comedy in the case of drama. Even if one can differentiate between major genre categories, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate or classify sub-genres.

For Chandler (1997) genre classification is not a neutral and objective procedure mainly for two reasons. First, there are no clear maps of

the system of genre within any medium, and second, since there is often considerable theoretical disagreement about the definition of specific genres, one theorist's genre may be another's sub-genre or even super-genre (what is technique, style, mode, formula or thematic grouping to one may be treated as a genre by another).

Even if I consider that translators themselves should not be the performers of detailed analyses aiming at classifying genres and sub-genres or at identifying new genres, but rather the end-users of such classifications, I strongly believe that they should be familiar with the aspects which are considered when classifying such genres. In this way, they could easily identify a certain genre or sub-genres and associate them with specific genre peculiarities.

Bhatia (1993:22), for instance, proposes that for the analysis of unfamiliar genres, one should consider some or all of the following steps, depending on the purpose of the analysis, the aspect of the genre that one intends to focus on, and the background knowledge one already has of the nature of the genre in question:

- Placing the given genre-text in a situational context
- Surveying existing literature
- Refining the situational/contextual analysis
- Selecting corpus
- Studying the institutional context
- Levels of linguistic analysis
 - Level 1: Analysis of lexico-grammatical features
 - Level 2: Analysis of text-patterning or textualization
 - Level 3: Structural interpretation of the text-genre

3.2. Genre characteristics

As it can be seen in Bhatia's approach to identifying unfamiliar genres (1993) presented above, he mentions several aspects which may be peculiar to specific genres: lexico-grammatical features, text-patterning or textualization, and structural interpretation.

Most of the research in identifying genre characteristics was done in the direction of genre's structures (Kaplan 1972; Clyne, 1981, 1987). In a research study of the essays of foreign students in the United States, Kaplan (1972:257) found four kinds of discourse structures that contrasted with English linearity:

1. parallel constructions, with the first idea completed in the second part;
2. circularity, with the topic looked at from different tangents;

3. freedom to digress and to introduce ‘extraneous’ material;
4. similar to (3), but with different lengths, and parenthetical amplifications of subordinate elements.

The discourse types which Kaplan identified are particular to the genetic language types: (1) Semitic, (2) Oriental, (3) Romance, and (4) Russian.

Clyne (1987:78-79) was also interested in how genres differ from culture to culture. He put up a list of register difficulties Anglo-Saxon students might encounter when entering a German university. According to him, the German academic register is marked by:

1. agentless passives and impersonal and reflexive constructions:
A general concept *recommends itself*.
2. hedged performatives and passive infinitives:
We can predict general agreement.
A group of decisions is *to be characterized* as aggression.
3. nominalizations and compound words
4. syntactic complexity (German syntactic constructions not shared with English: participial clauses and left-branching embedding):
That this publication, which only now when the...
Results already anyhow known are appeared has...

It is not the purpose of the present study to explore in depth ways of genre classification or to identify an exhaustive list of genre peculiarities. At this stage, I am contented to summarize and say that genre is a type of text that has certain goals and characteristics sufficient to give it certain individuality and differentiate it from other texts. I subscribe to Trosborg’s (2000) view that genre knowledge may be of particular help in text understanding and translation, since genres often are structured or composed in different ways in different cultures. In what follows I present a tentative methodology for applying genre knowledge to a translation process.

4. Identifying and analysing genre peculiarities for translation purposes – a methodological approach

Translation is seen here as ‘an activity which transfers into a target text – with a specific purpose in mind – the writer’s intention expressed in a source text’ (Dejica 2010a:155). I use ‘transfer’ with a double connotation: that found in Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) and Hatim and Munday (2004), to imply that I see translation as process, and that found in Nida and Taber (1969) and Gerzymisch-Arbogast (2005) to refer to the second phase of the translation process, i.e., that of transfer, where the ‘material’ analysed in the reception phase is transferred into the mind of the translator and compared for translation purposes. Reception, transfer and reproduction are the three phases of translation on which the following suggested

methodology for approaching genre peculiarities is based. The approach suggested here is thus a multi-phase process which combines pragmatic identification of information and atomistic and hol-atomistic analyses, and which consists of a series of phases and steps. For exemplification and analysis, I will use the Ptolemy Project text (below), a sample of a pragmatic text which I have used for other analyses as well and which is taken from an extended project description:

Project Ptolemy Objectives

The project aims to develop techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling, including both formal "meta-models" and a software laboratory for experimenting with heterogeneous modelling. In this context, it will explore methods based on dataflow and process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous/reactive languages, finite-state machines, and communicating sequential processes. It will make contributions ranging from fundamental semantics to synthesis of embedded software and custom hardware.

(Ptolemy Project, <http://ptolemy.berkeley.edu/objectives.htm>, May 25, 2006)

- **Phase 1. Reception.** The first translation phase, synonymous to text understanding, implies the following sequence of steps:

Step 1. Identification of the Information Universe constituents.

All the constituents expressed in the source text form what I call the *Information Universe* (IU) of the text (Dejica 2010:67). I use the term 'universe' from science, where it stands for the sum of everything that exists in the cosmos. Just like in science, in this approach, universe stands for the sum of all the information that exists in a text. The IU constituents are carriers of information which structurally can be divided into a two-part information system, which in my approach is formed of Themes and Rhemes.

For the identification of Themes and Rhemes, I suggest the use of a pragmatic Theme-Rheme (PTR) model. As the name implies, the model uses pragmatic parameters for the identification of information constituents, i.e. Themes and Rhemes, such as shared background knowledge of the sender and receiver, scope of attention, etc. The model and its application are described in detail in Dejica (2010:69-71) and resuming them here would exceed the aim and length of the paper. For the sake of the subsequent presentation, I present here only the results of the analysis, in the form of identified Themes and Rhemes:

1. Theme – given information: *the project*
2. Rhemes – new information: (i.e. the objectives proper): *development of techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling, including both*

formal "meta-models" and a software laboratory for experimenting with heterogeneous modelling; exploration of methods based on dataflow and process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous/reactive languages, finite-state machines, and communicating sequential processes; making contributions ranging from fundamental semantics to synthesis of embedded software and custom hardware.

Step 2. Atomistic analysis of the Information Universe constituents.

The atomistic analysis implies the analysis of all the IU constituents from the thematic or rhematic information, e.g., i.e., terms, proper names, multiword expressions, neologisms, idioms, etc., taken individually. The analysis is exemplified and presented in depth in Dejica (2010:85), and to avoid repetition and for space limitations I present here only the results of the analysis synthesized in the aspective matrix of the text:

Aspects IU constituents at sentence level	Terms	Multiword terminological expressions	Neologisms
<i>The project</i> aims to develop techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling, including both formal "meta-models" and a software laboratory for experimenting with heterogeneous modelling.	modelling, software	techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling, formal "meta- models", software laboratory	meta-models
In this context, <i>it</i> will explore methods based on dataflow and process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous/reactive languages, finite-state machines, and communicating sequential processes.	dataflow, process, network, systems, languages	dataflow and process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous / reactive languages, finite-state machines, communicating sequential processes	-
<i>It</i> will make contributions ranging from fundamental semantics to synthesis of embedded software and custom hardware.	fundamental semantics, software, hardware	embedded software, custom hardware	-

Table 4.1 Exemplification of the aspective matrix on a text

Step 3. Hol-atomistic analysis of the Information Universe constituents.

The hol-atomistic analysis implies the analysis of all possible relations between IU constituents from the thematic or rhematic information, e.g., syntactic, semantic, lexico-grammatical, etc., at text level.

- *Analysis of syntactic relations.* This relational analysis between sentence Themes and Rhemes reveals the source text author's preferences for a particular sentence construction or word order of the IU constituents. In the Ptolemy Project example, the Theme is identical with the subject in all three sentences and is part of the most frequent syntactic pattern in the English language: S + V + O. The representation at text level is shown below in the form of a syntactic holon, i.e., a system within a system:

S + V + O
S + V + O
S + V + O

Fig. 4.1 Syntactic holon at text level

- *Analysis of semantic relations.* This relational analysis at text level between Themes or between Rhemes reveals the meaning and structural relations between all the information universe constituents of the text and shows the way subsequent discourse re-uses previous Themes or Rhemes according to an overall textual plan. As it can be seen in Fig. 4.2, the text displays a thematic progression with Constant Theme. The Theme is resumed at the beginning of each sentence, which gives the text a more emphatic or argumentative power.

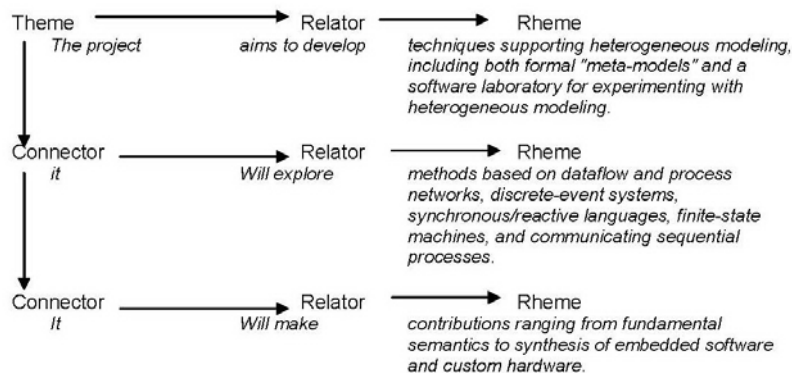


Fig. 4.2 Thematic progression of the text

- *Analysis of lexical and grammatical relations.* This relational analysis at text level between Themes reveals the author's preference

for a particular wording in Theme position. The hol-atomistic lexico-grammatical analysis of the Themes in the Ptolemy Project example displays the following relations, synthesized in the lexico-grammatical holon *noun – personal pronoun – personal pronoun* presented in Fig. 4.3:

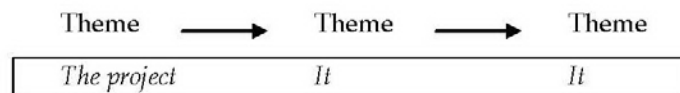


Fig. 4.3 Exemplification of a Thematic lexical and grammatical holon

Step 4. *Holistic analysis between the generic peculiarities of the source text and the generic particularities of the source language*

The source text features are confronted holistically, i.e. above text level, against the norms of writing genres in that particular language, where such norms exist, or assumptions are made as to the existence of such norms. In other words, applied to the Ptolemy example, the translator checks whether the generic peculiarities s/he identified atomistically or hol-atomistically (Steps 1-3 above) i.e., richness of terms and multiword terminological expressions, S+V+O pattern, progression with constant Theme, or noun-pronoun pattern, are isolated occurrences or whether they are characteristic for a specific genre, in this case, project proposals.

Step 5. *Overview of the analyses*

In this step, the translator summarizes his/her findings and makes a series of assumptions related to the genre s/he is translating. For example, the analyses in Steps 1-4 entitle the translator to make the following assumptions, which (hypothetically) may apply to all project objectives sections of project proposals in English:

- the project's objectives section of project proposals in English are usually written using a specialized language (e.g., in the selected example, language of computing), rich in terms, multiword terminological expressions, and neologisms;
- the thematic progression of information follows the pattern of progression with Constant Theme; this means that by resuming the Theme at the beginning of each new sentence, the text gains emphatic power and allows for developing new information in Rheme position;
- Themes (old information) are usually resumed using neutral pronouns;
- the syntactic organization of information follows constantly a basic word order (S+V+O) which makes reading easy and favours a very clear style;

- **Phase 2. Transfer.** This is a decision-making phase and consists of the following two steps:

Step 6. Identifying target-language generic specificities

In this step, based on his/her target-language knowledge or on other genre studies, the translator visualizes all possible genre specificities or preferences displayed by the target language for the specific genre s/he is translating. For example, in the case of the Ptolemy Project example, for the language pair English-Romanian, the translator may discover that Romanian does not share the same lexical and grammatical holon identified in the English text: the English personal pronouns are usually replaced in Romanian by demonstrative pronouns or nouns. These two possible Romanian lexico-grammatical holons are presented in Table 4.2:

English		Romanian (1)		Romanian (2)	
Theme	Grammatical class	Theme	Grammatical class	Theme	Grammatical class
<i>The project</i>	Noun	<i>Proiectul</i>	Noun	<i>Proiectul</i>	Noun
<i>It</i>	Personal pronoun, neutral	<i>Acesta</i>	Demonstrative pronoun	<i>Proiectul</i>	Noun
<i>It</i>	Personal pronoun, neutral	<i>Acesta</i>	Demonstrative pronoun	<i>Proiectul</i>	Noun

Table 4.2: English and Romanian lexical and grammatical holons

Step 7. Building the generic structure of the target text using translation strategies

Based on his/her findings but also on other external factors such as the intention of the source text writer, the expectations of the target text audience, the client requirements, etc., the translator now decides whether to preserve the source text peculiarities in the target text, or to adhere to the genre specificities of the target language. In other words, the translator makes the choice between creating a source- or target-language oriented translation, i.e. whether the target text will preserve the flavour of the original or whether it will be adapted to the target language specificities, and uses the most appropriate translation strategies to accomplish this task.

- **Phase 3. Reproduction.** In the last phase of the translation process the target text is created.

Step 8. Translation

The translator translates now the text based on his/her decision taken in Step 7. This is relatively a rather easy step, but one which cannot be performed without the activities detailed in Steps 1-7.

5. Conclusion

Using genre knowledge for translation purposes is one of the desiderata in translation studies, but one which for the moment is still insufficiently explored. That is why the tentative methodology created for approaching professional genres and presented in this paper should be seen only as a modest contribution in this direction, but one which should be definitely continued in further studies. Other contributions which could be made in this direction, not necessarily by translation scholars, but by genre analysts or by both, and which would be of a real help for translators, are related to and depend on the development of a more pertinent classification of genres and subgenres, to the existence of empirical studies which could establish genre specificities, and ultimately to the creation of specific norms for translating genres.

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ASPECTUAL ADVERB DISTRIBUTION AND LICENSING

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Abstract: *This article discusses the distribution and licensing of some aspectual adverbs in English, reviewing recent proposals. Both canonical and non-canonical orders of adverbs are considered. Examples are provided to illustrate that still, and already and no longer, for instance, cannot cooccur on semantic grounds within the inflectional layer, and that cooccurrences of aspectual adverbs are best if one of them appears within the complementizer layer, or after the lexical verb.*

Keywords: *aspectual adverbs; clause structure; definition; ordering restrictions; semantics; types*

1. Definition and classification

Aspectual adverbs encode and/or interact with so-called 'outer aspect' (see Haumann 2007:231, 319). 'Outer aspect', i.e. Smith's (1991, 2004) 'viewpoint aspect' and Dahl's (1985) 'grammatical aspect', focuses on the "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" (cf. Comrie 1976:3), e.g. viewing the event as a whole (perfective) or its internal structure (imperfect/progressive). (See Alexiadou 1997:86ff.; Cinque 1999:83ff.).

Linguists classify aspectual adverbs differently. Aspectual adverbs can be quantificational (*usually, always, often*), time related (*long, briefly, already, soon*), quantificational and negative (*never, seldom*), and quantificational, time related and negative (*rarely, never, seldom*). Ernst (2002) defines time related aspectual adverbs as "temporal relation between two events, one of which is linked to reference-time, and the other is of the same sort as the first and must have a specific relation to it" (Ernst 2002:341). Finer distinctions between aspectual subclasses are also possible. Some of them are: habitual (*usually*), durative (*long*), (im)perfective (*always*) and frequentative aspect (*rarely*). Examples [1-4] illustrate 'outer aspect' and these subclasses:

[1] [Wintering] birds have *usually* gone by late March ... (BNC)

[2] Graham will *long* be remembered for his wit. (CC)

[3] [The] watch might have *always* been there. (BNC)

[4] He *rarely* goes out because he *seldom* feels well. (BNC)

Cinque's (1999) aspectual adverb classification falls into the following categories:

[5] complementizer layer << ... [Asphabitual *usually* [Asprepetitive (I) *again* [Aspfrequentative (I) *often* [Aspcelerative (I) *quickly* ... [Tanterior *already* [Aspterminative *no longer* [Aspcontinuative *still* [Aspperfect *always* [Aspretrospective *just* [Aspproximative *soon* [Aspdurative *briefly* [Aspgeneric *characteristically* [Aspprospective *almost* [AspSgcompletive (I) *completely* [Aspcelerative (II) *fast* [Asprepetitive (II) *again* [Aspfrequentative (II) *often* [AspSgcompletive (II) *completely* >> lexical layer (adapted from Cinque 1999:106).

Each category given here enters into a specifier-head agreement relation with a designated functional head, which is vital to licensing. The order of functional heads / projections is canonical. Cinque (1999) claims that each projection has "a specific semantic interpretation" (cf. Cinque 1999:132). The (non)lexicalization of functional heads is accounted for in terms of a markedness hierarchy of semantic-interpretive features. The default interpretation of a functional projection is triggered in absence of lexical material in the head position, whereas, in the marked case, the functional head is lexicalized, (see [6] and Cinque 1999:128ff.). A modified analysis of aspect-related functional heads / projections and aspectual adverbs is also provided by Cinque (see Cinque 2001).

[6] FUNCTIONAL HEAD	DEFAULT	MARKED
Asp habitual	-[+ habitual]	+ habitual
Asp perfect	imperfect	perfect
Asp durative	- [+ durative]	+ durative
Asp progressive	generic	progressive

Cinque (1999) believes that the hierarchy of functional projections is invariable across languages, and that the functional heads impose different ordering restrictions across languages. (Cf. Pollock 1989; Ouhalla 1990, 1991). Word order variation is captured in terms of spell out options (see Cinque 1999:127, 136f.), that are closely tied to the range of movement options for verbal heads and/or verbal and nominal constituents, etc. both within and across languages. Cinque (1999:14) also demonstrates that if more than one VP-adverb occurs in VP-final position, they are in canonical order: e.g. Gianni does not win his matches *already any longer always well*.

In contrast, Haumann (2007:52) is able to show that the unique canonical order of adverbs as derived from [5] can be affected – reversed, scrambled, etc. – in (at least) six cases:

one of the adverbs in a sequence is heavy (i.e. modified, coordinated or focused),

- e.g. Laura [...] blew her nose *loudly again*. (BNC)
 Laura blew her nose *again so extremely loudly that he woke up*.
 Laura blew her nose *again loudly and obscenely*.
 Laura blew her nose *again* LOUDLY.
- b) some lower AdvP is *wh*-moved across some higher AdvP,
 e.g. He *always carefully* cleans his glasses.
 How *carefully* does he *always* clean his glasses?
- c) a chunk containing an AdvP is raised across some higher AdvP,
 e.g. Since then, he doesn't *any longer always* accept our invitations.
 Since then, he doesn't *always* accept our invitations not *any longer*.
 (Cinque 1999:13f.)

Always is the lower adverb and *any longer* the higher adverb. *Any longer* bears nuclear stress and thus occurs in final position.

- d) one and the same AdvP is base-generated in two different positions, and therefore has two distinct interpretations,

- e.g. Marvin sliced all the bagels *carefully*. (McCawley 1983:276)
 Marvin *carefully* sliced all the bagels. (McCawley 1983:276)

Carefully relates to the manner in which Marvin sliced the bagels in the first sentence, whereas it is related to Marvin's attitude in the bagel-slicing-event in the second sentence.

- e) some AdvP is used as a "focusing" AdvP and thus can assume different positions,
 e.g. "Gianni deserves it frankly/evidently/perhaps/ ... for more than one reason."
Even Mary was available. (Cinque 1999:31f.)
- f) some AdvP is used parenthetically,
 e.g. "Since then, he has no longer, unfortunately, come to visit us."
 "I will manage to read everything, perhaps, for the next week." (Cinque 1999:32)

In these two sentences, *unfortunately* and *perhaps* are set off by comma intonation.

Based on what has been said by now, one can conclude that non-canonical orders of adverbs are either derivative (i.e. movement of AdvP or a constituent containing AdvP) or created by merge in different positions.

2. The positioning of aspectual adverbs

Haumann (2007) considers the distributional versatility of aspectual adverbs in detail. He maintains that frequency adverbs relative to non-lexical and lexical verbs are - from a syntactic point of view - virtually free. They may occur between the subject and the finite lexical verb, between a modal and the bare infinitive of any verbal element, between any finite auxiliary and the participle of both lexical verbs and non-lexical verbs, after nonfinite auxiliaries (see Haumann 2007:233). Some aspectual adverbs, such as *rarely* and *seldom*, for instance, do not combine with present participles of non-lexical verbs though (cf. Haumann 2007:319).

Examples [7a-7d] illustrate that frequency adverbs may occur in pre- and post-subject position, and examples [7e, f] show that they can be placed after the lexical verb. *Often* in [7a] occupies specPromP, while *seldom* in [7b] occupies specFocP since it is an affective operator triggering 'subject-auxiliary-inversion'. In post-subject position, both *often* and *rarely* in [7c, d] are in specPromP with the subject having raised across them to specTopP. [7a,b,c,d] are accounted for in terms of raising to the complementizer layer.

- [7a] *Often* our intuition [...] warns us of impending danger. (BNC)
- [7b] *Seldom* has a bone been hyped as much as this one. (BNC)
- [7c] [They] very *often* will tell you what you want to hear. (BNC)
- [7d] In his opinion, scientists *rarely* could distinguish between good, mediocre, or bad art. (BNC)
- [7e] [This] particular store had been robbed *often*. (CC)
- [7f] Because it bites *seldom* we are unprepared for it. (CC)

Haumann (2007:233-4) also demonstrates that all aspectual subclasses may occur in sentence-initial position, i.e. specPromP (e.g. 8a, b, for instance),

or in specFocP, as is the case with *no longer* and *never* (e.g. 9a, b), and in post-subject position (e.g. 10a, b).

- [8a] 'anterior': *Already* they have [us] to work for them. (BNC)
- [8b] continuative: [I] tried to move away, but *still* [I] was paralysed.

- [9a] terminative: *No longer* is it to be seen as an age of poverty.
 [9b] (im)perfect: *Never* had so many children developed weak bladders.
 [10a] perfect: She *always* could be counted on ... (www)
 [10b] generic: John *characteristically* will not be attending. (www)

Haumann's further close examination of postverbal adverb occurrences reveals that habitual, terminative, continuative, (im)perfect, retrospective, proximative, durative, generic and prospective adverbs are realized within the empty verbal structure below the lexical verb. Based on his analysis, the following pattern has been obtained where • marks the positions assumed by frequency adverbs (*Table 1* is taken from Haumann 2007:235).

Table 1. Frequency adverb positioning

subject	Agrs	Mod	Relt	Perf	Aux	Prog	be
v							
	•						[fin]
[fin]							
VB	• modal	t					•
VBD	• have [+fin]		t				•
VBD	• modal	t	• have				•
VBG	• be[+fin]				t		•
VBG	• modal	t			• be		•
VBG	• have [+fin]		• been	t			•
VBN	• be[+fin]					t	•
VBN	• modal	t				• be	•

Table 1 (continued)

VBN	• have [+fin]		• been			t	•
VBN	• be[+fin]			t	• being	t	•

VB=bare infinitive, VBD=past participle, VBG=present participle, VBN=past participle

Haumann claims that the distributional versatility displayed by frequency adverbs is shared by adverbs of all other aspectual classes to varying extents (Haumann 2007:235). He also finds examples to show that aspectual adverbs tend not to cluster within the inflectional layer, and that cooccurrences of aspectual adverbs are best if one of them appears within the complementizer layer [11], or after the lexical verb [12].

[11] [I] *often* could *no longer* remember what [he] looked like. (BNC)

[12] They *never* saw him *again*. (BNC)

Further, sequences of the type *not*>*aspectual adverb* are interesting to look at. Bellert (1977:341ff.) maintains that such adverbs are similar to manner adverbs because sentences which contain them presuppose the corresponding non-negative adverbless sentences [13]:

[13] The lift was *not usually* operated after six in the evening. (BNC)

→ The lift was operated after six in the evening.

→ The lift was *not* operated after six in the evening.

Since pitch accent most naturally falls onto the adverb, the contrastive *not*Adv-reading is preferred, i.e. *not usually*, but often.

Finally, Haumann (2007:242) considers reverse orders formed in cases when a seemingly higher adverb is realized in a lower, the postverbal position (see example [14]):

[14] They can *always* start *again* and it doesn't matter. (BNC)

3. Some cases of non-admissibility of aspectual adverbs

Ernst (2002:327ff.) discusses some cases of non-admissibility of aspectual adverbs and argues that they derive from semantic mismatches between the adverbs and the verbal elements under consideration, rather than from syntactic restrictions. Both Ernst (2002:351) and Haumann (2007:237) state that habitual adverbs are barred from occurring in relatively low positions within the inflectional layer, because the time intervals as denoted by the participles in [15a, b] are often too short for the habitual adverb to quantify over:

[15a] *Politicians were *habitually* being blackmailed.

[15b] *The police have been *usually* called at night.

Haumann explains that *already* cannot be within the scope of non-finite *be* since *already* requires that a given activity be completed at reference time, as shown in [16a, b]:

[16a] *She has been *already* giving in.

[16b] *The reservation has been *already* made. (Taken from Haumann 2007:237)

Examples [17a, b] illustrate that perfective *have* is incompatible with terminative adverbs and continuative adverbs. The reason why this is the case is a simple one. Terminative adverbs require that a given state of affairs not obtain any longer at reference time, while continuative adverbs require that an event be unbound in the sense that a given state of affairs must obtain at reference time and at some point in time preceding reference time. (Cf. Ernst 2002:345f.).

[17a] *They {*no longer/still*} have {*no longer/still*} refused our invitations.

[17b] *The president has been {*no longer/still*} insulted.

Although the analysis displays that the occurrence of aspectual adverbs is governed by the underlying hierarchy of functional heads (see [5]), Haumann (2007:239) points out that certain adverbs cannot cooccur on semantic grounds within the inflectional layer. *Still*, for instance, cannot be

in the scope of *already* and *no longer*, as *already* and *no longer* require that the activity, process or state it takes scope over be completed at reference time, whereas *still* requires the non-completion of an activity or process at reference time.

Examples [18a, b] demonstrate this.

[18a] *They are *already still* having lunch.

[18b] *This rule *no longer still* applies.

The same holds for *no longer* and *recently*, as illustrated in [18c].

[18c] *They *no longer* have *recently* been asked out.

Examples [18d, e] are also ruled out because *soon* requires that the activity, process or state arise in the near future, and *already* and *no longer* require completion at reference time.

[18d] *They *already* were *soon* getting sick.

[18e] *Robin could *no longer* be *soon* leaving.

(Examples [18a, b, c, d, e] are taken from Haumann (2007:240)).

4. Conclusion

The positioning of aspectual adverbs is virtually free syntactically. Any single adverb may assume any of the interverbal positions within the inflectional layer (see Haumann 2007:233, (136)), as well as the pre- and post-subject position identified in the article as specPromP [7a, b, c, d, e, f]. The cooccurrence and the relative order of aspectual adverbs are believed to be governed by the underlying hierarchy of functional heads identified by Cinque (1999). Certain cooccurrence restrictions derive from clashes between the semantic requirements imposed by certain classes of adverbs [18a, b, c, d, e]. It has been shown that aspectual adverbs avoid clustering in the inflectional layer ([11] & [12]), and that they can both follow and precede *not*. When adverbs follow *not*, the strings are always ambiguous between sentential and constituent negation [13]. The relative order *aspectual adverb*>*negation* is preferred (e.g. That means programs have *still not* been written for a whole range of complex new tasks ... (BNC)), where the adverb takes scope over negation. The results suggest that aspectual adverbs compete for high merge.

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COLLOCATIONS ARE BACK IN ‘BUSINESS’

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***Abstract:** The paper aims, on the one hand, at providing an ‘inventory’ of English collocations in which the noun **business** is used either as a ‘node’, or as a ‘collocate’, and at discussing on the formal and semantic features of the ‘equivalent’ collocations in Romanian and Italian, on the other.*

***Keywords:** business collocations, business English, ‘collocate’, ‘node’.*

1. Introduction

Business English, as a type of domain-specific language or ‘*special language*’, ‘*microlanguage*’, ‘*technolect*’ (Garzone 2003:23), covers a wide range of factual and functional aspects. The former presuppose exploration of the ways in which activity is organized in areas such as marketing, advertising, sales, employment, banking, finance, computer and the internet, whereas the latter include the ‘essential language of negotiations’ and the ‘language for business correspondence’.

Being a ‘contextual-functional variety of the language’ (Berruto 1980:29 in Garzone 2003:23), business English is usually defined in relation to the professional, disciplinary or technical fields to which it pertains, i.e. to marketing, advertising, sales, employment, banking, finance, computer and the internet.

2. On business English and business communication

The main characteristic of this type of functional-contextual language variety is the “additional correspondence between signifiers and signifieds” (Berruto 1974:68-69 in Garzone 2003:25), i.e. the use of specific lexicon which makes business English less accessible to non-specialists than ordinary language. In other words, business English may be regarded as a ‘sub-code’. Although it is not subject to special grammatical and phonological rules, this domain-specific language has, like any specialized language, certain morpho-syntactic features which are used with abnormal frequency, as well as distinctive discursal and pragmatic characteristics. However, the most important attribute of ‘microlanguages’, in general, and of business English, in particular, is the lexicon specificity.

Mention should be made that the economic development at the international level in the last decades of the previous century and the ever growing interest of businessmen in establishing solid and profitable business relationships with partners from other countries have brought to

the fore the necessity to facilitate effective communication between the various business partners.

Since communication among people belonging to different countries cannot be discussed outside the cultural specificity of the two systems brought into contact, it becomes clear that the transfer of the message from one language to another is hardly, if ever, a mere transfer of words; the cultural element is always present when the representatives of different language systems interact.

The same holds valid for business communication. As stated by Garzone (2003:52), “this is fully justified, as in no other workplace environment as international business do subjects with a different cultural, linguistic and ethnic background come into contact and have to face issues of mutual or common interest. More often than not, people from different countries and organizations have to perform problem-solving tasks concertedly, in situations where important decisions have to be taken and a lot is at stake, in economic terms”.

That is why, when it comes to approaching **business discourse**, the solutions are often very controversial, thus, greatly debated on.

Like in the case of general texts, specialists have tried to find out whether business communication across linguistic boundaries presupposes mere **transcoding** or **transposition of sense**. In other words, the dilemma has been whether speakers should merely replace the words in the source language (SL) by their ‘equivalents’ in the target language (TL) or should concentrate on the message communicated ignoring the formal equivalence among the languages in contact.

Furthermore, modern translation theories suggest that an essentially **functionalist** approach should be used in the case of domain-specific texts. This is due to the fact that such an approach provides the “principle in the light of which a choice can be made between different alternatives available” (Garzone 2003:84). Consequently, choices are made according to the purpose of the overall translational action, i.e. the **function** the translated text will have to serve in the target language culture.

3. Business English and the use of collocations

The extensive use of **collocations** in business texts requires that speakers should have very good phraseological competence in order to be able to handle the ready-made language effectively. Thus, they need to know the ready-made phrases used in various registers in both languages, as well as to match them and evaluate them from the sociolinguistic point of view. The elements influencing the quality of a domain-specific text abounding in **collocations** are:

- the speaker's linguistic competence and cognitive experience for the decoding and encoding phases of comprehension and production;
- the speaker's collocational competence in the language for special purposes (LSP);
- the speaker's capacity of giving accurate and adequate representations in the TL, which depends *on the properties* of the discourse and on his/her background knowledge.

Business English, as a well-represented type of 'special' language, makes extensive use of **collocations**. Hill (2000:51) suggests that the collocational patterns most often encountered in business English are the following:

- **Adj. + N:** e.g. *slack business, slack demand, infant industry, future delivery, current deposit, temporary account, limited liability, active stock*;
- **N + N (+ N) (compound noun):** e.g. *bear market, market leader, market research, market trends, exchange rate, inflation level, dividend reinvestment plan*;
- **V + Adj. + N:** e.g. *to make fair profits, to revise the original plan, to withdraw/ revoke a (an import/ export) license*;
- **V + Adv.:** e.g. *to examine thoroughly, to increase dramatically, to decline/ fall/ drop slightly /moderately/ substantially/ sharply*;
- **Adv. + Adj.:** e.g. *deeply/greatly indebted, strictly confidential, badly damaged*;
- **V + Prep. + N:** e.g. *to withdraw from a market, to run something for profit, to sell under price, to exempt/free from a tax, to take somebody into partnership*;
- **V + N:** e.g. *to ban promotion, to dominate the market, to flood/ gut the market, to penetrate the market, to charge a price, to fix/settle/set a price*;
- **N + V:** e.g. *profits fall/ decline/ drop/ shrink, profits rise/ accrue/ amount, the business is booming, the market is booming*;
- **N + V + Adv.:** e.g. *a product sells badly, a product sells well*;
- **N + and + N:** e.g. *coin and bullion*.

Considering the great variety of business collocations, their appropriate use across language implies, on the one hand, observing a series of linguistic and domain specific constraints, and on the other, finding the most appropriate strategies to transfer them in the target language culture (TLC).

If attention were devoted to the possibility of transferring business collocations from English into Romanian and Italian, there are cases in

which the collocations used in English have formal and semantic equivalents, both in Romanian and in Italian: *law of supply and demand* → *legea cererii și a ofertei* → *legge della domanda e dell'offerta*, *temporary account* → *cont temporar* → *conto temporaneo*, *to dominate the market* → *a domina piața*, → *dominare il mercato*, *to sign a contract* → *a semna un contract* → *firmare un contratto*.

There are, of course, numerous situations of partial equivalence across these two linguistic borders. One possible reason could be the fact that there is no formal equivalence in the languages under discussion, e.g. *active stock* → *acțiuni în plină tranzacție* → *azioni attive*. On the other hand, the lack of equivalence across languages may be due to the collocational restrictions: *infant industry* → *industrie nouă* → *nuova industria*, *term delivery* → *livrare la termen* → *consegna a termine/ futura*.

It is interesting to notice that certain synonymous business collocations used in English have only one equivalent in Romanian and Italian: *profits fall/ decline/ drop/ shrink* → *profiturile scad* → *i profitti calano*; *profits rise/ accrue/ amount* → *profiturile cresc* → *i profitti aumentano*.

4. Business collocations in English, Romanian and Italian

The various collocational patterns including the noun *business* (see Appendix 1) are constructed around six of the most frequent meanings of this noun: 1. buying and selling of goods; 2. amount of trade done; 3. firm/ shop; 4. work/ responsibility; 5. important matters; 6. situation/ event. Out of these six meanings, the first three are related to the business domain, whereas the other three are more likely to be correlated to general situations. The same meanings are traceable in the 'equivalent' Romanian and Italian lexical combinations.

4.1. As regards the **pattern typology** of the noun *business*, the most numerous and best represented patterns are the nominal ones, especially those in which this noun is used as the 'collocate'. However, the adjective and verb combinations are also numerous in English.

A comparative – contrastive approach to the Romanian and Italian collocations including the equivalents of the noun *business* reveals not only a significantly great number of nominal patterns but also quite numerous verbal and adjectival patterns (see Appendices 2 and 3).

4.2. The interesting aspect which may be noticed when comparing the *business* collocational patterns in English and the corresponding Romanian and Italian ones is that many English lexical combinations including the noun *business* have formal and semantic equivalents, which are rather transparent both in Romanian and in Italian. For example, the

Romanian and Italian patterns corresponding to collocations such as *business appointment*, *business correspondence*, *business expenses*, *business plan*, *business name* are both formally and semantically equivalent to the English ones, and they may be quite easily accessed by both aware and unaware speakers of the two languages: *business appointment* → *întâlnire de afaceri* → *appuntamento d'affari*, *business correspondence* → *corespondență de afaceri* → *corrispondenza commerciale*. Such accessibility is favoured by the frequent use of these collocations in both domain-specific and general contexts.

Moreover, there are instances when the equivalent collocation in one of the two languages, or in both Romanian and Italian are less accessible to speakers because their transfer from one language into another implies domain-specific knowledge and collocational competence in the languages in contact. For example, the Romanian and Italian equivalents of such collocations as *business expenses*, *business name* or *business plan* are more unlikely to be selected by speakers who are not aware of the reality these collocations denote, or who are not familiar with the formally and semantically equivalent lexical patterns in the two languages: *business expenses* → *cheltuielile firmei/ cu firma* → *spese di esercizio*; *business name* → *denumirea firmei* → *ragione sociale/ ditta*, *business plan* → *plan de afaceri* → *piano aziendale*.

Such speakers will hardly make the appropriate collocational choices in Romanian: e.g. *denumirea firmei*, *cheltuielile firmei/ cu firma* and Italian, e.g. *spese di esercizio*, *ragione sociale/ ditta*, *piano aziendale*. They are tempted to use lexical patterns which they find natural due to their including more accessible terms: *business expenses* → **cheltuielile afacerii* → **spese della ditta*, *business name* → **numele afacerii* → **nome della ditta*, *business plan* → **planul afacerii* → **piano d'affari*.

In an era of globalization, the tendency may be noticed that certain business terms used in English are borrowed and used as such in different languages. This is also the case with the noun *business* which is used in its original form in certain collocational patterns used by Romanian and Italian speakers: e.g. *business class* → *clasa business* → *classe business*.

When a *business* collocation in English lacks a formal equivalent in Romanian or Italian, the use of longer explanatory structures seems to be the solution to achieve semantic equivalence across the languages under focus: *business bad debts* → *creanțe irecuperabile create în decursul activității firmei (deductibile din profit)*; *business liability* → *răspundere comercială (pentru neîndeplinirea unor obligații asumate în activitatea comercială)*; *business rate* → *imposta locale sull'attività economica*; *business taxation* → *imposizione sugli utili d'impresa*.

4.3. Examples such as the ones discussed above bring to the fore another interesting aspect, i.e. the fact that the English noun *business* has different equivalents both in Romanian and in Italian.

The words most often rendering the noun *business* in the Romanian collocations are the nouns ‘afacere’, ‘firmă’, ‘societate’ and the adjective ‘commercial’ for the cases in which *business* is used attributively. Among the less frequent and more problematic equivalents of the noun *business*, the following can be mentioned: ‘activitate’, ‘economic’, ‘activitate economică’, ‘activitate comercială’ (see Appendix 2).

Regarding the Italian ‘equivalents’ of the noun *business*, the most frequently encountered are ‘ditta’, ‘affare’, ‘impresa’, ‘azienda’ for its nominal use and ‘commerciale’, ‘economico’, ‘aziendale’, ‘d’impresa’, ‘di azienda’ for its attributive use (see Appendix 3).

5. Conclusion

Far from having covered all the aspects related to *business* collocations in English and to their ‘equivalent patterns’ in Romanian and Italian, this paper has hopefully highlighted the diversity and complexity of such domain-specific collocations across languages and cultures, as well as their formal and semantic specificity in the languages envisaged.

APPENDIX 1- ENGLISH *BUSINESS* COLLOCATIONS

***BUSINESS* → USED AS THE ‘NODE’** (the word which is being studied)

➤ **N+ *business*:** airline ~, banking ~, clothing ~, cosmetic ~, core ~, design ~, distribution ~, entertainment ~, export ~, family ~, fashion ~, film ~, fishing ~, franchise ~, freight ~, funeral ~, gardening ~, holiday ~, insurance ~, internet ~, manufacturing ~, movie ~, music ~, pharmacy ~, publishing ~, racing ~, telecommunication ~, television ~, textile ~, tobacco ~, transport ~, travel ~, tourism ~, tourist ~, whisky ~.

➤ ***business* + V:** ~ be amalgamated with, ~ boom, ~ close down, ~ collapse, ~ decline, ~ do, ~ expand, ~ fail, ~ flourish, ~ go bankrupt, ~ go well, ~ grow, ~ pick up, ~ prosper, ~ take off.

***BUSINESS* → USED AS THE ‘COLLOCATE’** (the word which occurs in the specified environment of a ‘node’).

➤ ***business* + N:** ~ account, ~ acquaintance, ~ activity, ~ acumen, ~ advisor, ~ affairs, ~ analyst, ~ appointment, ~ arrangement, ~ aspect, ~ asset, ~ assignment, ~ associate, ~ association, ~ banking, ~ card, ~ circle, ~ class, ~ client, ~ climate, ~ colleague, ~ commitment, ~ communication, ~ community, ~ concept, ~ conduct, ~ confidence, ~ conglomerate, ~ connection, ~ consultant, ~ contact, ~ context, ~ contract, ~ corporation, ~ correspondence, ~ correspondent, ~ counseling, ~ crime, ~ culture, ~ customer, ~ cycle, ~ deal, ~ dealings, ~ degree, ~ delegation, ~ development, ~ directory, ~ disaster, ~ discipline, ~ district, ~ economics, ~ economist, ~ efficiency, ~ elite, ~ empire, ~ end, ~ engagement, ~ enterprise, ~ entity, ~ entrepreneur, ~ environment, ~ equipment, ~ ethics, ~ executive, ~

expansion, ~ expense, ~ expertise, ~ failure, ~ headquarters, ~ hours, ~ initiative, ~ instinct, ~ interests, ~ investment, ~ investor, ~ jet, ~ journal, ~ journalist, ~ leader, ~ lease, ~ letter, ~ life, ~ link, ~ lunch, ~ magazine, ~ management, ~ manager, ~ matters, ~ meeting, ~ need, ~ news, ~ objective, ~ operations, ~ opportunity, ~ outlook, ~ package, ~ page, ~ park, ~ partner, ~ partnership, ~ people, ~ performance, ~ person, ~ plan/planning, ~ point of view, ~ position, ~ practice, ~ premises, ~ presentation, ~ property, ~ proposition, ~ publication, ~ purposes, ~ relationship, ~ reply mail, ~ requirement, ~ return, ~ rival, ~ schedule, ~ school, ~ secret, ~ section, ~ sector, ~ seminar, ~ sense, show ~, ~ side, ~ skill, ~ stationery, ~ strategy, ~ studies, ~ success, ~ suit, ~ survival, ~ tenancy, ~ tenant, ~ tie, ~ transaction, ~ travel, ~ traveller, ~ trip, ~ tycoon, ~ user, ~ as usual, ~ venture, ~ visitor, ~ vocabulary, ~ woman, ~ world, ~ worry.

➤ **ADJ. + business:** awful ~, bad ~, big ~, brisk~, catering ~, computer ~, core~, current~, daily ~, defunct ~, dreadful ~, efficient ~, excellent ~, family ~, flourishing~, funny ~, good ~, growing~, important ~, international ~, investment~, large ~, local ~, long-established ~, lucrative ~, mail order ~, medium-sized ~, official ~, personal ~, poor ~, pressing ~, private ~, profitable ~, prosperous~, retail ~, routine ~, run-down~, slack ~, slow ~, sluggish ~, small ~, state-owned ~, strange ~, successful ~, terrible ~, thriving ~, unfinished ~, urgent ~, wholesale ~, etc.

➤ **V + business:** attend to ~, be in ~, be back in ~, build up ~, carry on (often law) ~, close down ~, conduct ~, deal with~, discuss~, do~, drum up ~, encourage ~, establish ~, expand ~, finance ~, find ~, generate ~, get down to~, give up ~, go into/ after/ out of ~, go about one's ~, grow ~, handle ~, have~, have no ~, hunt for ~, interfere in sb. else's ~, join ~, leave ~, look for ~, lose ~, make sth. ~ manage ~, mind one's own ~, modernize ~, open ~, own ~, promote~, prop up ~, put sb./ sth. out of ~, restructure ~, run ~, set up in ~, start ~, streamline ~, talk ~, take over ~, transact ~, tout for ~, wind up ~, work in ~

➤ **PREP. + business:** in ~, on ~

➤ **PHRASES:** ~ and pleasure, ~ as usual, ~ or pleasure, mix ~ with pleasure, a place of ~ doing sth/to do sth ~, none of your ~/ no ~ of yours, any other ~, make it one's ~ to do sth. a ~, to stick one's nose into sb. else's ~.

APPENDIX 2 - ENGLISH - ROMANIAN 'BUSINESS' COLLOCATIONS

BUSINESS → USED AS THE 'NODE'

➤ **business + V:** ~ expand → afacerea se extinde; ~ is slow → afacerea este înceată.

BUSINESS → USED AS THE 'COLLOCATE'

➤ **business + N:** ~ address → adresa firmei, sediu; ~ advisory council → comisia de consultanță pentru afaceri; ~ agent (USA) → șeful de sindicat la nivel local; ~ appointment → întâlnire de afaceri; ~ bad debts → creanțe irecuperabile create în decursul activității firmei (deductibile din profit); ~ brokers → intermediari de afaceri; ~ call → vizită de afaceri/ făcută pentru a discuta cu cineva de afaceri; ~ centre → centru comercial parte a unui oraș în care se află principalele bănci, magazine și birouri; ~ circles → cercuri de afaceri; ~ class → clasa business; ~ college/school → colegiu /școală de studii economice; ~ combinations → regrupări de întreprinderi; ~ connections → relații de afaceri; ~ consulting → consultanță de afaceri; ~ corporation → societate comercială, corporație; ~

correspondence → corespondență de afaceri; ~ correspondent → corespondent de afaceri, jurnalist care scrie articole despre știrile din domeniul afacerilor; ~ counsellor → consultant de afaceri; ~ cycle → ciclul al afacerilor/ ciclul economic; ~ damage → daune comerciale; ~ data processing → informatică de gestiune; ~ day → zi de lucru; ~ efficiency exhibition → expoziție pentru eficientizarea afacerilor; entity concept → conceptul de entitate lucrativă; ~ establishment → întreprindere, companie, firmă, societate comercială, asociație lucrativă; ~ environment → mediu de afaceri; ~ ethics → etică în afaceri; ~ expansion → extinderea activității; ~ expenses → cheltuielile firmei, cheltuieli cu firma; ~ expertise → profesionalism, abilitate în afaceri; failure → eșec comercial, faliment; ~ for sale → fond de comerț de vânzare; ~ games → jocuri de afaceri adesea pe calculator în care indivizi sau grupuri concurează pe o piață ipotetică; ~ interruption insurance → asigurare pentru o sumă fixă pentru situația întreruperii afacerii; ~ judgement rule → tribunalele nu intervin în conducerea întreprinderii; ~ law → cod comercial, legea societăților; ~ letter → scrisoare de afaceri; ~ liability → răspundere comercială (pentru neîndeplinirea unor obligații asumate în activitatea comercială); ~ loan → credit pentru activitatea curentă; ~ loans → pierderi de exploatare, pierderi din activitatea de bază; ~ lunch → dejun de afaceri la care se discută chestiuni legate de afaceri; ~ name → denumirea firmei; ~ ownership → participație la capitalul unei firme; ~ plan → plan de afaceri; ~ premises → sediu; ~ portfolio analysis → analiza a portofoliului de afaceri; ~ premises policy → polița de asigurare pentru sediu; ~ property → patrimoniul societății; ~ prospects → afaceri posibile; ~ publications → publicații economice; ~ quarters → sediu comercial al întreprinderii; ~ receipts → veniturile societății; ~ relations → relații comerciale; ~ risk → risc de firmă; ~ segment reporting → raportare segmentală a activității economice; ~ structure → structura firmei, structura afacerii; ~ tenancy → proprietate deținută în scop comercial; ~ transaction → comerț, tranzacție comercială; ~ travel/ trip → călătorie de afaceri/ în interesul firmei; ~ unit → unitate comercială; ~ year → an comercial/ financiar;

➤ **V + business:** to be in ~ → a fi în afaceri, a fi implicat în activități comerciale; to go into ~ → a intra în afaceri, a crea o firmă; to go out of ~ → a ieși din afaceri, a înceta activitatea comercială; on ~ → în interes de serviciu; ~ card → carte de vizită, ~ equipment → echipament de birou; ~ hours → ore de lucru, program de lucru; big ~ companii foarte mari; any other ~ → orice altă problemă;

➤ **PHRASES:** business to business advertising → publicitate adresată companiilor.

APPENDIX 3 – ENGLISH - ITALIAN *BUSINESS* COLLOCATIONS

BUSINESS → USED AS THE ‘NODE’

➤ **N + business:** the cotton ~ → il commercio del cotone; family ~ → impresa familiare, insurance ~ → ramo assicurazioni; line of ~ ramo di attività.

BUSINESS → USED AS THE ‘COLLOCATE’

➤ **business + N:** ~ activity → attività commerciale; ~ address → indirizzo d' ufficio; ~ administration → amministrazione aziendale/ gestione aziendale, ~ administrator → amministratore aziendale; ~ agent → agente di affari; ~ appointment → appuntamento d'affari; ~ assistance → assistenza alle aziende; ~ associate → collega d'affari, socio; ~ association → impresa, azienda; ~ barometer → barometro economico; ~ budget → budget aziendale; (econ.) ~ call → visita d'affari; ~ card → biglietto di visita; ~ cash → moneta commerciale; ~ centre → centro degli affari/ centro commerciale; ~ class → classe

imprenditoriale, uomini d'affari; ~ class (transp.) → classe ~; ~ combination → fusione di aziende; ~ concern → impresa, azienda; ~ connections → relazioni d'affari; ~ consultant → consulente commerciale/ consulente aziendale, commercialista; ~ correspondence → corrispondenza commerciale; ~ correspondent → corrispondente commerciale; ~ credit → crediti societari; ~ customs → consuetudini commerciali; ~ cycle (econ, US) → ciclo economico; ~ day → giorno lavorativo; ~ deal → operazione commerciale; ~ deposits → depositi commerciali; ~ economics → economia aziendale; ~ economist → aziendalista/ economista aziendale; ~ efficiency → efficienza aziendale; ~ end → parte operativa di un oggetto (punta di coltello, canna di fucile, etc.), ~ enterprise → impresa/ azienda, ~ entity → entità aziendale; ~ entity concept → concetto dell'entità aziendale; ~ ethics → etica aziendale/ imprenditoriale; ~ expenses → spese di esercizio; ~ failure → fallimento aziendale, ~ finance → finanza delle imprese, finanza aziendale; ~ fluctuations → fluttuazioni economiche; ~ forecasts → previsioni commerciali/ aziendali; ~ formation → formazione di nuove imprese; ~ game → gioco aziendale, ~ gift → doni aziendali; ~ hours → orario di esercizio/ lavoro/ apertura; ~ income → reddito aziendale/ di impresa; ~ indicator → indicatore commerciale; ~ intelligence → informazioni commerciali; ~ interruption insurance → assicurazione contro l'interruzione di esercizio; ~ interruption policy → polizza di assicurazione contro l'interruzione di esercizio; ~ investment → investimento aziendale; ~ investor → azienda investitrice; ~ leader → leader capitano d'industria; ~ loan → mutuo aziendale; ~ judgement → giudizio dell'imprenditore; ~ law → diritto commerciale; ~ letter → lettera commerciale, lettera di affari; ~ lunch → colazione di lavoro; ~ machines → macchine per ufficio; ~ manager → dirigente aziendale; ~ market → mercato delle aziende; ~ marketing research → ricerca di mercato aziendale; ~ mathematics → computiseria; ~ meeting → riunione di affari; ~ motive → movente commerciale; ~ name → ragione sociale/ ditta; ~ objectives → obiettivi aziendali; ~ organization/ impresa/ azienda; ~ panic → panico economico; ~ park → zona industriale, zona commerciale; ~ performance indicator → indicatore di risultati aziendali; ~ plan → piano aziendale; ~ policy → politica aziendale; ~ portfolio analysis → analisi di un portafoglio prodotti; ~ premises → locali aziendali; ~ premises policy → polizza di assicurazione dei locali aziendali; ~ process redesign → riprogettazione di processi aziendali; ~ process reengineering → reingegnerizzazione dei processi aziendali, ~ rate → imposta locale sull'attività economica; ~ recovery → ripresa dell'attività commerciale, ~ relations → relazioni d'affari; ~ reply card → cartolina con risposta pagata; ~ report → rendiconto d'esercizio; ~ reputation → reputazione commerciale; ~ risk → rischio commerciale; ~ reply service → servizio di risposta affrancata; ~ saving → risparmio d'impresa; ~ school → scuola aziendale/ facoltà di economia e commercio; ~ sector → settore commerciale/ delle imprese; ~ sense → senso degli affari; ~ services → servizi aziendali; ~ services industry → industria dei servizi aziendali; ~ simulation → simulazione di gestione; ~ statistics → statistiche commerciali; ~ strategies → strategie aziendali; ~ structures → strutture aziendale; ~ studies → studi di amministrazione aziendale, economia e commercio; ~ survey → indagine congiunturale; ~ taxation → imposizione sugli utili d'impresa; ~ taxes → imposte sugli utili d'impresa; ~ tv → televisione aziendale; ~ transaction → operazione commerciale; ~ travel/ ~ trip → viaggio d'affari; ~ unionism → sindacalismo aziendale, ~ unit → (a) unità operativa; → (b) impresa, azienda; ~ volume → volume di scambi, volume delle contrattazioni; ~ wealth → patrimonio aziendale; ~ world → mondo degli affari; ~ year → esercizio;

➤ **V + business:** to be away on/for ~ → essere via per affari, per lavoro; to be in ~ → essere in affari/ avere tutto pronto/ essere pronto all'azione; to be abroad on ~ → essere all'estero

in viaggio d'affari; to be out of ~ → non essere piu in affari; to carry on ~ → svolgere l'attivita economica; to do ~ → fare affari; to do a profitable ~ → svolge una remunerativa attivita; to establish a ~ → fondare un' impresa, to get down to ~ (idiom) mettersi al lavoro, cominciare a lavorare; to give up ~ → ritirarsi dagli affari; to go into ~ → entrare in affari/ avviare un'attivita economica/ darsi agli affari; to go out of ~ → cessare l'attivita, ritirarsi da un'attivita, fallire, fare fallimento; to keep ~ relations with sb → intrattenere relazioni d'affari con qn; to own a thriving retail ~ → possedere una prospera impresa di commercio al dettaglio; to put sb out of ~ → fare fallire qn; to retire from ~ → ritirarsi dall'attivita; to set up in ~ → mettersi in affari; to set up a ~ → fondare un'impresa/ aprire un' impresa; to transact ~ → trattare affari, to travel on ~ → viaggiare per affari, viaggiare per lavoro;

➤ **business + V:** ~ is beginning to slow down → l'attivita sta cominciando a rallentare; ~ is contracting → l'attivita economica e in contrazione; ~ is expanding l'attivita economica e in espansione; ~ is at a stand still → il mercato e fermo, si fanno pochi affari ; ~ is slack → il mercato e debole/gli affari languono;

➤ **Adj + business:** a nasty ~ → una brutta faccenda/ un brutto affare;

➤ **PHRASES:** any other ~ → varie ed eventuali; ~ as usual → l'attivita prosegue regolarmente: "siamo aperti", ~ - to- ~ advertising → pubblicita da azienda a azienda; ~-to- ~ marketing → marketing da azienda a azienda; ~ -to-consumer marketing → marketing da azienda a consumatore; ~ before pleasure → prima il dovere, poi il piacere; Now we are in ~! → Adesso ci siamo!; We are not in the ~ of... → il nostro scopo non e di.../ noi non siamo qui per'... ; to get down to ~ → cominciare a lavorare: Let' s get down to ~ → bando alle chiacchiere!; mettiamoci sotto!; to have no ~ doing smth. → non toccare a qeno., fare a qcosa; to know one's ~ → saper fare il proprio mestiere, like nobody's ~ → a piu non posso/ all' impazzata/ da non dirsi, to mean ~ → fare sul serio, to send sb. about his ~ → dire a qeno. di farsi i fatti suoi/ mandare q a quel paese; to get down to the ~ of doing sth → accingersi a fare qc; to make it one's ~ to do sth. → farsi un dovere di fare qc.; It's no ~ of mine (none of my ~) → non è affar mio; la cosa non mi riguarda: Mind your own ~ → bada ai latti tuoi; non t'impicciare! ~ is ~ → gli affari sono affari.

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COGNITIVE METAPHORS IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS

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***Abstract:** The paper discusses a number of conceptual metaphors used by teachers as ways of explaining unknown mathematics matters to secondary and high school pupils. The linguistic phenomenon is approached mainly from a cognitive perspective, but brief considerations from an emotional point of view are also made, with the purpose of finding arguments for why they function so efficiently in the teaching-learning process.*

***Keywords:** analogical thinking, cognitive instruments, conceptual metaphors, emotional attitudes, teaching mathematics*

1. Introduction

Teachers, be they younger or more experienced, must all have realized (sometimes, the hard way) that making students comprehend the specialised information transmitted is not always as easy as it might theoretically seem. Knowledge of the subject taught, no matter how thorough, will not ensure the success of the teaching – learning process unless what is to be understood and learnt is conveyed in a way that makes sense to the students.

As teachers to be, it was a must for all of us to get acquainted with strategies considered generally accepted principles of teaching, mentioned in all core teaching methods studies. Later however, many of us must have found it necessary to create and adapt other methods, according to our personality, imagination and experience, irrespective of the subject we were dealing with. It is on this latter category of teaching strategies that the present paper focuses; of these, some of the metaphors that teachers of mathematics use in their classroom explanations have stirred our interest. The data have been collected by directly interviewing two mathematics teachers, Gabriel Birău and Ileana Bîtea, to whom we are grateful for their help. More specifically, what we have paid attention to is the usefulness in class of these metaphors, both from a cognitive and from an emotional perspective. The cognitive theoretical background against which the characteristics of the metaphors will be highlighted is offered by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2000) opinions; the approach of the metaphors from an emotional angle represents our own views on the matter.

On the one hand, through highlighting the very use of these metaphors, our paper is a counterargument to Lavric's (2006:5) opinion that mathematicians are "artists whose metaphors are never embodied in words". Through pointing at the efficient way in which metaphors are used by our

colleagues, it is, on the other hand, an argument in favour of a point of view that we may consider emblematic for the belief of many and that was put forward (metaphorically!) by a math student as follows: “Mathematics is an underground sewer system. It’s huge, seemingly never ending, with so many different ways to go. It’s dark and uncomfortable, and *unless someone else is leading me*, I can never see much further than my small flashlight beam in front of me” (Schinck et al online:5).

2. Mathematics – a difficult subject

What is it, in fact, that makes mathematics be perceived as such a difficult subject? The answer would most probably be – the fact that its discourse and logic builds so heavily on abstraction, defined, on Wikipedia, as “the process of extracting the underlying essence of a mathematical concept, *removing any dependence on real world objects*, with which it might originally have been connected, and generalizing it so that it has wider applications or matching among other abstract descriptions of equivalent phenomena”. There are, undoubtedly, advantages of the pervasiveness of abstraction in mathematics: by relying on it, deep connections between different elements of the field may be revealed, the results obtained in one area of the domain may lead to the development of theories in another, methods and techniques used on certain occasions may be put to work in related contexts, etc. These, however, do not cancel the main disadvantage implied by the extensively abstract character of the subject in question. As explained on Wikipedia, “highly abstract concepts are more difficult to learn and require a degree of *mathematical maturity* and experience before they can be assimilated”.

Mathematical maturity, what allows mathematics to make sense, has been defined in various ways by different scholars. A list of its characteristics, compiled from definitions of the concept suggested by several American university teachers of mathematics in their courses available online (see References*), includes, but is not limited to: the capacity to generalize from a specific example to a broad concept and to handle increasingly abstract ideas; the ability to recognize mathematical patterns, to link a geometrical representation with an analytic one, to communicate mathematically by learning standard notation and acceptable style; and, what we find especially relevant for our study, *a significant shift from learning by memorization to learning through understanding (i.e. understanding the abstractions that lie at the basis of this discipline)*.

3. Learning mathematics through understanding. From the concrete to the abstract

One way of facilitating learning through understanding is the teacher's fostering the students' analogical thinking, by resorting to the immediate reality known to them and to the experiences they have had with it, when giving explanations about unfamiliar things. Generally efficient as this approach may be, it is even more evidently so when what is being explained lies at a pretty high level of abstraction, as in the case of mathematics. Thus, developing the ability to deal with abstractions, as part of mathematical maturity, goes through the stage of handling these by connecting them to elements and processes of the recognizable reality. Of the strategies used by the two mathematics teachers interviewed to explain to their students the unknown abstract in terms of the familiar concrete, as suggested above, it is the use of conceptual metaphors that has drawn our attention. They will be discussed in what follows.

4. Conceptual metaphors used in teaching mathematics

As it is well known, "a conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, in which one domain is understood in terms of another", where "a conceptual domain is any coherent organization of experience" (Kövecses 2002:4).

Some of the metaphors that our informants reported to have used in their mathematics classes, for explanatory purposes, are the following:

- a circle is a thread arranged in a circular shape (the length of the circle is the length of the thread);
- similar triangles (triangles that have the same shape and are up to scale of one another; triangles that are enlargements of a given one) are the same object reflected by the light of a torch;
- an equation is a pair of scales in equilibrium, the members of the equation are the dishes of the pair of scales holding equal weights;
- a mathematical function is an engine which turns fuel into motion (because functions presuppose an input that, based on a formula, is transformed into something else);
- converting metric measurements from one unit to another is climbing up or getting down a flight of stairs; the stairs are the units – *deci*, *centi*, *mili*, in this order from bottom to top; climbing up the stairs is more difficult, it takes more energy (i.e. more units); getting down the stairs is easier, it takes less energy (i.e. fewer units);
- in a fraction of the form $\frac{1}{2}$, the numerator is a whole apple and the denominator is half an apple; in a fraction of the form $\frac{1}{4}$, the numerator is a whole apple and the denominator is half of half an apple (a quarter of an apple);
- in a fraction chain whose limit tends to zero, the numerator and the denominator are competing runners; if the degree of the numerator is higher than the degree of the denominator, the difference between the two increases in favor of the denominator –

metaphorically put, the denominator runner runs increasingly faster than the numerator runner; the value of the fraction decreases up to the point that it tends to zero – metaphorically put, the denominator runner runs so fast, compared to the nominator runner, that the latter ends up by not being able to catch up with the former, so that actual competing is out of the question, it is reduced to zero almost;

- in a fraction chain whose limits tends to zero, the numerator is an orange and the denominator is children between whom the orange is divided; if the degree of the numerator is higher than the degree of the denominator, the difference between the two increases in favour of the denominator – metaphorically put, the more numerous the children, the less each of them receives of the orange, until what is received is almost nothing (zero);

- in a chain of fractions in which the value of the numerator is n and the value of the denominator is $n+1$, the two elements of the fraction are the two arms of a pair of tongs and the limit of the chain is the object squeezed by the tongs; as n increases, the limit of the chain is closer and closer to number one – metaphorically put, the object is squeezed by the two arms of the tongs;

- in a chain of fractions situated between two other chains of fractions having identical limits, the limit of this chain is the same as the limit of the two in between which it lies – metaphorically put, the two chains of fractions with identical limits are two police officers holding a criminal by his arms so that the latter has no choice but to move in the direction imposed by the officers.

5. Characteristics of the conceptual metaphors used in teaching mathematics

5.1. A cognitive perspective on the characteristics of conceptual metaphors used in teaching mathematics

It is due to a number of characteristics of the metaphors enumerated above that they function efficiently in the process of teaching mathematics.

As already mentioned, they all facilitate the understanding of the abstract, intangible target domain, by explaining it in terms of a concrete, physical domain. Thus, they all belong to the category of metaphors called *ontological* by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), i.e. they assist thinking and help us to get knowledge on the basis of our direct experience with the world around us. Once a student knows what a pair of scales in equilibrium looks like and understands that the state of equilibrium is due to the fact that the two weighing pans hold equal weights, it should become easier for him/her to understand that the operations in an equation should be carried out in such a way that the two members remain equal (i.e. in equilibrium). Similarly, the scene of two police officers holding a criminal by his/her arms and forcing him/her to walk in the direction they want, familiar to learners, if not from real situations they have been part of or witnessed, at least from the movies they have watched, must be of help when trying to understand the behaviour of a chain of fractions situated between two other chains with identical limits.

The fact that the metaphors considered in our study are *experientially motivated*, that they are grounded in correlations based on human (everyday) experience enhances their potential as cognitive instruments, even if, in general, they may not be predicted, i.e. they are *not conventionalized* (such as “life is a journey”, “an argument is war” or “theories are buildings”), but rather *innovative*, not based on obvious preexisting similarities between the two domains implicitly compared.

Unidirectionality is another feature of the metaphors considered that makes them functional when teaching mathematical abstractions. The fact that they are unidirectional means that “they go from concrete to abstract domains” (Kövecses 2002:25), but not the other way round. One may metaphorically see the numerator of a fraction as an apple, but seeing an apple as the numerator of a fraction is highly against our logic; the length of a circle may be mentally pictured as the length of a piece of thread (and metaphorically called that), but, most probably, one will never ask for the length of a circle, when referring to the piece of thread one needs to sew something.

Unidirectionality presupposes mappings between the source and the target domains that are unlikely to create confusion, though they are, most of the times, only partial. Even if only some components of the source domain are mapped onto the target domain, a process called by Kövecses (2002:91), “partial metaphorical utilization”, the learners’ previous experience with the surrounding reality enables them to make the right choice of the elements that would help them understand the unknown. Thus, it will be the learner’s knowledge that an apple is a whole that may be divided into two halves or four quarters that will be activated in his/her trying to make sense of the $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ fractions. Characteristics of apples such as colour or round shape will, intuitively, not be activated in the process. Similarly, in the “an equation is a pair of scales” metaphor, it is the property of scales to be in a state of equilibrium if the same weight is placed on its two weighing pans, that, of the multitude of scales characteristics, will play a role in the learner’s understanding the target concept. What a pair of scales is made of or how big it is has no relevance for the metaphorical mapping of scales to equations. Partial metaphorical utilization of the source domain is motivated by a particular “metaphorical highlighting” (Kövecses 2002:79) of the target domain. It is because the teacher is interested in making her students understand the concept of circle length that she has resorted to the “the circle is a thread arranged in a circular shape” metaphor. While the length of the circle is the one of its characteristics that is highlighted, others, such as the fact that all the points on a circle are equally distant from the center of the circle, for example, remain, in this case, hidden. In the same

way, “an equation is a pair of scales” metaphor highlights the fact that equations presuppose equality between the members to the left and right of the “equal” sign, while hiding other features, such as, for instance the fact that an equation is equivalent to another if the two have the same solution.

In terms of the level of generality at which they can be found, the metaphors considered are *specific-level metaphors*, i.e. they may be decoded only in the specific instances in which they have occurred, which also increases the improbability of their creating confusion, and, consequently, their potential as useful components of the teaching process. Thus, the metaphors “the numerator and the denominator of a fraction are competing runners” or “the numerator is an orange and the denominator is children between whom the orange is divided” make sense only if they are used to explain a certain behaviour of fraction chains whose limit tend to be zero. Outside this context, they would be irrelevant, unlike a generic-level metaphor such as “generic is specific”, that, according to Kövecses (2002), helps to interpret a proverb like “The early bird catches the worm” in various ways. “... The early bird is anyone who does something first, catching is obtaining something, and the worm is anything obtained before others. Thus, the generic meaning of the proverb is something like ‘If you do something first, you will get what you want before others.’ Given this generic-level interpretation, the proverb can apply to a wide range of cases that have this generic structure. One such case is when you go and stand in a line early for a ticket to a popular Broadway show and you do get a ticket, while others who come late do not” (Kövecses 2002:39). Another may be when you manage to be among the first one hundred customers who get a substantial discount when buying the latest design TV set, yet another, when you get on a usually very crowded train early enough to get a seat, etc.

Innovative as they may be, the metaphors that the two mathematics teachers reported on to us are highly probable candidates to *universality*, i.e. there is a great chance that they may transgress both cultural and personal boundaries (also a consequence of their being grounded in experiences that we all go through or in elements of reality that we are all familiar with).

Also, they are *not ideologically biased*. Unlike some metaphorical choices that inevitably present a biased viewpoint (as is the case of metaphors used by politicians or advertisers, for example), the linguistic devices analyzed here do not filter reality, but directly reflect it. As such, the chances of their creating confusion, surprise or rejection on ideological bases are reduced to almost none.

5.2. An emotional perspective on the characteristics of conceptual metaphors used in teaching mathematics

We have so far suggested some reasons why the metaphors we have analyzed function efficiently as cognitive instruments. However, their efficiency is also ensured by the positive attitudes and feelings they trigger on the part of the learners. Once they come to understand – based on their knowledge of the world - how abstractions in math function, learners gain confidence in their ability to cope with what is generally perceived as a difficult subject in school and are encouraged to approach it at higher and higher levels.

A friendly, stress-free atmosphere is built in a classroom where learners are motivated to study a certain subject because they understand it and thus come to like it. Such an atmosphere is maintained by the close teacher – learner relationship, built by employing a way of teaching that appeals to the learners' minds and hearts. As learners, we all liked or disliked some teacher or other; the teaching strategies used played a major role in shaping these attitudes. A teacher who was able explain things to our understanding was a “good” teacher, one that we trusted, admired and felt inspired by. On the contrary, one that seemed unable to find the right ways to our minds, was considered a “bad” teacher, whose classes we did not attend with pleasure and whose subject we ended up by not being interested in.

Last, but not least, using instructional devices such as cognitive metaphors in all kinds of classes (not only for mathematics) might be a way of stimulating the learners' creativity and, if employed frequently enough, also a means of developing a way of analogical reasoning that might prove helpful in other learning situations as well. In other words, learners may get used to trying to creatively establish similarities between what they know from the surrounding world and the abstract elements they come across in their studies. The kind of relationships they see between the source and the target domains they are dealing with may not be immediately evident, but they may be of great help in turning their own reasoning into a learning experience.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of the ten conceptual metaphors used to facilitate mathematical understanding in class prompts the conclusion that, due to their features, they are very useful instructional devices. On the one hand, being ontological metaphors, i.e. motivated by the learners' experience with the objects and phenomena in the surrounding world, they efficiently contribute, alongside their unidirectional and universal character (which

reduces their potential for creating confusion), to facilitating learning through understanding. The fact that they are metaphors meant to be decoded in the specific context in which they were intended to be functional and, at the same time, devices that are not ideologically biased and that may, as such, be employed irrespective of the nationality and cultural background of their users, enhances their usefulness as cognitive instruments in the teaching-learning process.

Their positive potential in the mathematics class is also ensured at the level of the positive attitudes they trigger on the part of the learners. Once things that they consider difficult to master are explained to them in a way that makes them easier to understand, learners gain confidence in the teacher and in their own intellectual abilities, to the point that they become fonder and fonder of the subject. In an encouraging and friendly classroom atmosphere, their creativity is boosted and so is their potential to build up their own cognitive metaphors on which to rely when trying to understand the unknown not only in mathematics, but in other subjects as well.

Our brief description of how and why cognitive metaphors work successfully in class is an argument in favour of advising not only mathematics teachers, but instructors in general, to resort to these instructional tools without reserve. The possibility of their seeming less professional is cancelled by the positive consequences that the use of such devices has on the way the subject they teach “speaks” to the minds and hearts of their pupils.

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TO JOIN OR NOT TO JOIN? AN ANALYSIS OF BRITISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON TUTKEY'S EU ACCESSION

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to analyse the position of the main British political parties through discourse analysis regarding Turkey's EU accession in the context of their constructions of the EU. The paper uses Sjursen's (2008) scheme for analysing arguments in favour of/against enlargement, which, following Habermas, classifies them as pragmatic, cultural or universal values
Keywords: Turkey, EU Enlargement, British political parties

1. Introduction

Britain, under the Blair and Brown Labour governments, has been one of the staunchest supporters of Turkey's accession to the EU. It has been suggested that the underlying reason for this is that the notoriously Eurosceptic UK views Turkey's accession as a way of stalling further European integration. In order to evaluate this claim, this paper has examined both Labour and Conservative discourse on the EU and on Turkey's accession in the framework of Sjursen's three 'ideal' visions of the EU. First, the EU may be seen pragmatically as a simple problem solving entity, secondly as a 'values-based community' underscored by a European 'we-feeling' or identity or, finally, as a 'rights-based post-national union', based on broader, 'universal' rights such as democracy and human-rights (Sjursen 2008).

A. The EU as a Problem Solving Entity

This outlook conceives of the EU in pragmatic terms: policies are supported or opposed according to a means-end calculation. Thus, in the case of EU enlargement, pragmatists tend to support enlargement if it is considered to maintain or enhance the economic prosperity and physical security of national and EU citizens. In this vision the EU is optimally without borders. Enlargement is seen as a question of efficiency and utility, and often linked to arguments about extending the free market or reinforcing security (Schmidt 2009:215). In this view, the EU is simply an international organisation, and the Member States' right to veto further integration is taken for granted (Sjursen 2008:3).

Similarly, from this point of view, if an enlargement round is considered to endanger prosperity or security it is likely to be opposed.

Thus, it follows that a candidate country is not merely accepted on cultural terms, and may be rejected for full membership even if it fulfills the formal membership criteria if this is seen as going against the interests of the EU or some of the Member States in question (Sjursen 2008:3-4).

B. The EU as a Post-National, Rights Based Community

These arguments, like value-based ones, are normative, in that they are based on norms and values rather than pragmatic or utility based arguments. In this case, however, the norms in question are not cultural but 'universal'; the legitimacy of a community is based not on common cultural values and traditions but on a set of legally entrenched fundamental rights and democratic procedures. In this view, particular solutions or policies are preferred if they are considered to fulfill universal criteria of being just or right. In the context of enlargement, the argument is that a candidate country should be allowed to accede to the EU if it is considered to fulfill conditions based on 'universal' liberal democratic norms such as respect for human and minority rights, democracy and the rule of law (Sjursen 2008:3).

Indeed, the conception of the EU put forward in the Treaties is close to a rights based post national union. Article 2(1a) of the TEU affirms that 'the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities'. Similarly, the Copenhagen criteria, set out by the European Council in 1993 demand that the candidate countries meet four conditions as follows:

The stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union ...[and] the ability to take on *the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union* (European Council 1993).

As Ruiz-Jimenez and Torreblanca point out, then, 'whether the candidate country is Turkey, Norway or Switzerland it should not make much difference' (2007:6) . Thus, from this point of view, there is no cultural criteria for EU accession; instead any country that is accepted as geographically European and fulfills these criteria should be allowed to join regardless of broader identity questions such as religion or history.

C. The EU as a 'Value-Based Community'

In this conception, which is also normative, the borders or cultural values of a community are stressed. These arguments imply that a political

community should be based on a sense of common identity, or 'we-feeling', rather than simply on common benefits (Sjursen 2008:3). This 'we-feeling' may be based on a common history or religious tradition. However, the construction of an identity also involves the construction of its 'Other' (or 'Others'). Ethical-political arguments, then, are focused on differences rather than similarities between inside and outside. Thus, people can be regarded as genuine members of a community only if they are born or assimilated into it culturally. If not, they are doomed to remain outsiders. Those who support this version of EU identity, then, see it as a 'value-based community' underscored by cultural and historical characteristics which serve to draw its geographical boundaries. From this perspective, enlargement is encouraged only into spaces which are considered to have a similar cultural heritage: its aim is to bring together the 'European family' (Schmidt 2009:15).

Such a view has been upheld by conservative politicians in France and Germany in particular. They have tended to emphasise cultural elements in addition to geography and universal values when defining European identity (Yılmaz 2007:296). Moreover, from this point of view, Christianity is thought to be an important element of European identity, a notion which, as pointed out in the following section, appears to share considerable public support in spite of the decrease in the numbers of practicing Christians in Europe. This can be explained by the importance granted to Christianity in this discourse as a civilisational marker rather than for purely religious reasons. Thus, in this view Christian heritage is seen as the basis of some secular European values, including the separation of religion and the state, the idea of the natural rights of man and even the culture of capitalism. (Yılmaz 2007:298).

2. British Discourse on Europe

Britain has historically not seen itself as an 'organic' part of Europe, its self-image in the dominant discourse rather being that of a world power. However, by the 1960s it was clear that Britain was in economic decline, in stark contrast to the booming economies of the European Economic Community (EEC). Britain's decision to bid for membership of the EEC was an overwhelmingly pragmatic one, although a minority, including Roy Jenkins in the Labour Party, did argue that Britain should join Europe for cultural reasons (Larsen 1997:53).

The dominant discourse on Europe in Britain has continued to be primarily pragmatic in nature; it presents Europe in terms of the concrete interests it can fulfill. Thus, Europe is presented in 'non-mythical' terms, with little emotional pull, rather than a natural, organic community (Larsen

1999:456). Despite differences between the dominant Labour and Conservative views of Europe, they still have much in common. With the modernising of the Labour party under Tony Blair, it became overwhelmingly pro-European. The newly elected Labour government argued that, although it would continue to defend vital British interests, it would adopt a much more positive attitude to the EU than its predecessors, and indeed proved itself to be a far less 'awkward partner' in the EU than the preceding Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Blair's Labour government joined the Social Chapter, which Britain had opted out of under the Conservatives, and showed a more conciliatory attitude to the negotiations for the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties, in which he was willing to incorporate extensions to supranational decision making (Leonard 1998:260).

However, Labour still had a largely pragmatic attitude to the EU. It continued to prefer an intergovernmental rather than a federal EU, and to promote flexible and dynamic labour markets rather than the social welfare model supported by some continental socialists (Watts and Pilkington 2005:232-233). Despite this, however, Blair saw active involvement in the EU as vital for Britain's interests: 'If we want to stand up for Britain then we have to be in Europe, active, constructive, involved all the time. We have to negotiate tough and get our way, not stand aside and let other European countries make the decisions that matter to us' (Blair 2000).

Britain has generally seen the EU/EC as a free market. This can be explained by the traditionally dominant political discourse in Britain, which considers the state to be inherently non-interventionist (Wallace 1986:383) (Larsen 1999:459). This view is particularly strong in the Conservative party, especially since the Thatcherite neoliberal reforms of the 1980s; while the Labour party has tended to support a somewhat larger role for the welfare state this it is still far weaker in Britain than in Danish discourse, for instance (Larsen 1999:459).

In addition, parliamentary sovereignty has traditionally been a central feature of British political discourse; in the absence of a strong ethnic base parliamentary sovereignty is, together with the monarchy, the central element of the unity of the UK (Larsen 1997:34-39). Thus, the issue of parliamentary sovereignty has also been central to British discourse on Europe, whereby the EC/EU has tended to be framed as a threat to Britain by representing a loss of British parliamentary sovereignty. In this discourse, then, fears of a 'federal' Europe or a European 'superstate' are particularly notable.

This view has been most associated with, although not limited to, the Conservative Party, in particular during the Thatcher era and since the

Conservatives' defeat in the 1997 general elections. William Hague, the first new Conservative leader following the electoral defeat, exposed fears of a European superstate in his 'elephant test' speech, for instance. Arguing that if it looks, smells and sounds like an elephant it probably is one, he discerned the future shape of a European superstate in the draft Constitutional Treaty, including a proposed president, a parliament, a court and a single currency (Watts and Pilkington 2005:277).

In the run-up to the 2010 British general elections, this view is still very dominant in Conservative party discourse on Europe. According to leader David Cameron, with the Lisbon Treaty ratified by all 27 Member States, the Conservative Party now seeks to limit what it views as future federalist damage by implementing laws to 'protect Britain's sovereignty'. These would include a 'Sovereignty Bill', according to which ultimate authority would remain with the British Parliament, which would also have to approve so-called 'ratchet clauses' and a 'referendum lock' intended to prevent further power being handed to the EU without a referendum (Cameron 2009:3).

In addition, Europe provokes little emotional allegiance in the discourse of the two main British political parties. There is little sense of Europe being based on a common cultural and ethnic foundation. This is perhaps understandable in Britain, where, due to its multinational nature, the concept of 'the British nation' is often largely divorced from ethnicity or culture. Indeed, the dominant discourse of the current Labour government has been that of a *multicultural* nation based on universal values. However, the lack of emotional identification with Europe does not mean that, in British discourse, 'Europe' should not defend certain values; those values are, however, 'universal' or 'Western' in nature, including freedom, democracy and the rights of man. Even Margaret Thatcher proposed the idea of a 'Magna Carta for the whole of Europe'. Thus, in British discourse even as early as the 1980s, Europe is seen as an integral part of the West, including the USA, with which it shares, and tries to spread these values (Larsen 1997:57).

Thus, as Schmidt points out, 'despite the fact that British leaders have in mind primarily a borderless problem-solving free market when they speak of Europe, they have increasingly referred to the EU's common values, its importance of human rights, and its role as a global actor' (2009:217). Blair, for instance, in a speech following the French and Dutch rejection of the Constitutional Treaty stated that the EU was a

union of values, of solidarity between nations and people, of not just a common market in which we trade but a common political space in which we live as

citizens ... I believe in Europe as a political project. I believe in Europe with a strong and caring social dimension. I would never accept a Europe that was simply a economic market. (Blair, 2005)

Similarly, a recent speech by Shadow (Conservative) Foreign Secretary William Hague also indicates that the Conservative Party sees the EU as somewhat more than a mere problem-solving entity. In his view, the Conservatives 'have always argued that it is in all our common interests that the nations of the European Union use their collective weight in the world to our mutual advantage and in the promotion of our shared values' (Hague, 2010).

3. British Discourse on Turkey's EU Accession

The British are generally considered to be among the staunchest supporters of enlargement, particularly to Turkey. This has often been put down to a desire to 'widen' the EU in order to delay or undermine the 'deepening' of integration. There is indeed evidence of this in the discourse, particularly in the more Eurosceptic Conservative party. Thatcher, for instance, saw enlargement as a weapon to combat a 'federal Europe' as early as 1988. Then, in her famous anti-federalist 'Bruges Speech' she called for a wider European community that stretched from 'the Atlantic to the Urals' rather than one based on deeper integration, arguing that a more tightly integrated EC would be less able to accommodate newcomers (Thatcher 1993:744).

This view is still put forward by some prominent Conservative politicians. Conservative MP and former candidate for party leadership Liam Fox, for instance, recounts how when a French politician complained to him that Turkey's entry would weaken European integration, Fox had to stifle a 'three cheers to that' (2006). This brings us back to the 'sovereignty' issue; in this view Turkey's accession would protect British sovereignty by hindering the development of a European 'superstate'.

However, an examination of the discourse in both parties reveals that this is far from the only reason put forward for support of Turkey's EU accession bid. As has been argued above, the multinational and even multicultural concepts of the British state, coupled with a traditional lack of emotional connection with, and even distrust of, Europe mean that the 'values based' community discourse of the EU is a minority one, particularly in the two dominant political parties.

Thus, in a Europe which is not perceived as an organic community based on a shared culture or ethnicity, it is easier to accept the inclusion of a Muslim majority country such as Turkey. Turkey's cultural (or

civilisational) ‘Otherness’ as an obstacle to its EU accession is simply not an issue in the dominant British discourse and such arguments tend to be treated with dismay and incomprehension. As Labour MP Shaun Woodward comments, for instance, ‘President Giscard d’Estaing’s question about whether Turkey is European is simply the wrong question to ask today’.

There has been an important pragmatic element to both Labour and Conservative discourse in favour of Turkish accession, in line with the dominant British discourse of the EU as primarily a problem-solving entity. In particular, according to this discourse Turkey’s entry into the EU would be beneficial for Britain’s strategic, political and economic interests. This has been clearly emphasised by former Prime Minister Tony Blair, who argued that the EU’s decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey was important for the world’s future ‘peace and prosperity’ (Blair 2004). British Foreign Secretary David Milliband also emphasises the pragmatic view in a 2006 speech to the recently elected Turkish government in Ankara:

We want the EU to be a shared institution of which Britain and Turkey are full and equal members. We believe that there are big gains for Britain, Europe and Turkey from a process of closer and closer collaboration on issues ranging from security, energy to cultural exchange (Milliband 2006)

Conservative discourse in general, while supportive of Turkey’s EU accession process can appear non-committal in comparison to the dominant Labour discourse. In the following speech conservative leader David Cameron echoes this support of enlargement; ‘We will press to keep the doors of the European Union open to new member states, especially to entrench stability in the Western Balkans where so much European blood has flowed, and also to Turkey’ (2009:6). However, in this speech, Cameron’s attitude to Turkey’s EU accession appears rather lukewarm; indeed Turkey is added almost as an afterthought. This, perhaps, reflects a considerable split on the issue among Conservative MPs. Shadow Foreign Minister William Hague, however, gives a rather more positive message when he states that ‘We will uphold the view that the widening of the European Union, including to Turkey, is in Europe’s collective interest’ (2010).

Some other Conservative MPs, including Liam Fox, also appear more energetic in their support of Turkey’s EU accession, again for pragmatic reasons. He argues that ‘short sighted capitalists in Western Europe need to open their eyes and see Turkey for what it really is: A valued NATO partner, a secular state bridging Europe and the Islamic

world, a developing economy and a major player in the energy market' and adds the question 'Who wouldn't want Turkey in their club?' (Fox 2009).

One of the arguments that the Labour government has used in favour of Turkish accession is that, with its predominantly Muslim population, a Turkey anchored in the EU could contribute to avoiding a 'clash of civilisations' within and beyond Europe, an argument that has also frequently been put forward by members of the European Commission (Aydin Duzgit 2006). This view was reinforced following the September 11 events and, particularly, following the Al-Qaida terrorist attacks on two synagogues and two British targets in Istanbul in November 2003. Jack Straw, for instance, put forward the view that EU entry would prevent Turkey from falling into the hands of Muslim extremists: if the terrorist attacks were attacks against civilisation, EU accession would place Turkey firmly on the side of the civilised world (Aksoy 2009). This has also been echoed in Conservative discourse. Fox (2006) for instance argues that EU membership will protect Turkey from those in the 'fundamentalist shadows'. In this way, then, he attempts to pose the failure to include Turkey in the EU as a security threat by implying that it will force Turkey into the hands of Islamic fundamentalists, thus turning Europe into a 'much more dangerous and destabilised continent'.

Thus, in this instance Turkey's being a Muslim-majority country is viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat. As has been pointed out, the idea of Turkey as a cultural 'threat' to the EU has been all but absent in the dominant political debate over Turkey's EU accession, understandably as the view of the EU as a 'values-based' community underscored by a strong cultural identity is certainly a minority one in the major British political parties. Indeed, when Turkey's accession is referred to in terms of the 'cultural values' of the EU it has been viewed as enhancing rather than threatening them. This is particularly notable in Labour discourse, and may be partly explained by the Labour Party's focus on 'multiculturalism'.

As Aksoy points out, some members of the Labour Cabinet have stressed the long interaction and cultural links between the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions, and the shared values between them (2009:489). Here, then, the government's argument appears to nod towards the 'values-based community' approach, although here this imagined community is not an exclusively Christian one. Dennis MacShane, the Labour Minister for Europe, for instance, has stressed the medieval Islamic world's contribution to the humanities, sciences and arts, and its role as a shelter for the persecuted minorities of Europe. Thus, in his view, the EU's encouragement of Turkey's accession process would be a way of both recognising the Islamic influence on Europe's cultural heritage and supporting the

development of democracy in a predominantly Muslim nation (MacShane 2002).

Finally, recent Conservative discourse on the EU and Turkey's EU accession has revealed that the view of the EU as a 'rights based union' is not limited to the Labour party. Shadow Foreign Minister William Hague, for instance, has argued in a recent speech:

While we have had our differences over the utility and purpose of our institutional structures, we have always argued that it is in all our common interests that the nations of the European Union use their collective weight in the world to our mutual advantage and in the promotion of our shared values. (Hague 2010).

In addition, despite its generally staunch support of Turkey's EU accession bid, Labour has repeatedly highlighted the need for Turkey to meet the political criteria in full. This tends to support Sjursen's argument that 'universal values have acted mainly as a constraint rather than as a motivation for action' (2006:213).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, then, the Labour and Conservative parties' policies towards the EU and to Turkey's accession show more similarities than differences. While Labour have tended to be rather more enthusiastic Europeans than the Conservatives, they share a fear of a European 'superstate', a fact that can be explained by the dominant discourse on state and nation which stresses the sovereignty of the British Parliament. Neither party sees the need for the EU to be underscored by a common cultural identity, which is understandable when it is considered that the UK itself is not based on a common cultural identity. However, despite the fact that the EU is often viewed in pragmatic terms in the UK, both major parties have also argued that it rests on 'universal values', such as democracy, human and minority rights and the rule of law.

British support for Turkish accession, then, can also be explained by this pragmatic attitude to the EU. Given that the British parties do not generally see the need for a 'European cultural identity', it is, in principle, easier for them to accept the accession of a Muslim-majority country like Turkey, particularly given the importance of multiculturalism in Britain. In contrast, the argument common on the French and German right that the EU needs a strong political and cultural identity founded on a Christian civilisational identity makes Turkey's accession far more unpalatable in those countries. However, that is not to say that the support for Turkey's accession in either Labour or Conservative discourse is unconditional. It is,

rather, dependent on Turkey's fulfilling the political criteria for membership, which are based on universal values.

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USING CONCEPTUAL MAPPING TO ANALYZE ROMANIAN AND ENGLISH PROVERBS MEANING

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***Abstract:** Interpreting metaphorical proverbs is still an ongoing process. What has been recently brought as a new approach to proverb studies is the model of conceptual blending that can be applied and expanded to describe the process of metaphorical proverb meaning. I am going to use the Romanian folktale **Sarea-n bucate** to illustrate how narrative analyses can fill the spaces of the proverb map – in this case – **Salt Season All Things**. Cultural inferences can complete the meaning of the proverb both as base meaning and as blended meaning.*

***Key words:** conceptual blending, narrative analysis, meaning, metaphor, phrase*

1. Introduction

Paremiological research has recently combined cognitive semantic approach and literary stylistic devices to map the becoming of metaphor meaning. There is no doubt that metaphor has been at the centre of any attempt and successful analysis. Metaphor brings clarity and explores all the possibilities that meaning can give.

2. Proverb meaning

There are two different forms of proverb meaning:

- *base meaning* - the non-metaphorical meaning that can be applied

to the a variety of situations.

E He who makes no mistakes, makes nothing.

R Numai cine nu muncește, nu greșește.

- the *blended meaning* as the conclusion to a folktale:

E Salt season all things

R Sarea e bună în toate bucatele..

Proverbs are generally used in context. There are the ethnofields that bring certain terms as the focused ones. If we take 'salt' as the focused term in some Romanian proverbs like:

Dușmanului să-i dai pâine și sare.

or

Glumele să-ți fie ca *sarea*-n bucate.

we can see that both of them contain elements targetting 'food'. They display, however, terms that are not connected with 'food' but with 'adversity' (*dușmani*) or 'wisecracking' (*glume*)

The English versions of such proverbs keep only one word or one idea from the Romanian version:

R *Dușmanului* să-i dai pâine și sare.
E Make your *enemy* your friend.

R *Glumele* să-ți fie ca *sarea*-n bucate.
E Leave off while the *play* is good.

3. Proverb models

The proverb model meaning helps to discuss individual metaphorical phrases and domains (categories of cultural symbols which are grouped on the basis of similarity). Certain researchers [PROVERBIUM no 26/2009] used the syntagm input spaces instead of domains that are still seen as categories of cultural symbols. We admit that any proverb, as a syntactic unit, is conveyed through generations with its base meaning and having as a background, a story.

Can we equate proverbs with stories? There is no perfect equation because proverbs can be considered implicit stories.

Let's see what a comparison between proverbs and stories can bring:

Proverbs	Stories
- present a whole idea; - may lack a verb;	- have proverbial meaning; - are independent units with plot, characters and conclusion;
- do not present focus or viewpoint; - are rhetorical tools; - are used to persuade others; - are incorporated into a story or introduced into a dialogue; - represent a combination of inputs; - in most of the cases are dependent syntactical units; - have a meaning that is realized by integration with a situation;	

According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1981), a proverb can have multiple base meaning. The ethnofield 'salt' is developed in the English versions of the Romanian proverb:

R Trebuie să mănânci un *car cu sare* cu cineva ca să-l poți cunoaște.

In the following patterns:

E a) Trust no man unless thou hast first eaten a *bushel of salt* with him.

b) Before you make a friend, eat a *bushel of salt* with him.

c) Short acquaintance brings repentance.

The a) and b) variants have the same base meaning and even the same symmetry: *trust a man/make a friend only after eating a bushel of salt with him*.

The c) variant is the image of another register:

Short acquaintance vs repentance

where the element 'salt' is absent but the base meaning is established on the basis of an understanding of the specific cultural context – *no man can be a friend until he is well known*.

The original starting point that gave the base meaning of:

Trebuie să mănânci un *car cu sare* cu cineva ca să-l poți cunoaște.

has two input spaces: *food* and *knowledge*. From the domain of 'food' there is 'salt' and the synecdoche 'salt' represents an element of the whole, making the connection with the second input, 'knowledge'. This second input is, in fact, the step for a better understanding of the c) version

[without knowledge] Short acquaintance brings repentance.

4. Proverbs in folktales

At this point, the folktale itself *Sarea-n bucate* can explain the proverb *Salt season all things*. The wider context of the story cannot be given in some sentences but it will supply the common cultural understanding able to display the base meaning of the proverb *Salt season all things*.

Once upon the time, there was an emperor who had three daughters. The empress died and the emperor devoted his time to his daughters' good education. One day he asked his daughters how much they loved him. The eldest replied that she loved her father as much sugar is in all things. The emperor was pleased. The mid daughter told her father she loved him as

much honey is in all things. The emperor was pleased again. The youngest daughter told her father, in a very shy voice that she loved him as much salt is in all things. The emperor was angry when he heard that and he imposed his daughter to leave the court because he did not want to see her any more.

The youngest princess left the palace and she arrived at another emperor's court where she pretended to be a poor servant who wanted to help the empress with the household work. She was very good at cooking and cleaning and she was very well-bred and humble in her gestures. The emperor and his son left the court for defending their kingdom against enemies. The young prince was wounded in the war. When they returned home the empress was desperate because her son was not well and she asked her servant to help her. Sometimes the young servant who was in fact the youngest daughter of the emperor who liked only sugar and honey, replaced the empress when the young prince was watched over. While the young prince was cared after by the young princess he fell in love with the humble servant. When he recovered, the young prince asked his parents to allow him to marry the young servant. Even if they were not pleased with such a mismatch, the emperor and the empress agreed to their son's request. The bride wanted her father to be present but she did not tell the truth about her real identity. She cooked herself the food for the special guest. The food and the wine were excellent and everybody enjoyed the feast, except the emperor invited by the bride. His food was not good, he could not eat it and at a certain moment he tasted his neighbour's food. That food had an excellent taste and the guest reproached his host for mistreating him. The groom's father replied he had no fault in that and sent for the cook. The bride replied she cooked herself the food, adding only sugar and honey in it. The emperor recognized his youngest daughter and asked for her forgiveness. He admitted he was wrong when he said that only sugar and honey season all things. The father and the daughter reconciled and the groom's parents were happy they got such a beautiful and wise daughter-in-law (not to speak about her real identity!). They all lived happily after.

The story was selected and retold by Petre Ispirescu, a Romanian writer very much indebted to the Romanian folklore. There are common points between the proverb and the story:

- there are no names of the story characters and no elements of time and space
- the idea of 'salt' season(ing) all things, leads to the conclusion that life/existence cannot be enjoyed without 'salt'.
- the idea of 'salt season(ing) all things' leads to the conclusion that life/existence cannot be enjoyed without 'salt'

The possible mapping of the proverb *Salt season all things*, integrated into the folktale *Sarea-n bucate*, would appear like in figure 1:

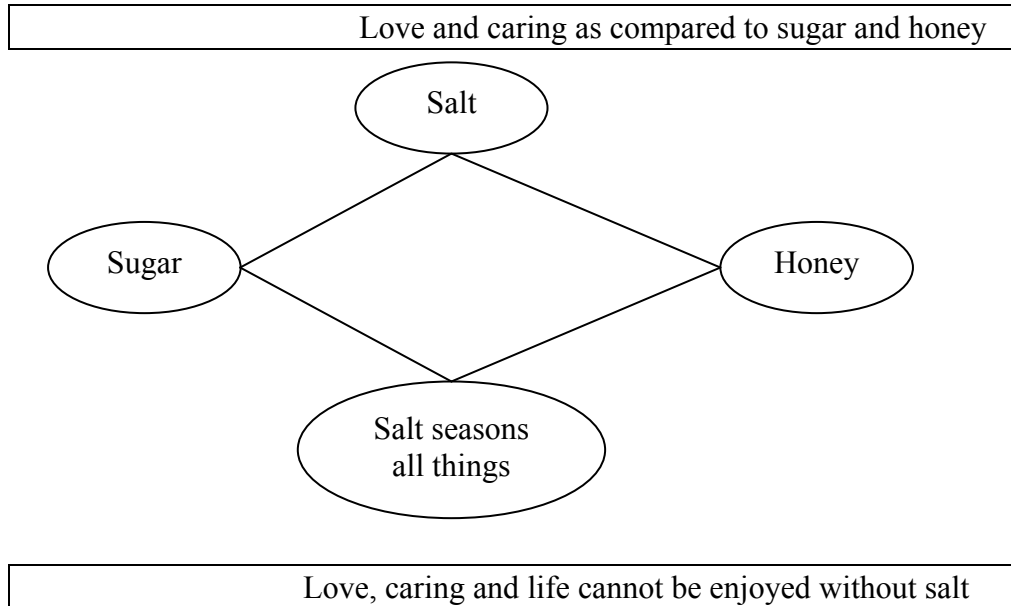


Figure 1.

5. Conclusion

Proverbs matching folktales and fables are very much spread, irrespective of language. There are markers of proverbiality, common within a given language and they allow a comparison of proverb structures within any given language. The need for native understanding is vital and it extends beyond the comprehension of lexical items and knowledge of syntax. Individual proverbs are understood differently by different groups of speakers.

‘Salt season all things’ is a universal statement. Still, there are not many universal folktales matching such a proverb. Even if the Romanian folktale brings a world that belongs to a fantastic background, it displays in fact, common people’s life with their daily problems, dilemmas or conflicts.

That is why this particular proverb as well as the story cannot be left apart or thrown out of the context as they match life itself.

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CULTURE - SPECIFIC ITEMS IN THE TRANSLATION OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF VITAL EVENTS: A MODEL OF LEGAL-ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

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***Abstract:** The study of culture-specific items in official documents of vital events issued in English-speaking countries has shown that each country has its own communicative and legal practices as well as values based on the country's ideas of population records and communication about them, which can be modelled as a three-layered structure.*

***Keywords:** culture-specific items, cultural model, documents of vital events, translation of official documents.*

1. Introduction

Although translations of certificates of vital events, i.e. births, marriages and deaths represent the bulk of translations of personal official documents and thus they have become routine, they sometimes contain sloppy renderings or even errors whose sources prove to be translation problems. A closer look will show that the problems are not simply linguistic or text-specific; they are cultural problems, which experienced translators can solve easily, but not so easily can trainee translators.

Knowledge of the culture – specific items (CSI) in documents of vital events is important to three groups of professionals: translators, translator trainees / academics, and translation scholars. If the first group needs cultural awareness and intercultural competence to deal with the cultural presuppositions and linguistic units adequately in tasks, the second group needs detailed knowledge of the referents or rationale of cultural units and of the relationship between the cultural terms and the translation procedures, while the third group needs a reference structure of CSIs to be able to carry out comparative cultural studies of such documents.

The translation scholars who have taken a pragmatic stance on culture-specific items have come up with definitions of cultural words/culture-specific items, with general categories, such as socio-cultural or organizational (Newmark 1988:) as well as classes of corresponding concepts, such as political, administrative. They have also identified translation techniques, also called strategies for dealing with the terms (Newmark 1988, Venuti 1995).

The latest developments of translation theory incorporate theories of culture of various orientations, but each fails to fully cover by itself the complex and dynamic phenomenon of culture. These theories are

undoubtedly pertinent to translation studies, but for practitioners, academics, and researchers they are not readily suited to their purposes. For these professionals more relevant may be models of culture about which David Katan aptly noticed that they represent the system in a simplified way, can be taught and thus can help understanding how culture functions (Katan 1999:26).

The cultural models referred to by Katan, Trompenaars', Hofstede's, Hall's Triad of Culture, and the Iceberg Theory, developed for training programs for the business community, group the cultural elements into interdependent layers or levels, which are represented graphically and are thus easily accessible to the learner.

The purpose of this paper is to propose a cultural model of documents of vital events which has been made by first analyzing the nature of the CSIs in documents issued by government offices in English - speaking countries and then by synthesizing the observed data into a three-layered structure. We believe that the model can thus offer a pool of CSIs, which for some pairs of languages are cultural problems and potential difficulties.

2. The concepts of culture and culture-specific items

The theoretical framework for this research was established in previous papers on official documents, but we have to present it here again (Pop, Superceanu 2009, Superceanu 2010).

The literature on culture is vast and diverse in perspective, ranging from anthropological to translational. Scholars have elaborated on the concepts of culture and civilization, have distinguished a spiritual culture from a material one, and have been concerned with aesthetic, philosophical, civilizing or social aspects according to their orientation and affiliation to a field of study.

In this research, we consider that the concept of culture includes social, institutional and professional aspects along with aesthetic, philosophical or civilizing aspects. Culture also involves social and communicative practices controlled by norms, rules, values, language, and knowledge shared by the members of a professional community. In the case of official documents, these practices are mirrored as cultural items in the genre texts.

As for the culture-specific item, we view it as a linguistic unit whose referent is an aspect of the socio-cultural reality. Cultural items cannot be dissociated from the social ones, although we agree that social facts are not always of cultural nature and neither can cultural facts be always social. Culture consists of socio-cultural phenomena which include, on the one hand, knowledge of the world and general social and communicative practices, and, on the other hand, specific professional knowledge and

institutional, social and communicative practices specific to a professional community and shared by the members of that community. While the former group of phenomena makes up the *general encyclopedic culture*, the latter makes up the *professional culture*. Professional cultural items occur in genres and subgenres, reflecting specific subject matter and linguistic and textual phenomena of a domain and its corresponding community.

Culture-specific items are textually actualized source culture items which involve a translation problem due to the nonexistence of or difference from a corresponding item in the target culture/target language (Aixela 1996:58)

According to the above theoretical perspective, we have classified cultural items into two classes:

1. *common*, representing universal, national and local cultural phenomena mentioned in translation studies as denoting knowledge of the world and occurring in various genres;
2. *generic*, representing cultural phenomena denoting professional and communicational knowledge and practices specific to a genre.

3. Culture-specific items in official documents of vital events

The above view on culture and CSI has been applied to the analysis of *certificate*, which is the genre, and of three sub-genres of certificates, namely *birth*, *marriage*, and *death* for identifying the CSIs in these documents. The corpus is made up of authentic documents issued in S.U.A, Ireland, Canada, and Australia and commissioned for translation at Romanian translation offices.

Certificates are written official declarations of some fact – a person's birth, death or a marriage. They are supplied as certified copies or photocopies of an entry in the Register of such events for administrative or legal purposes.

The government system of a country includes an institution responsible for the repository of records relating to births, deaths and marriages. While storing and communicating information about such events, the institution called Register Office/ Vital Statistics Agency or Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, uses professional practices, i.e. action patterns legally controlled.

Consequently, the discourse recorded in the documents is contextually bound and generally highly formalized, although the degree of formalization differs with the country. Communication is carried out via a *form* with empty spaces to be filled in with specific information, which is quantitatively limited and governed by items of legislation, e.g. Marriage Act 1961/ Marriage Regulations 1963/ Coroners Act 2008 (Australia) Births and Deaths Registration Acts 1893-1996 (Ireland).

The *cognitive structure/superstructure* of the documents reflect the cultural differences between the issuing countries in terms of their conception about the registration of civil matters and their communication to other governmental institutions, actualized in the kind and amount of information as well as its ordering. The cognitive structure also includes formulas for certification, authentication, addressing an officer or for stating the validity conditions. The formulas synthesize current legal practices, which confer legality on the information specified in the document. Apart from these formulas, other culturally-marked formulas are used for expressing the dates and addresses, which are common cultural items.

The *data* included in the documents are generally information about 1) *the person(s) in case* – child, deceased, spouses; 2) *the issuing office* – its affiliation to the governmental system, its position in the structure, its name and seal and then the civil officer’s name and position and 3) *the document* – name, recording number, issuing date.

The amount and variety of data differs with the issuing country, state or province, being determined by the legislation governing the registration of civil matters, which is culturally bound.

The *vocabulary* includes terminological units whose referents are notions from the legal or administrative system to which the document belongs. For example, certified extract, vital record, city clerk, county clerk, registration district, Registrar’s District

The results of our analysis are exemplified in the tables below, two for each subgenre. (Tables 1-6)

Table 1: Culture - specific items in **certification of birth- USA**

Common items	Generic items
<i>A. Name of issuing authority</i>	<i>A. Cognitive structure</i>
1. <i>State</i> State of New York 2. <i>Local</i> Department of Health	1. Name of document 2. Issuing authority 3. District number 4. Registered number 5. Certification formula with the child’s personal data (name, sex, date and place of birth) and record file number 4. Legalization formula 5. Signature of registrar, position of office clerk
	<i>B. Formulas</i>
	1. <i>Certification</i> This is to certify that ... (name of child, sex) was born on ..., in ...county of and State of .. as shown in

	the record of birth filed with the registrar of vital statistics of this registration district. 2. <i>Signature legalization</i> Witness my signature this(date)
	3. <i>Validity Warning</i>
	Warning: Any alteration invalidates this certificate
	C. <i>Terminological expressions</i>
	record of birth, Registrar of vital statistics; registration district; witness my signature

Table 2: Culture - specific items in **birth certificate – Canada** (original document)

Common items	Generic items
<i>1. Name of issuing authority</i>	<i>A. Cognitive structure</i>
1. <i>State</i> British Columbia 2. <i>Local</i> Vital Statistics Agency	1. Heading: country, province, coat of arms 2. Name of document 3. Signature of chief executive officer + name and issuing authority 4. Kind of document + seal of issuing authority 5. Child's personal data (surname, given name, date of birth, place of birth) 6. Registration number 7. Date of registration; date of issue 8. Name and birthplace of parent (mother) 9. Name and birthplace of parent (father) 10. Validity formulas
<i>B. Formulas</i>	<i>B. Formulas</i> <i>1. Authentication:</i> Signature, name, position, issuing authority
Feb 18, 2008	<i>2. Validity</i>
	This certificate is a valuable foundation identity document. Theft or loss of this document could lead to identity theft or financial loss. This document contains numerous security features for your protection, is invalid if altered or laminated, should be stored in a secure place and carried only when absolutely necessary. This certificate has been issued under the authority of the Vital Statistics Act. Use of this certificate is subject to the conditions of the Act. The certificate may be recalled, cancelled or invalidated in accordance with the Act.
	<i>Terminological expressions:</i> vital statistics act; certified extract; recall / cancel / invalidate a

	certificate
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Table 3: Culture - specific items in **certification of marriage – USA**
(original document)

Common items	Generic items
<i>A. Name of issuing authority</i>	<i>A. Cognitive structure</i>
<p>1. State : State of Illinois</p> <p>2. Local Office of the County Clerk</p>	<p>1. Heading (County, State, issuing authority)</p> <p>2. Name of document</p> <p>3. License number</p> <p>4. Certification formula + data (groom’s name and age; bride’s name and age, date of marriage, kind of ceremony, celebrant’s name, title, place of marriage)</p> <p>5. Date of recording the event</p> <p>6. Application date</p> <p>7. Authentication formula</p> <p>8. Place and date of issuance</p> <p>9. Signature of County Clerk</p> <p>10. Validity formulas</p>
<i>B. Formulas</i>	<i>B. Formulas</i>
<p>1. Date August 31, 1997</p>	<p>1. Certification - (Between) X and Y on Z were united in marriage in the County of Cook, and State of Illinois in a religious ceremony by....., (officiate title) at V</p> <p>2. Authentication - This is to certify that this is a true and correct abstract from the official record - Signature (Signature, name, position)</p> <p>3. Validity This copy is not valid unless displaying embossed seals of Cook County and County Clerk Signature This document has a colored background. Any alterations or erasures void this certificate</p>
	<i>D. Terminological expressions</i>
	Religious ceremony; civil ceremony, official record; embossed seal; license, county clerk, abstract from the official record

Table 4: Culture - specific items in **certificate of marriage – Australia**
(original document)

Common items	Generic items
<i>A. Name of issuing</i>	<i>A. Cognitive structure</i>

<i>authority</i>	
<p><i>1. State :</i> Commonwealth of Australia</p> <p><i>2. Province</i> New South Wales (N.S.W.)</p> <p><i>3. Local</i> The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration number 2. Logo of issuing department 3. Heading (State, Act governing the Registrar's operation) 4. Registered number 5. Name of document 6. Certification formula + data (date and place of celebration, governing Act; bridegroom's and bride's surname, Christian and other names, occupation, usual residence, conjugal status, birthplace, date of birth, father's name in full and mother's maiden name in full) 7. Signatures of parties 8. Witnesses to the marriage (full names and signatures) 9. Certification formula + data (name of authorized celebrant, date of celebration, signature) 10. Place and date of marriage registration 11. Signature of Principal Registrar 12. Validity formula 13. Name and seal of issuing authority +date of copy issuance 14. Authentication formula + Registrar's signature
<i>B. Formulas</i>	<i>B. Formulas</i>
<p><i>1. Date</i> Dated this 18th day of March 1987; 27th October 1952; 20 MAR 1987 05 Jan 2007</p> <p><i>2. Address</i> 25 Brittain Crescent, Hillsdale</p>	<p><i>1. Certification</i> - Marriage was solemnized between the party particular of whom are given below on the ... at ... according to ... - I authorized celebrant hereby certify that, on the date and at the place specified above, I duly solemnized marriage in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Act 1961 between the parties specified above: dated this ... day of ..</p> <p><i>2. Authentication</i> - I hereby certify that this is a true copy of particulars recorded in a Register in the State of New South Wales, in the Commonwealth of Australia - Signature (Signature, position)</p> <p><i>3. Validity</i> Before accepting copies, sight unaltered original. This original has a colored background.</p>
	<i>D. Terminological expressions</i>
	Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Marriage

	Act, authorized celebrant, solemnize marriage, party particulars, conjugal status
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Table 5: Culture specific items in **death certificate – Canada** (original document)

Common items	Generic items
<i>1. Name of issuing authority</i>	<i>A. Cognitive structure</i>
Walter D. Kelly Funeral Home and Chapel, Ltd.	1. Heading (Funeral home, address, phone, fax, logo) 2. Name of document 3. Personal data of the deceased (name, residence, date of death, place of death, age, date of birth, birthplace, occupation) 4. Next of kin (name, address, relationship) 5. Name of deceased's father 6. Name of deceased's mother 7. Cemetery 8. Social insurance No. 9. Certification formula 10. Signature of Per 11. Date of issuance
<i>B. Dating formulas</i> March 18, 1997	<i>B. Certification Formula</i> We hereby certify that the foregoing information has been taken from our records and we believe it to be true and correct.
	<i>C. Terminological expressions</i>
	Proof of death certificate, funeral home and chapel

Table 6: Culture - specific items in **death certificate – Canada** (original document)

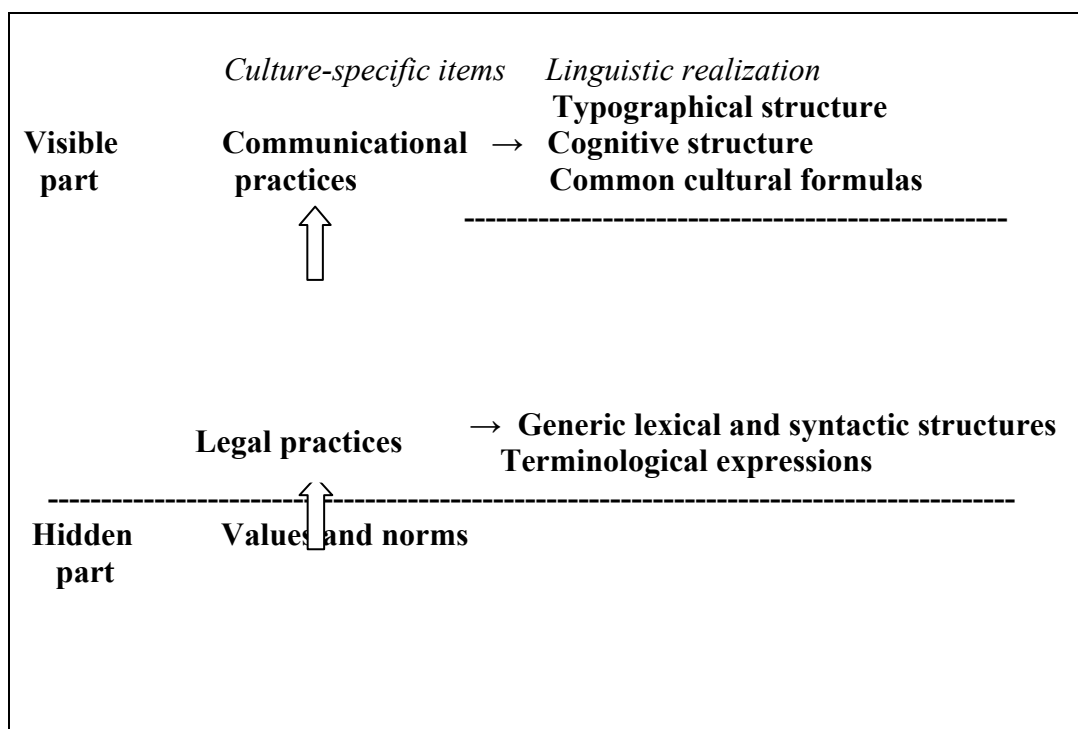
Common items	Generic items
<i>1. Name of issuing authority</i>	<i>A. Superstructure</i>
LEYDEN'S Funeral Homes Ltd.	1. <i>Name of document</i> 2. <i>Certification formula + the deceased's data</i> (name, place of death, date of death, age, residence) 3. <i>Data about funeral</i> (date, kind, place) 4. <i>Next of kin</i> (name, address, relationship) 5. <i>Certification formula</i> 6. <i>Place and date of issuance</i> 7. <i>Name of issuing authority</i> 8. <i>Embossed seal of issuing authority</i> 9. <i>Signature of Per</i>

<i>B. Dating formulas</i>	<i>B. Formulas</i>
this/the 27th day of May 1981	<i>1. Certification Formula</i> We certify that (from our records) died at the age of....and was resident of. <i>2. Authentication</i> We certify the above to be a true statement from our records
	<i>C. Terminological expressions</i>
	funeral directors, statement from records, statement of death, funeral home , cremation

The analysis of the culture-specific items in official documents of vital events has shown that they are expressed at the level of text, sentence and word. Generalizing over the analytical data, we can model the specific generic culture in such documents as a three – layered structure which has the following components:

- **the first layer**, which is visible and formally explicit, includes *communicational practices* actualized in each national or state culture as typographical – textual forms, cognitive structures and dating and localizing formulas. This last element also occurs in other categories of the national culture. The layer consists of both common and generic elements;
- **the second layer**, also visible, includes *legal practices* expressed linguistically as peculiar lexical and syntactic structures;
- **the third layer**, which is hidden, consists of the *norms and values* which underlie the legal conception about population registration and communication about it expressed in legal Acts. The values and norms are generic cultural elements.

Graphically, the model can be represented as follows:



4. Conclusions

The study of our corpus has indicated that each English-speaking country, state or province may have its own communicational and legal practices derived from the national or state laws which are actualized at the linguistic level as peculiar forms, which represent culture-specific items. However, since the items fall into identical conceptual classes, although different according to their visibility degree, we can model the generic culture underlying the documents of vital events. The model consisting of clearly defined and graphically represented components gives a global image of the culture-specific items in such documents, of their nature and relationships within a legal-administrative structure.

Translator trainers can use the model successfully for teaching the translation of such documents from or into English by comparing and contrasting it with the model of the other language in the pair.

Translation theorists may use it as a reference structure in culture studies and research of other genres of official documents. Last but not least, translators may improve their competence by gaining insights into the cultural side of official documents.

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THE PROBLEM OF NON-NEUTRAL FOCUS IN ENGLISH-TO-HUNGARIAN TRANSLATION

ALBERT VERMES

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Abstract: In English a non-neutral (or marked) focus can occur anywhere in the clause, marked by heavy tonic stress. In Hungarian a non-verbal focus can only occur in one well-defined syntactic position: right before the verb. Such linguistic differences may cause problems in translation, and thus it is vital that translators should have a contrastive knowledge of such phenomena in the two languages concerned.

Keywords: English, Hungarian, information structure, non-neutral focus

1. Introduction

At the level of the clause the basic syntactic difference between English and Hungarian concerns word order or, more precisely, constituent order. Disregarding adverbials and complements, the main functional constituents of the clause are the verb (V), the subject (S) and the object (O). English and Hungarian are different in terms of how they express the S and O functions. In English, the subject and object are in most cases syntactically encoded, while in Hungarian they are morphologically encoded, rather than syntactically. For this reason, in English word order is relatively fixed and the basic order of constituents is SVO. In Hungarian, word order is relatively free, with two basic variants: SOV and SVO, but the other permutations: OVS, OSV, VSO and VOS are also equally possible.

This does not mean, however, that word order has no role in Hungarian. It is an important means of signalling discourse properties like thematic development or pragmatic properties like presupposition and contrastive focus. The question of syntactic structure (constituent order) is thus linked with the question of information structure. This paper aims to show that a contrastive knowledge of such phenomena in the source and the target language is relevant in translation and that lack of such knowledge may lead to translation errors.

2. Information structure and neutral focus

An **information unit** can be defined as a stretch of language conveying a complete piece of information. An information unit is coextensive with a **tone unit** (Quirk et al. 1985:1356), which is a stretch of language containing an intonation nucleus (tonic stress). The fundamental information unit is the clause. The **information structure** of the clause characterises the **communicative dynamism** of its components, which is

defined by Quirk et al. (1985:1356) as “the variation in communicative value as between different parts of an utterance”. In other words, the information structure of the clause characterises how the various clause constituents contribute to the achievement of the communicator’s communicative purpose in a context.

In this respect the basic parts of the clause are the topic (also referred to as theme), the comment (also called rheme or predicate), and the focus. Quirk et al. (1985:1361) define the **topic** (although they actually use the term theme) as “the initial part of any structure when we consider it from an informational point of view”. The topic links the clause to the known elements of the context. The **comment** (C) is the rest of the clause, providing information about the theme. The **focus** (F) can be defined as the informationally most prominent unit of the theme, the element which has the highest communicative dynamism in the clause. This unit is also the prosodic centre of the clause, signalled by the intonation nucleus of the clause: the syllable bearing tonic (or nuclear) stress.

According to Quirk et al. (1985:1357), “it is common to process the information in a message so as to achieve a linear presentation from low to high information value” in English. They call this the **principle of end-focus**. Thus in English the unmarked, or neutral, focus is normally found somewhere at the end of the clause. By contrast, in Hungarian the neutral focus of the clause is the verb, so Hungarian is characterised by mid-focus. Consider the following English example and its Hungarian counterpart, where the neutral nuclear stress is marked by ‘.

(1) The dog chased the ‘cat.

(1’) A kutya ‘kergette a macskát. [The dog ‘chased the cat.]

3. Non-neutral focus

When the focus moves from its predictable position, Quirk et al. (1985:1365) speak of marked focus, which will be referred to in this paper as **non-neutral focus**. Basically, there are two types of non-neutral focus, which can be called paradigmatic and syntagmatic focus. Discussing the prosody of the English clause, Nádasdy (2006:273) defines **paradigmatic focus** as the case when the nuclear stress is dislocated for reasons of contrast or emphasis on an especially important word. This definition needs to be extended, however, to also cover cases when the nuclear stress is not dislocated but is marked by non-neutral strength and pitch level, as in example (4) below. **Syntagmatic focus** is when the nuclear stress is dislocated from its normal end-position to highlight some earlier element, which carries new information (Nádasdy 2006:271).

3.1. Paradigmatic focus

Paradigmatic focus, according to Nádasy (2006: 267), has two subtypes. In the first case, there is non-neutral focus on some word to achieve **lexical contrast** between two lexical elements in the same paradigmatic set. The second subtype concerns **verbal modality and polarity contrast**. In such cases the nuclear stress occurs on an auxiliary, concerning the mood, tense, and positive/negative polarity of the verb.

3.1.1. Lexical contrast

In the following examples there is strong emphatic stress on a word to put it into contrast with some other word denoting a different entity in the same set, which is presumed to be understood from the context. (The focused elements are italicised, as is the normal practice in writing.)

- (2) The *dog* chased the cat. (Not the pig.)
- (3) The dog *chased* the cat. (It didn't bark at it.)
- (4) The dog chased the *cat*. (Not the mouse.)

Now consider the Hungarian translations of (2) – (4).

- (2') A *kutya* kergette a macskát.
- (3') A kutya *kergette* a macskát.
- (4') A kutya a *macskát* kergette.

In (3'), the focused element is the verb, as in (3). The Hungarian translations of (2) and (4), on the other hand, illustrate the fact that in Hungarian, when the focus is not the verb itself, the non-verbal focused constituent must occur in pre-verb position. As É. Kiss (1983:22) puts it, in Hungarian the position of the focus is fixed and thus in such a case we have to change the order of the clause constituents to ensure that each constituent has its desired communicative dynamism.

The non-verbal focus, normally occurring in immediate pre-verb position in Hungarian, will force even the verbal prefix to move from before the verb and will thus render the verb unstressed (É. Kiss, Kiefer and Siptár 2003: 39) as illustrated by the following examples (taken from É. Kiss, Kiefer and Siptár 2003:39).

- (5') János 'bejárta a biciklijével a Börzsönyt.
- (6') János a *biciklijével* járta be a Börzsönyt.
- (7') János a *Börzsönyt* járta be a biciklijével.
- (8') *János* járta be a biciklijével a Börzsönyt.

In (8') there is no contrastive focus and thus the preverb+verb combination *bejárta* has neutral focus. In the other sentences the element before the verb has contrastive focus and thus the preverb *be-* is moved into post-verb position. These Hungarian sentences would correspond to the following sentences in English:

- (5) János toured the Börzsöny hills on his 'bike.
- (6) János toured the Börzsöny hills on his *bike*.
- (7) János toured the *Börzsöny* hills on his bike.
- (8) *János* toured the Börzsöny hills on his bike.

In the English sentences there is no change of word order at all. What changes is the quality and location of the nuclear stress. In (5) there is neutral nuclear stress on the word *bike*. In (6) the nuclear stress remains in the unmarked position but is marked by a higher initial pitch level. In (7) and (8) the focus is also marked by its non-neutral position.

Now observe the next three examples (taken from Nádasy 2006:267-8).

- (9) He didn't do it *after* school, he did it *at* school.
- (10) It's a *catlike* animal, but it's not a *cat*.
- (11) He isn't a piano *teacher*, he's a pianist.

The Hungarian translations would be as follows:

- (9') Nem iskola *után* csinálta, hanem az iskolában.
- (10') Ez egy macskaszerű állat, de nem *macska*.
- (11') Nem zongoratanár, hanem zongorista.

What makes these Hungarian sentences interesting is the fact that each is elliptical in the sense that there is at least one verb missing from the surface form and thus it is not immediately evident that the focused element is in pre-verb position. To make the examples clear, here are the English glosses:

- (9'') not school *after* did-s/he-it, but the school-*in*
- (10'') this a *catlike* animal, but not *cat*
- (11'') not pianoteacher, but pianist

In (9') the focus is on the postposition *után* and the verbal inflection *-ban*, corresponding to the English prepositions *after* and *at*, respectively. The postposition stands right before the verb *csinálta*, while the inflection at the end of the sentence comes before the position of the verb, which is

elided here. In (10') and (11') there is no verb because the Hungarian equivalent of the English copula *be* does not occur on the surface in the third person singular in the present tense. However, the focused element is in its proper position, before the hidden copula. The copula occurs on the surface in the past tense, as in the following example:

- (12) He wasn't a piano *teacher*, he was a pianist.
(12') Nem zongoratanár volt, hanem zongorista.

In each sentence in (9') – (12') the focus naturally occurs on the lexical equivalent of the focused English expression and thus we can say that these English sentences would pose no translation problem at all in this respect.

3.1.2. Verbal modality and polarity contrast

The second subtype of paradigmatic focus concerns verbal modality and polarity contrast. Consider these examples (taken from Nádasy 2006:269-70), in which an auxiliary gets the nuclear stress of the tone unit in order to express a contrast concerning the modal, aspectual or polarity characteristics of the predicate.

- (13) (Will he enjoy it?) He *would* enjoy it, I think.
(14) (Why don't you try the cheesecake?) I *have* tried it, thanks.
(15) (It's a shame you didn't write to Liz.) I *did* write to her.

The sentences in (13) – (15) would be translated into Hungarian in the following way:

- (13') Szerintem *élvezné*.
(14') Már *kóstoltam*, köszönöm.
(15') De *írtam* neki.

The English glosses of these sentences are as follows:

- (13'') according-to-me *enjoy-would-s/he*
(14'') already *taste-ed-I-it*, thanks
(15'') but *write-ed-I* to-her

In each of these sentences, the focused element is the verb as such, not the suffix or lexical element that could be brought into correspondence with the meaning of the English auxiliary.

Let us take a look at one more example here, a possible follow-up to example (15):

(16) (It's a shame you didn't write to Liz. – I *did* write to her.) But you *didn't* write to her!

Not surprisingly, the focal stress would fall on the negative word in the Hungarian translation as well and, as can be expected, the negative word is in pre-verb position:

(16') De *nem* írtál neki!

3.2. Syntagmatic focus

Syntagmatic focus is the case when the element which would normally get neutral nuclear stress carries information that is already known from the context and thus the nuclear stress is moved forward to highlight the element carrying the new information, as in the following examples (from Nádasy 2006:271-2).

(16) (We only serve Indian food here.) I *want* Indian.

(17) (Was it unpleasant?) It was *very* unpleasant.

(18) (My wife comes from Singapore.) Oh, I grew *up* in Singapore!

The Hungarian translations:

(16') Én indiait *szeretnék*.

(17') *Nagyon* kellemetlen volt.

(18') Ó, én *Szingapúrban* nőttem *fel*!

The English glosses are the following:

(16'') I Indian *like-would-I*

(17'') *very* unpleasant was

(18'') oh, I *Singapore-in* grew *up*

In (16') the focus is on the verb, as in (16). In (17') the focus is on the adverb, as in (17). This is not an exception to the rule of pre-verb focus, since the adverb is part of the adjective phrase *very unpleasant*, the clause constituent in pre-verb position. In (18') the focus is on the name *Szingapúr*, in pre-verb position, but the verbal prefix, which has been forced to move into post-verb position, also has heavy stress here. In this case we can say that the focus is divided between these two elements.

4. Conclusion

Since focus is a pragmatic phenomenon, which is related to the way in which the communicator wishes to present the pieces of information to be communicated, and since such communicative procedures are likely to be broadly similar across cultures, one would not expect to encounter serious problems concerning focus phenomena in translation, at least not in the case of relatively close cultures. However, on examining the systemic possibilities of different languages like English and Hungarian, we find important differences in this area as a result, for example, of the fact that different languages rely on word order in different ways. Thus, while in English the order of constituents in the clause signals their syntactic functions, in Hungarian syntactic functions are marked by case endings and thus word order can be utilised to signal the communicative dynamism of constituents. Because of such differences between the two languages, difficulties concerning communicative focus do arise in translation from English into Hungarian or vice versa. Hopefully, even this rather incomplete discussion of focus phenomena will suffice to illustrate the point that it is vital that the translator should be aware of these differences and the resulting translation problems.

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FREE TEMPORAL VARIATION IN LITERARY TRANSLATION

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Abstract: The present paper investigates patterns of evolution in the temporal system of English and Romanian by employing the argument from translation. We are mainly concerned with reformulating the ‘complementary distribution’ law in the case of the Romanian perfect tenses.

Keywords: *complementary distribution, equivalence, free variation, temporal anaphora.*

1. Introduction: Temporal anaphora in translation

This paper addresses an important issue that concerns successful literary translation: to what extent we can speak of ‘norms’ when translating tenses from English into Romanian. In more scientific terms, we are interested in looking at the patterns of evolution in the translation of temporal anaphora. We employ the term ‘temporal anaphora’ in the line of Enç (1987) and of Kamp & Reyle (1993). Let us illustrate the concept below:

(1) John entered the classroom. He was wearing a brand new overcoat.

(2) John *entered* the classroom. He was wearing a brand new overcoat. After he *took* it off, he *sat* down.

e1.....s.....e2.....
e = event, s = state

(3) $e1 < e2, e1 = s, e2 > e1, e2 = s$

Consider the pair of sentences under (1). The underlined items (i.e. John, he) form an anaphoric chain, where the proper noun *John* is anaphorically resumed by the pronoun *he*. According to Enç (1987), we can analyse tenses in a similar fashion. Consider the example under (2), which contains three sentences. The first one contains a past tense verb, analyzable as an event. The second contains a past continuous verb, whose progressive dimension allows it to be interpreted as a state, according to the DRT framework provided by Kamp & Reyle (1993). Finally, the third sentence contains another past tense verb, analyzable as event. All of these events and states are employed in a semantic relation, which is formalized under

(3): the event in the first sentence is simultaneous with the state in the second and precedes the event in the third. Conversely, the event in the third is simultaneous with the state in the second sentence and is subsequent to the event expressed by the first sentence. In as much as this semantic relation is crucial to the cohesive interpretation of the sentences under (2), we can see a close similarity with the analysis of the sentences under (1), where the anaphoric relation between the nominal phrases creates cohesion. In other words, temporal anaphora and nominal anaphora are mechanisms that create cohesion in the text and therefore are analyzable as cohesive devices.

As demonstrated by Blum Kulka (2000), the understanding of cohesive mechanisms in a literary text is crucial for a successful translation. This observation lies at the basis of our paper. We will therefore try to analyze the extent to which the cohesive mechanism of temporal anaphora is successfully rendered from the ST into the TT. Our interest mainly lies in analyzing the Romanian perfect tenses and the combinatorial restrictions that should be observed with respect to the translation of the English perfect tenses into Romanian.

2. Equivalence and Free Variation in the Translation of Tenses

There are at least two important issues in the translation of tenses that should be discussed in this section: temporal equivalence and free temporal variation. As we will see, these two concepts are closely related, in the sense that temporal equivalence might trigger free variation.

Temporal equivalence can be considered to have two dimensions:

- a) ST > TT
- b) TT > TT

The first dimension refers to finding the proper equivalence between ST and TT tenses. For instance, grammar rules teach us that *instances of narrative Past Tense, used in literary texts to create narrative advancement, are normally translatable by narrative Perfect Simplu (PS) instances in Romanian*, as demonstrated below (the underlined forms are PS forms):

(4) She went through my classes for me, highlighting the best route to each on the map, and gave me a slip to have each teacher sign, which I was to bring back at the end of the day. She smiled at me and hoped, like Charlie, that I would like it here in Forks. I smiled back as convincingly as I could. When I went back out to my truck, other students were starting to arrive. I drove around the school, following the line of traffic. I was glad to see that most of the cars

were older like mine, nothing flashy. At home I'd lived in one of the few lower-income neighborhoods... (Stephanie Meyer, *Twilight*)

(5) Îmi înșiră ce ore aveam, subliniind pe hartă cu creionul drumul cel mai scurt către laboratoare, după care îmi dădu un formular pe care trebuia să-l semneze fiecare profesor și pe care trebuia să i-l aduc la sfârșitul zilei. Îmi zâmbi și îmi exprimă speranța că mă voi simți bine aici în Forks, exact cum făcuse și Charlie. Îi zâmbii și eu cât mai convingător. Când mă întorsei înapoi la camionetă, deja începeau să sosească ceilalți elevi. Ocolii școala, urmărind șirul de mașini. Eram bucuroasă să constat că restul mașinilor erau mai vechi decât a mea, că nu erau cine știe ce. Acasă locuisem într-unul din cartierele mai sărace... (my translation)

The second dimension of temporal equivalence is closely related to choosing between two Romanian tenses which contemporary Romanians perceive as equivalent: Perfect Simplu and Perfect Compus. Although the rule stated above vouches for the supremacy of Perfect Simplu, it is not uncommon for contemporary translators to use Perfect Compus forms when translating. To illustrate this situation, consider the published Romanian version of the text under (4):

(6) Trecu în revistă orarul, subliniind pe hartă cel mai bun traseu către fiecare, apoi îmi dădu un formular pe care trebuia să îl dau fiecărui profesor la semnat și apoi să i-l returnez la sfârșitul zilei. Zâmbi și îmi spuse, la fel ca Charlie, că speră să fie fericită aici, în Forks. I-am zâmbit cât de convingător *am putut*. Când m-am întors la camionetă, începuseră să sosească și alții elevi. *Am condus* în jurul școlii, urmând linia traficului. M-am bucurat să văd că majoritatea mașinilor erau vechi ca a mea, nici una care să sară în ochi. Acasă locuisem într-unul dintre puținele cartiere mai sărace... (trad. Laura Frunză, ed. Rao, 2008)

The translation under (6) illustrates a situation that is very frequent for Romanian literary translations: the co-occurrence of Perfect Simplu (PS) and Perfect Compus (PC) instances, in violation of the rule stated above. This situation leads us to draw the following conclusions:

1. narrative PS is perceived as equivalent with narrative PC
2. there is no complementary distribution between narrative PS and narrative PC, which means that they should be in free variation

Let us address these two problems in turn.

2.1. Is PS Equivalent with PC?

To answer this question we will resort to some arguments previously stated in Viñan (2006):

- a) the test of substitution: if a paragraph containing PS can be substituted with PC, it means that the tenses should be equivalent in meaning.

Consider the following examples under (7), which prove that PS can be substituted with PC:

(7) a. ... s-a înfățișat (PC) înaintea Domnului Dumnezeu, ș-atâta s-a rugat (PC), că s-a înduplecat (PC) cel Prea milostiv și i-a dat (PC) slobozenie să se pogoare între oameni... (*Minunile Sfântului Sisoie*, G.Topârceanu)

He went before God Almighty and begged Him so that the Almerciful relented and gave him leave to come down amongst people...

b. ... se înfățișă (PS) înaintea Domnului Dumnezeu, ș-atâta se rugă (PS), că se înduplecă (PS) cel Prea milostiv și îi dădu (PS) slobozenie să se pogoare între oameni...

He went before God Almighty and begged Him so that the Almerciful relented and gave him leave to come down amongst people...

e1.... e2....e3.....e4.....e5.....e100

The text under (7a) is similar in meaning with the text under (7b) and this situation is proved by the fact that they are provided a similar translation in English.

- b) the test of 'complementary distribution':

If these tense forms are equivalent, it logically follows that they should be in free variation, as is the case with the Romanian Future tenses in (8):

(8) a) Când *mă voi scula*, pre mulți *am să popesc*...

when I get up-FUTURE, many people I will punish-Periphrastic future

b) Dacă *o să mai vorbești aia*, *vei vedea* că...

if you keep talking-Periphrastic future like that, you will see-FUTURE that...

In (9a,b), the periphrastic future is replaceable by Future forms without impairing upon the meaning of the sentences. This means that the periphrastic future is in free variation with the Future tense in Romanian:

- (9) a) Când *mă voi scula*, pre mulți *voi popi*...
when I get up-FUTURE, many people I will punish-FUTURE
b) Dacă *vei mai vorbi așaa*, *vei vedea că*...
if you keep talking-FUTURE like that, you will see-FUTURE that...

This test demonstrates that the Romanian periphrastic future and the Romanian Future tenses are not in complementary distribution. Elements in complementary distribution are supposed to be close in meaning and function, but *not* equivalent, which would make it impossible for them to co-occur: this is the case of the definite article *the* and the demonstrative pronoun in English, as is stated in the example below:

- (10) a. this book and that book [+ proximous]/ [+ distal]
b. this book and the book [+ demonstrative]/ [+definite]
c. *this and the book
d. this and that book

As we can see, although close in function and meaning, it appears that these two forms contain a *functional feature* that does not allow them to be in free variation.

Let us now check and see what happens in the case of PC and PS. Consider the examples under (11):

- (11) a. Ion a intrat în clasă și ne-a salutat. [preterite meaning, but deictic]
Ion entered-PC the classroom and said hello-PC
b. Ion intră în clasă și ne salută. [preterite meaning, no connection with *now*]
Ion entered-PS the classroom and said hello-PC
c. * Ion intră în clasă și ne-a salutat.
Ion entered-PS the classroom and said hello-PS

If the two tenses were indeed equivalent in meaning and function, the sentence under (11c) would be grammatically correct, which is not the case. This fact proves that PC and PS are *not* equivalent. This conclusion is supported by the third test, stated below:

c) the ‘reverse order’ constraint

Consider the semantic relation between the sentences in example (12) and then compare the result with the one under (13):

(12) Ion căzu. Marin îl împinse.

‘Ion fell-PS. Marin pushed him-PS’

$e_1 > e_2$

(12) demonstrates that PS does not violate the “reverse order constraint”, whereas in (13) it is obvious that PC does not obey the rule:

(13) Ion a căzut. Marin l-a împins.

Ion fell-PC. Marin pushed –PC him.

$e_2 > e_1$

The examples under (12) and (13) illustrate the fact that there is no equivalence between PC and PS: while PS is subject to the ‘reverse order constraint’, in that the events expressed with PS are in sequence, PC violates this rule, since the event expressed by the first sentence under (13) is strictly interpretable as subsequent to the event expressed by the second sentence. This is not true of a purely narrative tense. In this case, PC does not ‘push narration forward’, and is replaceable by a MMCP form, that indicates anteriority, as is demonstrated in (14). Another way of paraphrasing the sentences under (13) is to resort to a connective that indicates a cause-effect relationship between the two events, as shown under (15):

(14) Ion a căzut. Îl împinsese Marin.

Ion fell-PC. Pushed-MMCP him Marin.

‘Ion fell. Marin had pushed him.’

(15) Ion a căzut pentru că l-a împins Marin.

Ion fell-PC because pushed-PC him Marin

‘Ion fell because Marin pushed/had pushed him.’

The examples under (11) prove that PC and PS *are in complementary distribution*. This leads us to the conclusion that, although Romanian allows for substitution in the case of these two tenses, substitution should be coherent, without violating the law of complementary distribution.

So far, the results of the three tests we employed with respect to the equivalence between PC and PS converge towards the idea that the two tenses (when employed narratively) are not equivalent, therefore they are not in free variation. This means that narrative PC cannot freely co-occur with narrative PS in a paragraph or a larger text. But is this the case? Consider again the text under (6):

(6) Trecu în revistă orarul, subliniind pe hartă cel mai bun traseu către fiecare, apoi îmi dădu un formular pe care trebuia să îl dau fiecărui profesor la semnat și apoi să i-l returnez la sfârșitul zilei. Zâmbi și îmi spuse, la fel ca Charlie, că speră să fiu fericită aici, în Forks. I-am zâmbit cât de convingător *am putut*. Când m-am întors la camionetă, începuseră să sosească și alți elevi. *Am condus* în jurul colii, urmând linia traficului. *M-am bucurat* să văd că majoritatea mașinilor erau vechi ca a mea, nici una care să sară în ochi. Acasă locuisem într-unul dintre puținele cartiere mai sărace... (trad. Laura Frunză, ed. Rao, 2008)

The text under (6) contains a mixture of narrative PC and narrative PS forms, which are employed by the translator in order to render the meaning of the English Past Tense. Is it maybe the case that PC and PS can, after all, appear in free variation?

Consider also another set of Romanian texts that are recent translations from English. As you will see, out of ten recently translated novels, only two were translated with PS, in strict observance of the norm. Five of these novels use PC and PS in free variation. The rest of three novels use strictly PC, as the only possible narrative past tense available for the Romanian version.

(16)

- Din moment ce nici n-ai cunoscut-o încă, **spuse** (PS) el, de ce te porți așa urâcios?

- Ce întrebare mai e și asta? **zise** (PS) Nan. Doar nu te aștepți să-ți și răspund?

S-au uitat (PC) unul la altul. Și Mor **și-a ferit** (PC) privirea. [...]

- Îmi pare rău, *spuse* Mor. (*The Sandcastle*, Iris Murdoch, trad. N. Visan, Polirom version, 2008, p. 12)

(17)

Era o femeie înaltă și arătoasă, bine îmbrăcată și sigură pe ea. Mor o **privi** (PS) aprobator. În orice conflict cu lumea exterioară, Nan era invariabil un aliat eficient.

- Nan, aceasta este domnișoara Carter, **zise** (PS) Mor, de vreme ce Deymote nu spunea nimic. Domnișoară Carter, soția mea.

Femeile **și-au zâmbit** (PC) și **s-au salutat**, iar Nan **a refuzat** (PC), ca întotdeauna, paharul de *sherry* pe care Deymote, ca întotdeauna, I-l turnase și apoi I-l oferise.

- Am mai spus o dată, e gata masa, **zise** (PC) domnișoara Handford... (*The Sandcastle*, Iris Murdoch, trad. N. Visan, Polirom version, 2008, p. 39-40)

In the case of the examples under (16) and (17), the translator correctly employed PS as the literary narrative tense. However PS forms were replaced by the editor whenever 3rd person plural was used (see “Se uitară, își zâmbiră”). When asked why she replaced the correct PS forms, the editor was not able to support her choice. Our guess is she did not recognize the forms as correct, due to the heavily inflected paradigm of PS. Since PC is less difficult to conjugate and has inflections only for the auxiliary, it is more easily employed by Romanian speakers. This situation however should not translate into literary Romanian.

Consider also the texts below:

(18)

- Dumnezeu, Doamne! **am exclamat** eu uimit.

- Ce înseamnă asta? *se interesă* Helga.

- Poate că s-a declarat război în timpul nopții, mi-am dat cu părerea.

Și-a încleștat convulsiv degetele de brațul meu.

- Nu vorbești serios, nu-I așa? *zise* ea.

Chiar credea că așa ceva era posibil.

- Am glumit, **am asigurat-o**. E vreo sărbătoare, firește.

- Ce sărbătoare? *insistă* ea. (Kurt Vonnegut – *Mother Night*, Polirom, 2004, p. 132, trad. Rodica Mihăilă)

(19)

Gilley *scutură* din cap. Era practic amețit de ceea ce era pe cale să facă.

- țineți-vă banii, știu că o să veniți.

L-a rugat pe domnul Dees să-l urmeze în spatele magazinului, unde **s-au strecurat** amândoi... (Lee Martin – *The Bright Forever*, Polirom, 2007, p. 122, trad. Mihaela Negrilă)

(20)

Odată, demult (se pare), F. **m-a trezit** din somn trăgându-mă de păr.

- Vino cu mine, prietene.
- Cât de ceasul, F.?
- E vara lui 1964.

Avea un zâmbet curios pe față, pe care nu i-l mai văzusem niciodată. Mi-e greu să explic de ce, dar mi **s-a făcut rușine** și mi-**am încrucișat** picioarele.

- Scoală-te, mergem la plimbare.
- Întoarce-te să mă-mbrac.
- Nu vreau.
- Te rog.

Trase cearșaful de pe trupul meu încă greu de somn și de visele despre soția mea pierdută. *Clătină* încet din cap... (Leonard Cohen – *Beautiful Losers*, Polirom, 2003, p.139, trad. Mircea Mihăieș)

(21)

Doreen *bătu* la ușa verde, cu mâner aurit.

Dinăuntru se *auzi* târșăit de picioare și râsul întrerupt al unui bărbat. Apoi un băiat înalt, îmbrăcat în cămașă, cu păr blond, tuns scurt, *crăpă* ușa și *se uită* afară.

- Iubito! *urlă* el.

Doreen *dispăru* în brațele lui. **M-am gândit** că trebuie să fie persoana pe care o cunoaște Lennz.

Am rămas tăcută în prag, cu rochia mea neagră mulată și cu eșarfa neagră cu franjuri [...] **Am pus** un picior în fața altuia.

- Ți-a un diamant, **a spus** cineva și o grămadă de oameni **au izbucnit** în râs.

Unghia mea **bătu** într-o fațetă sticloasă. (Sylvia Plath – *The Bell Jar*, Polirom, 2003, p. 127-128, trad. Alexandra Coliban-Petre)

(22)

Fitzhai **s-a uitat** o clipă în jos, apoi **și-a mișcat** picioarele; cătușele de la glezne au zăngănit. Apoi **a urmat**:

- Ca toți ostașii, și noi beam mult și chefuiam... erau și femei bineînțeles. Nu mai văzusem femei de luni de zile – poate chiar ani. Așa că, în câteva clipe, spiritele și patimile s-au încins.

De Revelle, cuprins de nerăbdare, îl *îmboldi*:

- Hai odată, omule, spune unde vrei să ajungi!
 - Cu toții tăvălisem câte o femeie-două în timpul călătoriei, unii prin hanuri, alții în câte un hambar cu fân. Toți în afară de înfumuratul ăla de Hubert, bineînțeles! Țsta ar fi trebuit să se facă popă, adăugă Fitzhai, privindu-l acru pe cantor.
 - Și ce legătură are asta cu cearta dintre voi? *zise sheriff-ul*, tăios.
 - Pe undeva prin Touraine m-am îmbătat și m-am dus cu o fată la han. Beam cu toții cot la cot pe atunci, inclusiv femeile. După aceea, fata a venit la mine cu taică-su și m-a acuzat că o siluisem.
- A urmat** cu vocea dintr-o dată ascuțită și puternică:
- Dar n-a fost deloc așa! (Bernard Knight – *The Sanctuary Seeker*, Rao, 1998, p 189, trad. Mădălina Monica Badea)

3. Complementary distribution vs. free variation?

A meticulous analysis of the results has issued the following possible combinations of narrative past tenses in Romanian. We offer them in the table below:

(23)

Narrative PS		Narrative PC [+deictic flavour?]	
PS(3d person), IMP, MMCP	PS(1st person), IMP, MMCP - obsolete	PC (1 st person preferred), IMP, MMCP	PC (3d person), IMP, MMCP - <i>more and more accepted</i>
Era (IMP) o după amiază plăcută. La ora cinci apărură (PS) și colegii. Ion îi rugase (MMCP) să aducă ceva de băut. Cu toții aduseseră (MMCP) bere. Se așezară (PS) și se apucară (PS) să bea.	Era o după amiază plăcută. La ora cinci apărui și eu. Ion mă rugase să aduc ceva de băut. Prin urmarea, adusesem bere. Mă așezai și începui să beau.	Era (IMP) o după amiază plăcută. La ora cinci mi-au apărut (PC) și colegii. Îi rugasem (MMCP) să aducă ceva de băut. Cu toții aduseseră (MMCP) bere. Ne- am așezat (PC) și ne-am apucat (PC) să bem	Era (IMP) o după amiază plăcută. La ora cinci au apărut (PC) și colegii. Ion îi rugase (MMCP) să aducă ceva de băut. Cu toții aduseseră (MMCP) bere. S- au așezat (PC) și s-au apucat (PC) să bea.

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The possible reasons for the obsolescence of 1st person PS are:

- a) The dialectal use of PS (resultative, interchangeable with PC)
- b) The deictic character of the first person (which clashes with the strictly 'preterite' meaning of PS)

4. Tentative Conclusions:

1. It is clear that there is a tendency for free variation between PC and PS, in the sense that the two tenses are perceived as equivalent in their narrative meaning (PC = PS). This is also due to the fact that PS seems to be on the verge of being ousted from Romanian due to its heavy inflection and to the fact that PC is less heavily inflected and is semantically rich.

Consider for instance the use of PC as MMCP:

- (24) a. Mi-a spus(PC) că și-a rezolvat (PC) problemele.
- b. Mi-a spus (PC) că își rezolvase (MMCP) problemele.
'He told me he (had) solved his problems'

- PC with MMCP value tends to be preferred in direct speech
 - It's more economical compared to MMCP and easier to use (due to less rich inflection)
2. Free variation seems to be still constrained by **paragraph boundaries** (although not all examples lead to this conclusion, see for instance *The Bell Jar* or the *Twilight* fragment). This means that rules of cohesion are still at play.
 3. Free variation seems to be dictated by choice of person (at least in some of these fragments, although the criterion is becoming fuzzier and fuzzier): PS is preferred for 3rd person forms, whereas PC takes over 1st person forms.
 4. Most Romanian speakers/readers do not seem to perceive the shift from PC to PS as a shift of perspective, which means that this distinction is on the verge of being obliterated.

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SEMANTIC DENSITY: STATE CHANGING WORDS IN THE BUSINESS LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *Various contexts and semantically dense words can act as anchors and represent stimuli which access emotional states, cause reactive state changes, evoking different kinds of associations. Semantically dense words can produce verbal reactions as well as feelings and value statements. Considering the four types of meaning, i.e. the propositional, expressive, presupposed and evoked meaning, we give a word a certain meaning in a given context. Consequently, my paper aims at studying the way words change states, depending on collocability and on context.*

Keywords: *collocability, context, internal states, maps of reality, semantically dense words, types of meaning.*

1. Introduction

The *meaning* language conveys to different people is influenced by a number of factors including *environmental context* and *cultural background*. The surrounding context and the *beliefs* and *values* of the speaker and listener affect the interpretation of spoken expressions. People have different maps of reality: how we symbolize, signify or represent experiential data, and how we interpret or give that data inner significance in our maps of the world. Meaning is a function of the relationship between *map and territory*; different maps of the world will produce different inner meanings for the same experiential territory (Dilts and DeLozier 2000:703).

Pacing internal states, i.e. values and feelings, means finding out how people respond to particular words and situations. This is mostly obvious when we consider people's values reactions to the word *money*, for example, and look at some categories in which one could categorize money values (McLaren 2000:138, 143). The degree to which people agree upon the meaning of a particular message is a function of the degree to which they share a common model of the world, of channels of communication, perception of context and intention, and have similar beliefs and values.

2. Internal States

Our internal states are a reflection of what we sense, the words we hear and the memories we get from the outside world. Hence, various contexts and *semantically dense words* can act as triggers and "take us into the states that are *anchored* to them" (McLaren 2000: 135, emphasis in the original). Words that act as anchors represent stimuli which access

emotional states, cause reactive state changes, evoking useful/not useful, pleasant/unpleasant associations. Different sensations, feelings, emotions and beliefs come to mind when we hear various words that have semantic density for us.

As it has already been mentioned, semantically dense words can produce *verbal reactions* as well as sensations, *feelings*, beliefs, *value statements*. **Contexts** make considerable difference with words like *money*, *profit*, *target*, *race*, *ball*, *bankruptcy*. The word *money* might lead to different states in a manager who values money and equates it with power and for whom the power value might be *If I raise enough money, I will open another bank*, or in an entrepreneur who thinks about taking big risks and whose variation might be *As soon as I raise enough money I'll start a new business*. The same holds valid with the representatives of a community projects agency, who concentrate on the social value of money and for whom the approach might be *"Since we have saved a large sum of money, we can afford spending some time on voluntary work."* On a competitive market, the word *bankruptcy* may sound encouraging for those businessmen who take advantage from their rivals' misfortunes, and devastating for those who are actually forced to close their companies and open the door to their competitors. The meaning of these words also depends on the special interest one takes in something.

3. Types of meaning and semantically dense words in business communication

Considering the *four types of meaning*, i.e. the **propositional**, **expressive**, **presupposed** and **evoked** meaning described by Cruse (1986) in his *Lexical Semantics*, we give a word a certain meaning in a given context.

Meaning is greatly influenced by context: the same communication or behaviour will take on different meanings in different contexts. Having a lot of money, for instance, may be looked upon as *success* by some people, but a *risk* or a *burden* by other business people.

Thus, the propositional meaning of *money* is what you earn by working and can use to buy things; money can be in the form of coins or notes that you can carry around with you:

e.g. *Don't forget to change some money at the bank.*

The expressive meaning of the noun *money* is obvious in phrases such as: *there's money (to be made) in sth.* (i.e. you can earn a lot of money from doing a particular job or type of business), *I'm not made of money* (i.e. you cannot afford something when someone asks you to pay for it), *have*

money to burn (i.e. to have more money than you need, so that you spend it on unnecessary things), *get your money's worth* (to get something worth the price that you paid), *be in the money* (informal, to have a lot of money suddenly, or when you did not expect to), *money is no object* (informal, one can spend as much money as one wants to on something), *for my money* (i.e. giving your opinion about something to emphasize that you believe it strongly), *be (right) on the money* (i.e. to be completely correct or right) (LDCE 2003: 1062):

e.g. *There is a lot of money in PR consultancy these days.*
If you've got money to burn, these expensive diamond rings are right for you.
If they can afford to bid for these luxurious saloon cars, then money is no object to them.

The expressive meaning of money is also emphasized by modifiers. For example, *pay good money for sth* will be given the meaning: to spend a lot of money on something.

e.g. *Take care of this digital camera. I paid good money for it.*

The meanings of some words may be more or less shared by the members of a particular culture or group. In the phrase,

e.g. *This is hot money.*

the adjective *hot* which modifies the word *money* may mean one thing to a particular business community (i.e. money that is moved quickly from place to place in order to be invested in the most profitable things in different places: *If interest rates go lower, some of the hot money will start to leave*), and may have another meaning to a different group, traffickers, for example (i.e. money obtained from illegal activities that is invested in ways which hide its source: *The hot money is generated by the cocaine industry*).

The noun *money* will be given different meanings in idiomatic phrases (patterns) such as *money bag* (informal, someone who has a lot of money – used humorously) and *money-grabbing employers* (informal, employers determined to get a lot of money, even by unfair or dishonest methods):

e.g. *He lends money to all his friends as if he were a money bag.*
He has turned into a cynical money-grabbing company manager.

With a presupposed meaning, *money* is used in collocations such as *lend/borrow/owe money*, *pay/waste money (for/on sth)*, *raise money*, *save money*, *get/earn money*, *make money*, *spend money*:

e.g. *She is working on an investment project now, and **making a lot of money**.*
*I **owe money** to the bank and I'm worrying about my regular repayments.*
*We **raise money** for our start-up company from private investors.*

There are few phrases having exactly the meaning of the words that make them up. For example, the phrase *to make money* means “to conduct a business as to make profit”. But, in fact, nobody *makes money*, with the exception of counterfeiters or workers in a mint. Similarly, *to throw money away* means “to spend money foolishly”, but nobody literally *throws money away*. A metaphorical meaning may be met in all phrases. That is why, we may talk of a surface and a deep meaning of idiomatic phrases.

Money also commonly occurs in collocations such as *money box* and *money belt*, denoting a box in which one puts one's money to save it, and a special belt one can carry money in while traveling:

e.g. *I put my savings in the **money box** to pay the bank charges.*

Another collocation is *pour money* which means “pump/put money into sth.” (i.e. give money to a company or business so that it will become successful and profitable):

e.g. *Venture capitalists **pour money into** new business operations hoping to make enough money to double their turnover.*

Other combinations may be *money maker* / *money-spinner* (a product or business that earns a lot of money) as in the example

e.g. *The mail-order business is a real **money-spinner** or, in money run/walk/parade (a teenagers' promenade, a ritual parade of courting couples or hopeful 'singles'). This dated term was used particularly before World War II to describe both the location and the practice. The expression continued to be used by older speakers until the 1960s (Thorne 1990:343).*

Similarly, the word *profit* will be given different meanings by the different participants in the discourse. Thus, one will understand it as “money that one gains by selling things or doing business”:

e.g. *He sold his shares and **made a profit** of \$30 million.*

Someone else will refer to *profit* as “an advantage that s/he gains from doing something” (used formally):

e.g. *There is no profit in postponing signing the contract.*

With a presupposed meaning, *profit* is used in collocations like *make/earn/turn a profit, boost/maximize/report profits*:

e.g. *Apple will have to sell almost 500,000 Mac mini computers a year to **turn a profit** on this new product.*
*Sephora, Marks & Spencer and Roberto Rossi all **reported** huge **profits** at the end of last year.*

The presupposed meaning of the word *profit* is also emphasized by collocations such as *profit and loss account* (a financial statement showing a company’s income, spending, and profit over a particular period), *profit-making organization* (a profit-making organization or business that makes a profit), *profit sharing* (a system by which all the people who work for a company receive part of its profits):

e.g. *This company’s **profit and loss account** shows a total income of \$1bn.*
*Emporiki Bank will make **profit sharing** payments of \$2m.*

Business people have long appreciated the power and the potency of the word *profit*. We frequently encounter the phrase *profit centre*, but what does it mean precisely? To some, “profit centre” means a part of a business that is expected to produce profits, or that is used as a unit in calculating profits in relation to other parts:

e.g. *Porsche’s R&D strategy functions for other auto makers too, including Ford, and is run as a **profit centre**.*

Others believe it means a building that is used for a particular activity.

In the same way, there will be arguments on the different meanings of the noun *target*: 1. something that you practise shooting at, especially a round board with circles on it. 2. the person or place that is most directly affected by an action, especially a bad one. 3. something that you are trying to achieve or reach, such as a total, an amount, or time. It preserves two of these three meanings in the collocations *target practice* and *ales/attainment/growth target, target date*:

e.g. *2014 is the **target date** for the completion of the 10,000 km highway.*

Furthermore, with a presupposed meaning, *target* is used in collocations such as *aim at/be committed to/meet/reach/set/stick to target*:

e.g. *Retailers promote their products to **meet sales targets**.*
*If we **stick to target**, the project for building the hydroelectric dam should be completed in three years.*

The word *ball* may acquire different meanings in different contexts. The propositional meaning of *ball* is a round object that is thrown, kicked, or hit in a game or sport.

With a presupposed meaning, *ball* is used in collocations such as *throw/hit/kick/catch a ball*.

e.g. *The striker took a shot at goal, but the goalkeeper **caught the ball**.*

The word *ball* also appears in false collocations such as *have a ball* (informal, have a very good time), or *have/keep too many balls in the air* (struggle to deal with more than one problem or job at the same time):

e.g. *The company won't be able to **keep that many balls in the air**.*

The expressive meaning of the noun *ball* is obvious in idiomatic phrases such as *on the ball* (informal, able to think or act quickly and intelligently), *the ball is in sb's court* (it is their turn to take action or to reply), *carry the ball* (to take responsibility over something), *start the ball rolling* (to start something happening).

e.g. *He is really **on the ball** and gives quick solutions to whatever problems.*
*I gave them all the details of the contract: **the ball is in their court** now.*

Context has the same importance in revealing the meaning of the phrases, as in the examples:

e.g. *Luke and Frank were **playing ball** in the park.*
*So far, the company has refused to **play ball**, postponing an imminent takeover.*

In the former sentence, the phrase *play ball* has the meaning of “hitting/catching/throwing a ball as a game or activity”, whereas in the latter sentence, the same phrase gets the meaning of “doing what someone else

wants you to do”. Thus, the sentence in which a word is used may be considered as the context determining the meaning of the component words.

Other combinations where *ball* is a term may be *ball park figure* (a number or amount that is almost, but not exactly, correct), *a whole new ball game* (a situation that is very different from the one you are used to), *a ball of fire* (informal, someone who has a lot of energy and enthusiasm):

e.g. *The World Bank decided to grant a credit to poor countries to the value of \$50bn but it's just a **ball park figure**.*
*They used to work in the production line, but personal selling is **a whole new ball game**.*

As we have seen, some collocations containing the word *ball* are polysemantic, sharing a literal (propositional) meaning and a metaphorical one, as in *open the ball*, meaning literally “to officially start the ceremony/party and have the first dance”, and figuratively “to take the initiative/to start doing something”:

e.g. *They **opened the ball** with a slow dance.*
*The government **opened the ball** for helping exports in the Middle East.*

A polysemantic meaning is displayed by *ball and chain* “a heavy metal ball on a chain, tied to a prisoner’s legs to stop him from escaping”, and metaphorically “something that limits one’s freedom and stops one from doing what one wants to do”:

e.g. *The sentenced prisoners went to trial in **ball and chain**.*
*The depreciation of fixed assets was seen as a **ball and chain** for the company.*

Therefore, one should take into consideration the fact that most words are polysemantic, and each meaning is revealed in certain circumstances. It is obvious that a correct inventory of any vocabulary can be made only if taking into account the whole set of contexts in which each word can appear.

4. Conclusion

As a conclusion, I can state that *context is prevailing* in revealing the differences in meaning of a word and the type of meaning words are used with. It is as interesting as useful to see how semantically dense words trigger verbal reactions and value statements. Furthermore, it is important to study the way words change states, depending on collocability and on the

context. How successful one is in communication, in general, and in business communication, in particular, depends on how s/he uses words.

There are many variations in the ways that people give meaning to the same words. We “understand” what a person is saying, but we may each have different representations. To give a new twist to an old saying, “A word is worth a thousand pictures”.

To conclude, in the process of communication, we need to pace the interlocutor in order to find out what some of their triggers and anchored states are related to. Most of these words are non-specific, because they cannot be sensed directly, they are abstractions and generalizations. They are likely to fire an anchor based on the experience that each of us has encountered.

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SECTION FOUR:
LITERATURE STUDIES

INTERSECTIONS IN HAROLD PINTER'S *ONE FOR THE ROAD*

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Abstract: *'One for the Road' shows the author's unequivocal attitude towards repression and towards the totalitarian context. Harold Pinter's one-act play hosts a mixture of political, social and psychological references whose intersections, reflected in technical devices, structure and setting, contribute to the economy of the work.*

Keywords: *intersections, multiple perspectives, postmodernism, technical devices*

1. Introduction

Pinter's plays host an ever-growing tension that lingers beyond or around the apparent simplicity of his characters, setting and plot and instil various interpretations in readers. One can thus complain about the openness of his plays towards social, personal, historical, political, cultural aspects, an openness that has enhanced with Pinter's preference for generalization. In Quigley's opinion multiple perspectives rather obscure than explain the text: "The trouble is that these various perspectives serve best as ways into the texture of the plays rather than as summations of the implications of that texture, and if excessively relied upon, they begin to obscure what they seek to clarify." (Quigley 2001:7) Pinter himself admitted that he did not always understand the ambiguities of his plays.

As Raby noticed, "Pinter is a playwright who constantly reinvents himself" (Raby 2001:2). Indeed, Pinter chose to reinvent or deconstruct the myth of the home and room that used to offer protection. The geometrical limits that Pinter sets urge the readers, in an already established postmodernist context, to explore the inner space and to imagine possibilities outside the room/house. The room becomes a stimulus, a knot or a crossroads where people, ideas, lives intersect, where sections or sequences of lives and ideas interact. Pinter's room demonstrates how "miniature can accumulate size", the fact that "it is *vast* in its way". (Bachelard 1994:215)

Although it is an one-act play, *One for the Road* (1984) compensates through the various issues tackled, through its implied geometry, that is a network of roads and rooms, of lines and knots, and through the effects of large-scale generalization. The play transcends well-established patterns in literature and even patterns that Pinter had established in his previous plays. As regards the novelty that this play brings, the source and the making of the play, its main theme and the symbol of the room are worth mentioning.

2. Intersections of ideological perspectives

With *One for the Road*, Harold Pinter settled the third phase in the evolution of his dramas of displacement by switching his representations towards politics and towards the repressive processes of authoritarian regimes. “Pinter has never shrunk from taking up causes and from acting, and speaking, publicly for what he believes to be right.” (Raby 2001:3) He thus enlisted in the postmodern movement of social and political contextualization of art. According to critics, Pinter’s transition to a “self-consciously and self-proclaimed explicitly political dramatist” seems to be partly indebted to his interest in Turkish restriction of Kurdish human rights, which is enlarged to other “repressed and dispossessed races – Irish, Welsh, Basque, Estonian, Urdu.” (Rabey 2003:57) A catamorphic movement to the playwright’s Portuguese and Jewish origin renders even more coherence to the choice of subject matter for his dramas. (Greenwald 2002:1665)

One for the Road is a play where too much tension is concentrated due to its ideological density and to its breathtaking suspense. It functions like a convergence point where a supposedly almighty character performs ostentatiously in front of his victims whom he eventually mutilates or kills, demonstrating thus his sterility, frustrations and the fear that they might disseminate anything related to that experience. By killing or mutilating, therefore reducing to silence, his audience, Nicolas repeatedly and unconsciously annihilates phases of his life. The play invites to multilayered analysis, since the playwright insistently warns the readers against the main character by outlining his portrait from moral, psychological, intellectual and social perspectives. Victims of Nicolas’s verbal and physical aggression (the latter being indirect), the other characters are only pretexts for his performance and contribute to the creation of different contexts that reveal different forms of aggression and manifestations concealing the protagonist’s frustrations.

According to Pinter’s confession, the play is an aesthetic outburst of rage emerging from a conversation at a London cocktail party. Pinter asked two Turkey women what they thought about political repression in their country and was amazed at their answers:

They said, “Oh, well it was probably deserved ... they were probably Communists. We have to protect ourselves against Communism.” I said, “When you say ‘probably,’ what kind of facts do you have?” They of course had no facts at their fingertips “But what do you have to say about torture?” I asked. “Oh, you’re a man of imagination.” I said, “Do you mean it’s worse for me than for the victims?” They gave another shrug and said, “Yes, possibly.” Whereupon instead of strangling them, I came back immediately, sat down, and, it’s true, started to write *One for the Road*. (Greenwald 2002:1657)

The play is not a reflection of this conversation, nor does it aim to represent the political repression of the Kurds in Turkey. Instead of serving a cause, as literature is art and not a political tool, it rather creates a possible and very general situation of political repression that can echo various historical events in the readers' minds, aiming to raise cultural, political, historical awareness by "strangling" ignorance and indifference.

Pinter's story about how he got to write *One for the Road* reminds of the aesthetic principles promoted at the beginning of the twentieth century when authorial awareness developed. Should readers consider Joyce's question: "If a man hacking in fury at a block of wood (...) makes there the image of a cow, is that image a work of art? If not, why not?" (Joyce 1993:255), it is obvious that Pinter released his fury in his words. The play is the proof of the evolution from modernism to postmodernism since, by transgressing this border, the playwright skilfully turns a humanitarian message stemming from a political and social burden into an artistic form. The women's idea that imagination can make facts worse than they really are was probably a challenge for Pinter who imagined and referred to the worst physical tortures, without describing them, to make the readers feel worse than the victims by imagining tortures. Thus, Pinter has placed the burden of the meaning(s) on the readers.

According to Quigley, the focus of the play is on the process of self-justification reflected in the social interaction between the oppressor and the oppressed:

What is dramatized is not physical torture, murder or rape so frequently referred to in critical discussion, but the process of self-justification they promote and the differing consequences for the oppressor and the oppressed of their limited persuasiveness. (Quigley 2001:10)

Nicolas's justification is as evasive as the two Turkey women's. Nicolas says: "I have never been so moved, in the whole of my life, as when (...) the man who runs this country announced to the country: We are all patriots, we are as one, we all share a common heritage. Except you, apparently." (Pinter 2002:1660) The women say: "Oh, well, it was probably deserved ... they were probably Communists. We have to protect ourselves against Communism." (Greenwald 2002:1657)

Although Pinter himself used to be an adept of the avoidance of political references and propaganda in literature – "I find agitprop insulting and objectionable." (Greenwald 2002:1657), he said – *One for the Road* marks the turning point in his authorial principles and career. Therefore it is

a play where the 80s authoritarian politics and artistic means of expression intersect, displaying the author's awareness of the power of drama to transmit messages and elicit reactions and his awareness of the audience's indifference to contemporary or historical events similar to those imagined in the play. He confesses that a too great similarity between his characters and people all over the world hinders the latter from sharing his attitude. The New York theatergoers, for example, said: "We know all about this. We do not need to be told." "I believe they were lying" said Pinter. "They did not know about it and did not want to know" he said concluding that "they themselves were too often 'interrogators' in their daily lives." (Greenwald 2002:1657)

By deliberately anchoring his play in reality and by placing the action in a non-specific setting where a character is accused of an unnamed crime by an unnamed government, Pinter makes his creation reflect contemporary and echo past situations of physical, spiritual and psychic torture. This generalization, floating like an accusation against any government and creating the tension of an unexpected and unseen danger, is upheld by the structure of the play – mainly a monologue in one act where any disagreement with the speaker is a sign of social abnormality. In his study on "Pinter, politics and postmodernism", Austin Quigley shows how Pinter's play is closer to Lyotard than to Habermas:

Pinter's plays lean towards Lyotard rather than Habermas in one of the key debates about postmodernism. For Habermas, as Lyotard reads him, the continuing goal of a democratic society is the Enlightenment pursuit of social and political consensus; for Lyotard, the great danger of the pursuit of consensus is that if too many people agree on too many things, disagreement becomes a sign of social abnormality, dissent becomes unpatriotic and difference becomes intolerable – precisely the scenario implied by Nicolas's attempt to invoke social consensus in *One for the Road*. (Quigley 2001:14)

Nicolas announces the dissent between "we all" and Victor, "apparently", and Victor's family implicitly, without a reference to a political direction or another, which emphasizes the intersection of political and social aspects within the community. Social interaction is reflected in the existence of a family, in the interrogation of the family members, in the allusions to the existence of larger groups of people such as "we all" and soldiers. While Nicolas attempts to make the family reach the social consensus, Victor and Gila make efforts towards the adjustment to the imposed pattern/behaviour, which means a clash between personal and social and a surrender of the individual. Pinter actually grasps the moment of collision, the crossroads where these aspects meet, which makes his play

reflect the contrast between Habermas, followed by Nicolas, and Lyotard suggested by Pinter's approach, Victor's silence and Gila's adjustments.

In Quigley's opinion the conflict between personal values and political values leads to "the recurring clash in the plays between competing allegiances of various kinds on various scales which require of the characters constant and complex adjustment" (Quigley 2001:19) These Protean and conflictual social situations represent an important source of challenges and opportunities for Pinter. (Quigley 2001:19)

3. Formal intersections: technical devices, the geometry of the setting, intertextuality

One for the Road transfers political and social aspects to a more visual and formal aspect of the play which materializes in the devices Pinter uses for the sake of artistry and in a geometrical representation of the setting that implies a network of similar, complementary and opposed elements (such as road, room, home). Within the economy of the text and as a support for both tension and theme, the organization of the above-mentioned elements suggests the dialectics of inner and outer spaces.

Pinter does not abandon his pauses and "silences" in the text, which renders the play fragmentary and make the reader/audience ponder on the meaning inter sections, within the intervals. The play is structured into four sections, each section presenting a Nicolas who according to his interlocutor – Victor, Nicky or Gila – changes the topic and reshapes his aggressive and vengeful attitude. Nicolas's hypostases can be seen as constant readjustments to the interlocutors, as social appearances that reveal Nicolas's attitude and manipulative techniques imposing adjustments on the oppressed. The fourth section, far from being a resolution, ensures the cyclicity of the play as Nicolas addresses Victor again and prepares to move on, after he has made all the adjustments: Victor's language was cut, Gila was raped many times and the boy probably killed.

Pinter places the action in the room, but the room has a reversed function and meaning. In *One for the Road* it is an official/public space where people only stop for a short moment and then continue the road, sometimes in a different direction. Instead of suggesting solitude and intimacy, the rooms in this play are social spaces where strange people meet and interact – verbally or physically, which makes the room a more dangerous space than the road. The three family members are displaced (from their home which is vandalized) and separated – three roads and three different rooms – according to the adjustments they need. Nicolas's room is a sort of meeting place where torture is explained and justified, where verbal communication is focused in the process of dramatization. Those who enter

it are given a drink for the road to strengthen them for the next experience, as Nicolas's gesture may imply repetition. Unlike the situations in Pinter's previous plays – *The Room* and *The Caretaker*, for example – where the aggressor enters the room, this time the aggressor/interrogator is in the room and the experience the interrogated people/victims have to be through is even more traumatic since they have to deal with an unfamiliar setting. The idea of threat and danger is emphasized as the victims are deprived of property and protection, as they are displaced and vulnerable. Nicolas's job to talk to different people and adjust his speech to his interlocutors forces him into alienation and gives him the impression of power growing out of a contextual stability. His secure position is a false impression of stability, as his mind alters and he loses control over himself, while gaining control over the others. The official room is the most appropriate setting for both mental and physical intersections.

Nicolas dominates the stage by moving and speaking. His monologue scattered with pauses and moments of silence reveals his personality and frustrations. While trying to dominate Victor, Nicolas actually shows that his power is a matter of conjuncture and that he will always be spiritually and intellectually inferior to his victim who remains, unless forced, silent. The play highlights Pinter's fascination with silence as presented in his essay "Writing for the Theatre" (1962):

So often, below the word spoken, is the thing unknown and unspoken ... a language where under what is said, another thing is being said. It is in the silence that my characters are most evident to me. There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed. The speech is an indication of that which we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place One way of looking at a speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness. (in Greenwald 2002:1656)

The two characters in the first act communicate through different silences, thus Pinter's two silences intersect: Nicolas's speech is not directly related to Victor's situation, it is a self-justification that actually reveals Nicolas's thoughts and impressions, which may suggest unspeakable terror and suffering. Victor cannot or refuses to communicate, suggesting that his words might endanger his and his family's situation. A proof is the boy, Nicky, who is very sincere, tells Nicolas exactly what he thinks about the soldiers and is killed. Silence and/or adaptation of answers, in Gila's case, are a means to survive. Sometimes silence is interpreted, as the interlocutor can understand what he wants – Nicolas understands that Victor does not respect him because the latter prefers not to answer his question. On the

other hand, neutral answers can be interpreted just like silence, they betray the speaker:

NICOLAS. You do respect me, I take it?

He stands in front of Victor and looks down at him. Victor looks up.

I would be right in assuming that?

Silence.

VICTOR (*quietly*). I don't know you.

NICOLAS. But you respect me.

VICTOR. I don't know you.

NICOLAS. Are you saying you don't respect me?

Pause.

Are you saying you would respect me if you knew me better? Would you like to know me better?

Pause.

Would you like to know me better?

VICTOR. What I would like ... has no bearing on the matter.

NICOLAS. Oh yes it has.

Pause.

[...] I'm intrigued. Firstly because I've heard so much about you. Secondly because if you don't respect me you're unique. Everyone knows the voice of God speaks through me. You're not a religious man, I take it? (Pinter 2002:1659)

Nicolas's ego-centrism is in direct relationship with his socially and politically central position that empowers him and makes him imagine that he is God's messenger and can do anything:

What do you think this is? It's my finger. And this is my little finger. I wave my big finger in front of your eyes. Like this. And now I do the same with my little finger. I can also use both... at the same time. Like this. I can do absolutely anything I like. Do you think I'm mad? My mother did. (Pinter 2002:1658)

Nicolas is supposed to be a government representative and his political authority allows him to tell anything, even that he is mad, as he knows nothing can happen to him. From his central position, Nicolas can pretend madness and be ironic with Victor, who, despite his intellectual level, is as vulnerable as any person who is taken to that room. This one-man show aims to make the victims reveal their feelings through their eyes. When Victor asks Nicolas to kill him, the latter is satisfied and tells Victor: "Your soul shines out of your eyes." (Pinter 2002:1661) Physical torture is thus completed with psychic torture, and the death of one's soul seems to be the worst torture for Pinter, in his position of "a man of imagination".

During the second interrogatory with Gila, Nicolas succeeds in getting the answers he wants by manipulation: he accuses her of having

insulted her father by implying that there was a relation between her father (apparently an example of patriotism and honour, but he died) and Victor. He manipulates Gila into telling what he wants to hear without any other purpose other than a confirmation of his authority, a confirmation of the fact that he can do anything, that he can change the past. Thus, when Gila is asked where she met her husband and she says that she met him in her father's room, Nicolas gets mad and ironically delivers a eulogy of her father's patriotism that caused his death. When he renews the question, she changes the answer so as to please him and states that she met her husband in the street, which does not seem to be a happy choice either. These conversations are moments when, being at a crossroads, the victims have to reconsider their past so as to find a way for a possible future. Reality is not reliable or perceptions of reality are different, Nicolas wants to suggest through the variants that intersect during the interrogatory.

Pinter's play shows contrast between spatial and mental displacement, between micro- and macro-social groups, between personal and social/political identities. While Nicolas's monologue delivered to Victor reveals the speaker's intellectual frustrations, his attitude and cruelty towards Gila, whom he accuses of having brought up a child who was not educated properly and whom he mercilessly humiliates, shows that he had had a frustrating and problematic relationship with his mother. It is obvious that he immaturely projects the fault for Nicky's behaviour to Gila.

Your son is ...seven. He's a little prick. You made him so. You have taught hi to be so. You had a choice. You could have encouraged him to be a good person. Instead, you encouraged him to be a little prick. You encouraged him to spit, to strike at soldiers of honour, soldiers of God. (Pinter 2002:1663)

The accusations he brings to Gila remind of Nicolas's mother who said he was mad. It seems that he hates his mother, and considers that a child is a mother's responsibility, thus blaming his behaviour on his mother and Nick's on Gila. His frustrations, repressions and regressions marked his childhood mutilating his soul and sensitivity and probably denying him mother-son affectionate moments. His frustrations concerning his intellectual level are evident in his attempt to convince Victor of the similarities between them: "You're a civilized man. So am I." By the end of the conversation he succeeds in demonstrating the limits of his education.

The play also offers a favourable context for a perspective upon religion, which contributes to the play as intertextuality. In Nicolas's references to religion, faith and morality can be identified with the alienated perspective that reveals a revisionist attitude facilitated by the fact that

language can cover terrible truths, that it can be beautiful vesture in a terrifying and aggressive world. Religious myths, historical truths/facts and a language that can obscure and distort reality intersect in Nicolas's speeches.

As far as intertextuality is concerned, by claiming to be God's messenger, Nicolas alludes to the vengeful and cruel God in the *Old Testament*, although he is not Jewish. He recreates his position as a mythical, unquestionable and universally recognized one, a position which is supposed to impose respect: "Everyone respects me here. Including you, I take it? I think that is the correct stance." (Pinter 2002:1659) The idea of morality is actually associated with a form of respect for the administrative and military structures of the country.

For Rabey, language has an all encompassing effect serving Pinter to show how it can distort reality: "Initially, Pinter's new-found purposeful impatience with language as moral subterfuge pushes him towards – uncharacteristically – theatrically presentational and demonstrative work, revealing the political fact of how decorous procedural or sentimental language covers up hideous truths, but in a way which documents rather than imaginatively challenges bleak consequences. *One for the Road* critically depicts the appalling degree of power represented by authoritarian coercion, but is a formally coercive play: the dramatic and imaginative experience it offers is that of association with Nicolas's authorized sadism or with his victims' fearful impotence in the face of violation." (Rabey 2003:58)

4. Conclusion

Within the context of the already established postmodernism, *One for the Road* is a play limited to one act, but with unlimited challenges for the audience in both ideas and form. Displacement, tension, collision, border-crossing, reversed symbolism, multiple perspectives, "the instability and indispensability of verbal interaction, the shifting status of social realities" (Quigley 2001:9) intersect in one of Pinter's text which still preserves the imprint of his style and setting. Marking a new step in the playwright's evolution, this play shows that both the author and his characters are products of their environment, that their behaviour is conditioned. Irving Wardle had noticed much earlier that "Pinter mimicked a social discourse degraded and deformed by environmental pressure, and that he was politically opposite for just that reason." (Stokes 2001:31)

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STORYTELLERS AND HISTORIANS IN *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN* AND *THINGS FALL APART*

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Abstract: This research aims to analyse and compare the role of the narrator in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. They both use oral storytelling techniques in their narration, but whereas Chinua Achebe's narrator combines the authoritative voice of the historian with the mythic timeless voice of the teller of tales, Saleem, Rushdie's garrulous narrator wants to escape history by embracing a skaz narrative.

Keywords: storyteller, historian, skaz, historical and mythical consciousness

1. Historian, Chronicler or Storyteller?

Both Chinua Achebe and Salman Rushdie come from cultures which were deeply affected by the process of colonization. Not to mention that, before colonization, both cultures were to a great extent oral. By the mere fact that both authors write in English and write about their culture using the colonizers' language makes them endowed with a double consciousness. But, before proceeding, I would like to state that I am not so much interested in writing yet another paper about the paradigmatic relationship between literacy and colonialism or the antagonistic relationship between literacy and oral cultures, that is already a well-established fact which was given due consideration by many critics, starting with Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back*. But what I would like to demonstrate is that whereas Rushdie's narrator, Saleem belongs more to the category of the storyteller; Achebe's anonymous narrator is a paradoxical mixture between the historian and the storyteller. For this very reason I will start my analysis by bringing forth the distinction between the chronicler and the historian as it was addressed by Walter Benjamin in his essay *The Storyteller*. According to Benjamin, the chronicler, which is the profane variant of the storyteller, is the historyteller and the historian is the writer of history. Furthermore, the historian has a tendency towards explaining the events he talks about, whereas the chronicler of the Middle Ages, the forerunner of the historian of today is more concerned with interpreting and integrating the happenings he deals with in 'the great inscrutable course of the world' (Benjamin 1973: 96).

The historian clearly belongs to the historical consciousness; in fact he is at the very basis of it, since he is the one who records the past, who preserves it for the next generations. In the same time, since recording history entails writing it down, the historian is the product of literacy, which

according to JanMohammed (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2002: 80) 'destroys the immediacy of personal experience and the deeper socialisation of the world and consequently the totalising nature of oral cultures'. In the same time, according to Ong (2002: 95) a literate person readily assumes that written records have more authority than spoken words as evidence of a long-past state of affairs; hence, the association between written records or historical discourse and power. A narrator who assumes the position of the historian, thus distancing himself from his text is struggling for power and credibility.

Talking about memory in oral communities, Jack Goody (2000: 43) states that oral cultures like all cultures rely on stored knowledge, but since writing is unknown to them their knowledge is carried in the mind. However, according to the same author, their memory cannot be verbatim reproduction since only with literacy the latter becomes possible. Thus memory is equated with reworked experience (Goody 2000: 43) and tradition (Benjamin 1973: 98). Furthermore, Ong (1967: 23) goes on to argue that 'in verbal accounts of the past in an oral-aural culture, the items that we normally isolate and record as facts become entangled with myth', creating that mythic consciousness to which the storyteller adheres.

Rushdie's narrator, Saleem is the storyteller *par excellence*. All his narration is a product of memory. The India, he is creating is shaped entirely by memory, not by any external, recorded sources. It is a deeply personalized country, infused with magical elements. Rushdie himself felt the need to specify that: 'what I was actually doing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: "my" India, a version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions.' (Rushdie 2010: 10)

We can no longer say the same thing about Achebe's narrator. We do not know how he obtains his information; he places himself above the sources of his text, in fact he is external to his story. This is also reflected in Achebe's choice of a third person narration, instead of a first person narration. He positions himself outside his text; he is an outsider, creating the illusion of objectivity and detachment. Thus, at times he even assumes the voice of the anthropologist, a voice which has been misinterpreted and unfairly criticised by Achebe's early critics.

While reading *Things Fall Apart*, we never question the validity of the things presented, whereas, Saleem's narration consciously flouts the historical truth. One of the many examples is Gandhi's assassination. 'I have discovered an error in chronology. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi occurs, in these, pages, on the wrong date. But I cannot say, now, what the actual sequences of events might have been; in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time' (Rushdie 1995:166). Saleem's narrative

clearly violates the records of what we call the “official” history; he even goes further and integrates history into the fantastic, thus creating, to quote Brian McHale, an apocryphal history (1987: 90). Nevertheless, my concern here is not to demonstrate that *Midnight's Children* belongs to the great family of historiographic metafiction, but to show how Saleem, although an educated character, tries to escape historical consciousness which he associates with literacy and thus with colonial intrusion.

2. Mythic and historical consciousness: a successful synthesis

In the light of the first pieces of evidence, it would appear that Saleem is the prototype of the storyteller and Achebe's narrator due to the detached tone he adopts is more a historian than a storyteller. That is why, in order to understand his pertaining to a double consciousness (both mythic and historical), we have to look at the role of the reader in the economy of his narration. Starting with the title of Achebe's novel we can come up with a fairly accurate description of the intended reader, who is said to play such an important part in the deciphering of the story and for whom Achebe wrote his story. If the reader recognises the quotation from Yeats, he/she is by definition not a part of Ibo society (Smith 1998: 8).

Furthermore, the detailed way in which Ibo society is presented – especially in part one and two – is meant to inform an outsider about Ibo's customs in an almost anthropological way. In other words, we are dealing either with a reader endowed with a historical consciousness or, if the reader is an Ibo who lost his/her roots, with double consciousness (mythic and historical). Achebe's narrator, who is also a skilful orator, has to convince this maybe sceptical reader that his story is credible, that Ibo culture is valuable and worth recording. But his job is very difficult; he has to avoid sentimentalism by keeping a distance from his narration and by requiring a participatory reader. Since he does not offer answers, he forces the reader to ask himself/herself questions.

Nevertheless, in the same time, how could one do justice to the rich Ibo culture if one adopted only a historical and anthropological perspective? Much of its oral characteristic would have been lost. Thus the narrator is forced to adopt an almost ‘schizophrenic voice’ (Smith 1998: 24). According to Angela Smith, the narrator has two modes of expression, and two sets of vocabulary which he consciously juxtaposes against one another: the detached vocabulary of the anthropological observer and the mnemonic chant like rhythm of the teller of tales – a double consciousness.

The oral characteristics of Achebe's narrative and the sophisticated interplay between orality and literacy have been extensively discussed many times before. C. L. Innes' quoted in Jago Morrison (2007: 18) sees Achebe's

narrative as ‘a form of creative appropriation’ between English and Ibo culture in which English is Africanized. Abdul JanMohammed (1998: 86-106) by paying special attention to the style and structure of *Things Fall Apart* also demonstrates that Achebe’s narrative is a product of a double consciousness. He argues that the distinction between mythic and historical consciousness has been formulated in ethnocentric, Manichean terms, while in fact Achebe’s narrative and style ‘transcends the Manichean relations by a brilliant synthesis of oral and chirographic cultures’ (1998: 104). Furthermore, JanMohammed’s insight into the style of *Things fall Apart* proves to be very valuable. Thus, he carefully notices the paratactic structure of Achebe’s sentence which ‘achieves its effect largely through juxtaposition, addition and aggregation’ (1998: 94). He also analyses Achebe’s clever use of periphrasis and apostasy and his conscious avoidance of casuality as an organising principle which emphasizes the flat structure of the novel (1998: 98).

Many critics, among which Angela Smith (1998) and C. L. Innes (1990) took great interest in the novel’s wealth of proverbial material, folk songs, parables, legends, sayings and Ibo vocabulary. In oral story-telling, according to Ruth Finnegan (2007: 45) performance was crucial, this was a complex and multi-faced process which involved much “ready-made” material, or pre-learned information. The songs, proverbs or legends had a very definite role, to actively engage the audience into the weaving of the story. The listeners knew the songs and proverbs, thus they could interfere in the story, make comments or ask questions. Many characters in the novel use stories or proverbs to create a bond between them and the other members of the community or to define themselves against their peers. Thus, we have women’s stories and men’s stories.

Folk tales have also a more technical role, that of communicators. In an oral type of mentality, tales or legends would constitute communicators, since their ability to store information about the past is never questioned. As Ong (2002: 137) remarked, narratives - here I also include proverbs, legends, parables - are in certain ways ‘more widely functional in primary oral cultures than in others’. In an oral culture, according to Havelock quoted in Ong (2002: 137) knowledge cannot be managed in elaborate, scientifically abstract categories, since it is always contextually bound. That is why, oral culture in general and storytellers in particular have to use stories to store and communicate what they know. Moreover, abstract notions like love or fear are better expressed by using parables or proverbs.

At times we, the readers, when we peruse *Things Fall Apart* have the impression that we are listening to the wise elders of the village telling Okonkwo’s story and adopting a kind of mythic, timeless voice.

Nevertheless, the mythic narrator changes without warning into the anthropological observer and the oral discourse is violently disrupted by words belonging to a different register. Words like “coiffure” (Akveke’s hair), “solid personal achievement”, “succulent breast” create an ironical distance, distance sustained by narrator’s repeated reference to the Ibo people as “those men”. Even the proverbs or the legends have a double status. First of all they create an aural-oral mythic world, an empathetic and participatory atmosphere, and in the same time they become mere tools in the hand of the anthropological observer, tools used to illustrate the rich culture of Ibo people. But as I have already stated, the narrator has to convince; he has to be credible without falling into the trap of sentimentalism.

3. Mythic and historical consciousness: a successful antagonism

Saleem does not have to be credible or to justify himself in front of his readers, since his narration depends almost exclusively on Padma. Rushdie in his desire to have an authentic storyteller - even though the storyteller is an educated, literate man - creates Padma, the narratee, Saleem’s counterpart. She comes from an oral tradition unspoiled by writing, pre-literate, type of society, who like Tai rejects books and the knowledge they record. She is the one who validates his story and defines him as a storyteller.

In oral traditions the audience played an essential role, since oral performance in its pure state is highly participatory and empathetic (Ong 2002: 45). Even the term audience does not seem to be adequate when applied to Padma. It suggests a distance and a marginal position for the listener who in fact takes an active part in the creative act of narration. A more suitable term would be replier, instead of audience or listener. ‘In story-telling the replier enhanced the performance by queries, responses, asides and verbal comments all through the narration’ (Ruth Finnegan 2007: 45). Padma as a replier is greatly empowered, she does not just listen to the story, she comments on it and she even censors it: at one time, dissatisfied with what Saleem has written about her name, she demands that he change his story:

‘What do you know city boy?’ she cried – hand slicing the air . . . ‘ In my village there’s no shame in being named for the Dung Goddess. Write at once that you are wrong, completely. (Rushdie 1995: 32)

Storytelling performance entails a contract between its participants, thus the storyteller has to deliver the story, whilst the ‘replier’ has to listen

to it, and as I have already said, to play an active part in the making of the story as such. According to Roland Barthes quoted in Halevi-Wise (2003:11) texts, and I would add oral delivered stories are 'legal tender, subject to contract, economic stakes, in short *merchandise*'. When Padma takes the decision to leave Saleem, she breaches a contract: that between storyteller and listener, or replier. As a result, his story, to quote him, becomes "Padma-less" (Rushdie 1995: 167), losing its unifying thread and what is more important its credibility.

How to dispense with Padma? How give up her ignorance and superstition, necessary counterweights to my miracle-laden omniscience? (Rushdie 1995: 149)

As long as she believes him, his narration is free from the constraints of reliability.

Not only does Padma legitimise Saleem as a storyteller but she also allows him to use a highly oral discourse, or to use a well-known formalist literary term, a *skaz* narration. As I have already said, his discourse is performative and participatory, redundant and copious, based on the repetition of the just said. It makes use of mnemonic or memory devices that help him construct his story and remember his past. One such mnemonic device is the perforated-sheet that keeps recurring in his story. Furthermore, his story is episodic in accordance with oral tradition rather than teleological like the written discourse, with the episodes connected by recurrent themes and images. Like many oral storytellers he uses repetition with variation, improvising around the same themes. As he himself confesses:

Things - even people - have a way of leaking into each other ...like flavours when you cook. Use Lubin's suicide, for example, leaked into old Adam and sat there in a puddle until he saw God' (Rushdie 1995: 38).

Saleem's oral discourse gives him the pretext to adopt a mythic consciousness which frees him from any constraints, even from the constraints of time. In a mythic oral-aural culture,

there is no history in our modern sense of the term. The past is indeed present, as to a degree that past always is, but it is present in speech and social institutions of the people, not in the more abstract forms in which modern history deals (Ong 1967:23).

In fact the past is always connected with the present, when a past incident ceases to be relevant to the present; it is automatically erased from the collective memory. Hence, he is free to start his story as if it were a

fairy-tale with the well-known formula once upon a time: 'I was born in the city of Bombay.....once upon a time' (Rushdie 1995:10).

Achebe's treatment of time in *Things Fall Apart* confirms the duality of the narrator's voice, his double consciousness. From the very beginning of his narration, he plunges his reader in a mythic time, measured by seasons, cyclic, untouched by human intervention, the legendary times of Amalinze the Cat. This is the mythic time of the first parts in which life follows an uninterrupted pattern. Janmohammed (1998: 99) notices the extreme vagueness of chronology and the fact that time is designated by phrases such as 'many years ago, years ago,' 'as old as the clan itself', 'the worst year in living memory'. These generic indications very much resemble the mythic formula 'once upon a time' and create that timelessness without which oral storytelling would be inconceivable. But then the reader is abruptly pulled from this mythic time into recent historical time with the arrival of the colonizers and Christianity. Although, we still do not have a definite time indication, the reader can place the narrative into a clear historical period, the beginning of the 19th century. The narrative which was up to that moment almost static, frozen in a mythic timelessness moves faster, heading towards the implacable end, an ending brought about by the destructive powers of history.

As far as the supernatural is concerned, the narrator decides to keep the border between the secular and the mythic. Therefore, he finds himself in the difficult position which can be best described through the oxymoronic expression "the outside insider". As an insider, a member of the Ibo culture, he celebrates magic rituals but in the same time, as an outside insider, he becomes the valuable link between Ibo culture and the sceptical and even biased European reader. This is the reason why, he adopts a double consciousness when he describes the Ibo's belief in magic for fear of risking his credibility and confirming the European bias according to which African culture is primitive and naïve. He adopts the mythic voice of the storyteller when he describes or retells the Ibo legends but in the same time he confines the supernatural adventures of the Tortoise or of the Vulture to the realm of fiction, clearly delimiting them from the real world.

In the case of Saleem's narrative, the fantastic is fully integrated into 'reality'. In fact there is no clear border between these orders: the fantastic, the fairytale and the real. Saleem, like most skaz narrators or to use a phrase coined by Wendy Faris, like all Scheherazade's children is freed from a realistic mode and he no longer feel the narrative burden of the past. He somehow manages to invent beyond it and to give an 'idiosyncratic recreation of historical events (Faris 1995: 172)'. His highly idiosyncratic voice combines mythic 'truths' with historical events, creating what John

Foster quoted in Faris (1995: 172) calls 'felt history'. Supernatural creatures and adventures leak into the structure of Saleem's narrative, and we, the readers, adopting Padma's position have no problem in accepting the existence of the midnight's children, or the fact that blood can turn into rubies.

4. Conclusion

Achebe's narrative is a product of a double consciousness (historical and mythic), of a seemingly paradoxical combination of chirographic and oral techniques. Why did he choose this double consciousness? One possible reason was that he wanted to persuade and be credible for his readers. As I have demonstrated he is an example of a successful synthesis between the storyteller and the historian. The mythic voice of the former does not feel threatened or disempowered by the more scientific tone of the latter, and the voice of the historian has only to gain from the timeless tones and creativity of the storyteller. In the same time, Rushdie wanted to create the prototype of the storyteller. And he succeeded; Saleem is not an example of a successful synthesis but of a successful antagonism. He embodies the paradigmatic relation between literacy and orality. Feeling disempowered by English and literacy, he rebels against the coloniser's language and recreates it most inventively.

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IDENTITIES RE-CONSIDERED / MYTHOLOGY RE-WRITTEN

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***Abstract:** This study aims at presenting the intercultural aspect of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*, which are defined as an attempt to create a mythology for and/or of Britain. The Elves, as the main focus of this paper, display how Tolkien re-writes Germanic mythology while creating Middle-earth.*

***Keywords:** Elves, J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, mythology, re-writing, *The Silmarillion*.*

1. Introduction

Julia Kristeva suggests that a text is “a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text”, in which “several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (Kristeva 1980:36). This study aims at displaying how a text is constructed within the (inter-)cultural context reflecting the norms and conventions that are employed in a given society. Each and every text is presented through a symbolic system of interaction with social dynamics and cultural references. In this respect, “the text is not an individual, isolated object but, rather, a compilation of cultural textuality” (Allen 2000:35-36). In accordance with this argument, a text we read and write is present within an intertextual web, in which each text has the potential to become a re-writing of another. A myth can be read as fiction and a representative of cultural or communal identity at the same time: “[M]yths [...] can be seen as widely believed tales told in dramatic form, referring to past events but serving present purposes and/or future goals” (Smith 1991:19). Myths establish a sense of collectiveness, corresponded to people’s own being. Myths express a universe in which people continuously produce and re-produce cultural symbols. In this study, the interaction between Germanic mythology and English literature is displayed through J. R. R. Tolkien’s re-writing of certain mythological figures such as elves, dwarves and magical rings.

2. Importing Texts

Identity, to begin with, is a symbolic membership and a signifier of identification constructed according to this membership. It refers to an identification which is based upon certain attributes such as political, national, ethnic, religious, cultural and civic. Therefore, it requires a community composed of members sharing the same kind of signifier(s), and a sense of belonging experienced by the members of that community.

National identity, like personal identity, is a collective representation of a symbolic unity; and the membership and/or identification, which stands as the basis of this representation, differentiates the Self (a.k.a identity) from the Other. Like all identities, national identity, is defined both as the promoter of a membership and the agent of distinctions. It constructs its own characteristic as well as the Other's otherness, and thus, defines both sides, in a manner of speaking, as "in" and "out". In other words, national identity draws a boundary based upon both including and excluding. This is precisely what Zygmunt Bauman (1987:8) refers to as "splitting the territory": "Each boundary splits the territory into two sides: here and there, in and out, us and them".

In this respect, identity construction is an intertextual project; it requires the presence of the Other and the reception of this presence from a certain point of view, namely interpretation. Identity, in general, bases itself on such an interpretation and thus, can be defined as fiction, which aims to tell its own story. Identity, eventually, is an interpretation, and each interpretation has its own perception of the world and a specific way of reflecting what it sees. This is exactly what fictions do: re-writing the world. From this point of view, national identity is not only a collective identification, but also a symbolic system of values. Value can be defined as an arbitrary measure, which is constructed for the members of a given community to coexist. In this respect, value is a conventional medium defined for the sake of the collective project. While talking about values, we reveal what we believe in, what we find proper or improper; in short, our values reveal who we are.

As all doctrines concerning the foundation of a nation suggest, nation relies on a collective consciousness and a feeling of unity. In this way, it presents a thesis within the cultural realm. Each nation is established by glorifying a unity within culture and constructs its identity through clearly defined components of culture, such as a common language, religion, ethnicity, past, or homeland. Nation signifies a symbolic entity, which is definitely agreed upon, common and hence different from its counterparts. Nation, even as a concept, demands the standardization of each and every unit it contains. This suggests that each nation finds its own meaning as a homogenous entity within itself.

Myth constructs this entity. Myth, in this respect, functions as a perfect medium between the eternal comprehensiveness of what is eternal and the limited, finite and volatile nature of the present. Here, myth is not the language of fantasy but is displayed as a made-up reality. Schelling, a German romantic, displays the ontological components of a nation:

The mythological ideas are neither invented nor voluntarily taken on. – Products of a process independent of thinking and willing, they were of unambiguous and urgent reality for the consciousness subjected to this process. Peoples as well individuals are only the tools of this process, which they not survey, which they serve without understanding it. (Schelling 2007:135)

Through this perspective, myth becomes an elementary unit of cultural re-production, which is basically located in the heart of a membership based on a common past, or a common destiny. Each and every time, cultural re-production requires an interpretation – or more specifically, an imagined world of understanding – within which a cultural and/ or intercultural act of (re-)writing anew is made up.

On a very plain level, myths can be defined as a collection of fictitious stories of an imaginative past. Being a significant part of culture, myths focus on the concept of identity in a collective manner. As Joanna Overing (1997:16) argues, “stating sets of identity criteria for a people and a community,” myths work as part of the system creating collectiveness. Myths, in general, display a communal or national identity within the fight between good and evil (which is also valid in Tolkien’s Middle-earth). Mary Fulbrook, however, draws another parallelism between myth and national identity:

Nations are themselves myths. There is no such ‘real entity’ as a nation: only a social reality, when enough people are prepared to believe in the salience of a certain set of characteristics as attributes of nationhood. Such characteristics might include language, culture, religion, belief in common descent or ethnicity. (Fulbrook 1997:72)

In this perspective, mythology is a symbolic dramatization of a so-called national nature, which people have in their own nature. In other words, this is the Schellingian way of understanding nations by looking at their mythology. This is the “reality” of fiction. Mythology finds its very roots in the essence of a nation; mythology rests in nation.

From time to time national cultural resources may be created by importing and embracing what is essentially foreign. This simply means using another source in establishing the Self, and hence making the cultural riches found in other sources than its own. This is an attempt to establish, or in other words, to “re-create” an original cultural resource. This attempt is often the result of the need to display a national reservoir referring to the national heritage - i.e. mythology. This need, precisely, makes cultural transfer necessary. Embracing what is genuinely foreign can be defined in

Pascale Casanova's words as "in-translation". "In-translation,' conceived as annexation and reappropriation of a foreign patrimony," is, according to Casanova, "[a] way of adding to a fund of literary resources" (Casanova 2004:235). This can simply be regarded as a strategy of compensation. And its aim is to fictionalize its own past in order to build up its own cultural resources. The aim is to make up a heritage of its own, or in other words, (re-)write the heritage of another culture to make it its own.

From this point of view, Tolkien's argument that England lacks a national mythology, and his urge to write down a mythology that is essentially English definitely exemplify this sort of an attempt. Various texts referring to or quoting from Tolkien's letters and personal writings emphasize the opinion that "part of Tolkien's ambition was 'to restore to the English an epic tradition and present them with a mythology of their own'" (Curry 1997:30). As far as his letters and his son Christopher's recollections are concerned, Tolkien's major focus was Englishness rather than Britishness: "I love England,' he told his son, '(not Great Britain and certainly not the British Commonwealth (grr!))'" (Fairburn 1999:74). Within this context, Britain and the British Commonwealth symbolize the empire, an institution, a combination of different cultures and even colonies rather than a single culture and community.

In one of his letters, Tolkien writes about the English people's equivalent in his texts: "The hobbits are just rustic English people, made small in size because it reflects the generally small reach of their imagination - not the small reach of their courage or latent power" (Fairburn 1999:75). However, when the whole story of Middle-earth is taken into consideration, it does not seem quite easy to associate the Hobbits with the rustic English people immediately. This is simply because "Englishness is not inscribed in the text" clearly (Curry 1997:31). With respect to Tolkien's attempt to write a mythology for and of England, national identity in Middle-earth seems to be a complicated theme. This is most probably a direct result of the fact that Tolkien wanted his works to be considered to be parts of a mythology, not an allegory. Making the association between the Hobbits and the English would be far too dangerous, since it would immediately turn the works into a piece of allegory.

Edward Said suggests that "[...] the designation of a beginning generally involves also the designation of consequent intention" (Said 1985:5). Tolkien does not need to go far away from his homeland to reach his own consequent intention. The figures Tolkien displays in his texts, such as the elves, can be traced back to *Codex Regius* or, in other words *Edda*. These are the figures known within the Germanic mythology from the very beginning; placed somewhere in between the gods and the human beings.

Within that context, Germanic belief portrays a world focusing not only on the gods but on the giants, dwarves and elves who are placed in between the gods and the men, and hence function as the representative of the good and the evil in this aspect. This is, at the same time, a war between light and dark. The fact that the elves are divided into two groups in the old Nordic sagas as *Dunkel-* and *Lichtalben* (dark elves and light elves), is significant in suggesting that the war between light and dark does not only take place among the gods. The creatures placed in between the gods and the men are displayed within the same context. *The Younger Edda (Prose Edda)*, written by the Icelandic poet Snorri Sturluson in the thirteenth century, which is still believed to be one of the most important sources of what we call Germanic mythology, follows the same pattern and divides the elves into two groups - light-elves and dark-elves:

One is there called Álfheim. There dwell the folk that are called light-elves; but the dark-elves dwell down in the earth, and they are unlike the light-elves in appearance, but much more so in deeds. The light-elves are fairer than the sun to look upon, but the dark-elves are blacker than pitch. (Snorri 1897:7/17)

Snorri's division is in tune with the Germanic belief portraying the elves in two opposite ways at the same time. According to this belief, the elves are originated both in light and dark, and they can interact with the mankind. Thereby, the elves, on the one hand are presented as the embodiment of nature's bright, luminous and beautiful aspect. On the other hand, they integrate with the dark, unknown and frightening aspect of the same nature. It is possible that the Germanic tribes conceptualize their need and longing for light in the harsh, dark and very long winters of the north through the image of the elf. In this respect, it can be argued that the elves as light-bearers function as important figures in the inner-world of the Germanic people, by showing that they are not only questioning and making sense of the outer world as well as their inner worlds. The assumption that the elves, who were called *alb* in *althochdeutsch* (the word Elf in German is a relatively young word, which was imported from the English through translation during the eighteenth century) used to sit upon the chest of the sleepers and hence cause them to suffer from both physical and psychological pressure can be traced back in the words *Albdruck* (elf pressure) and *Albtraum* (elf dream), which mean nightmare and sleep paralysis in modern German. This aspect of German elf-belief eminently resembles the Scandinavian belief in the mara, believed to cause nightmares, which are also similar to the legends of incubi and succubi.

Although the peoples of Middle-earth can be seen in various cultures, folklores and mythologies prior to Tolkien's texts, Tolkien uses these fictional characters and imaginative races within the context of a unique storyline. He even presents alternative languages and meanings to the words and concepts that we are accustomed to in our own world. As David Colbert emphasizes,

in our world, the word 'elf' comes from the Latin word *albus* meaning 'white', Tolkien made up his own origin. He says the name comes from *el*, meaning 'star', because the Elves were found under the stars by one of the Valar, soon after the God of Middle-earth created them" (Colbert 2002:30).

In "On Fairy-Stories" Tolkien clearly suggests that the words 'elf' and 'fairy' are interchangeable by saying, "fairy, as a noun more or less equivalent to elf" (Tolkien 2001:7). In his lecture and essay entitled "On Fairy Stories", Tolkien focuses on the notion of fairy-stories with respect to the cultural connotation and significance of elves. By referring to the function of the name "Elfe" in Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene*, Tolkien presents his views on the dignity and the value of Elves. Unlike Shakespearean elves such as Puck, which/who are portrayed as buffoon-like little creatures, Spenser "called the knights of his Faërie by the name of Elfe" (Tolkien 2001:9). Tolkien's Elves are doomed to be immortal, as *The Silmarillion* emphasizes, they are very tall and immensely beautiful. Instead of being displayed like jesters or buffoons, Tolkien's Elves are higher beings, standing somewhere in between human beings and angels/gods. In this way, he re-introduces the image of the elves as they were portrayed in ancient Celtic stories and mythology. Tolkien presents a Genesis as well; this is a story about the war between good and evil. As noted above, Germanic mythology bases itself upon the very same war too.

As a matter of fact, the Brothers Grimm follow the same pattern of Snorri's *Edda* in which the distinction between good and evil resembles the opposition between the Biblical angel and satan images. The Brothers Grimm suggest that the difference between the light and dark elves in *Edda* does not only symbolize a distinction between good and evil, but also the

difference between the angel-satan opposition in Christian mythology. Moreover, by arguing that the dark-elves are also portrayed as the dwarves, the Brothers Grimm draw a parallelism between this mythological tale and the Germanic epic *Nibelungenlied* (Reichert 2005). In this respect, Alberich, in *Nibelungenlied*, is the most significant example of this problematic association between the elves and the dwarves. Despite his elf-resembling name (phonetically speaking), which basically means *ein wildéz getwerc* (*Nibelungenlied* 493, 2), a wild dwarf, Alb-erich has a critical role in *Nibelungenlied*. Through the French Alberon, the name Alberich has entered English as Oberon, who shows up as the king of elves in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Nevertheless, the Brothers Grimm argue that the elves within the German culture are regarded as light-elves in general. As far as the Brothers Grimm are concerned, this is not only the result of the fact that the name elf is etymologically related to the Latin word *albus*. After Christianity, all words starting with the prefix *alb-* or *alp-* are in relation to the word *engel*, which means angel (*Engel* in German). At this point, the Brothers Grimm, who use Engilrîch instead of Alberich, and Engilhart instead of Albert, emphasize the same argument in their *Kunstmärchen* focusing on the elves, and hence define them as benevolent characters rather than malevolent. The pioneer of the Brothers Grimm in this point of view is Ludwig Tieck. When he writes down the German oral fairy-tale entitled *Die Elfen* [The Elves], Tieck presents the elves as benevolent beings, and hence places himself within the light aspect of mythology.

If Tolkien's texts on Middle-earth are designed as a mythology for the English, then the Men, like the Elves, the Hobbits, the Dwarves, the Valar and even the Orcs symbolize a certain aspect of the English people and their culture. In one of his letters to Milton Waldman in 1951, Tolkien writes: "my 'elves' are only a representation or an apprehension of a part of human nature" (Tolkien 1999b:xviii). The way the Elves, or in other words, the First-born, are portrayed in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* do have slight differences. *The Silmarillion* relates the history of the universe from the very beginning, starting with a Biblical Genesis-like introduction. Within this context, the Elves are inferior to the Valar. In *The Silmarillion*, they fall a couple of times as a consequence of the problems they have amongst their race which seems to be related to the concepts such as ego, greed and ambition for power. They even unintentionally trigger the war of the rings simply by making the Silmarils, the three most beautiful jewels after which Sauron decides to make the One Ring.

However, *The Lord of the Rings* relates the history of Middle-earth in which the Valar are no longer present. Hence, the representative of wisdom and knowledge are the Elves, instead of the Valar in *The Lord of the Rings*. Elrond and Galadriel, in that respect, are the Elves who are highly respected, admired and even feared. Tolkien in his letter to Milton Waldman very clearly talks about the significance of Elrond, who can also be regarded as the representative of the Elves in *The Lord of the Rings* in general:

Elrond symbolizes throughout the ancient wisdom, and his House represents Lore - the preservation in reverent memory of all tradition concerning the good, wise and beautiful. It is not a scene of action but of reflection. Thus it is a place visited on the way to all deeds, or 'adventures'. It may prove to be on the direct road (as in *The Hobbit*); but it may be necessarily in *The Lord of the Rings*, having escaped to Elrond from the imminent pursuit of present evil, the hero departs in a wholly new direction: to go and face it at its source. (Tolkien 1999b:xxiii)

With respect to this quotation, the Elves in *The Lord of the Rings* refer to times and wisdom that seem to be vanished from Middle-earth. The beginning of "The Prologue" in *The Fellowship of the Ring* emphasizes this aspect by referring to the Elves' connection with the old times: "Only the Elves still preserve any records of that vanished time, and their traditions are concerned almost entirely with their own history, in which Men appear seldom and Hobbits are not mentioned at all" (Tolkien 1999a:3). In this sense, it would be appropriate to suggest that the Valar in *The Silmarillion* with respect to their connection with the universe, nature and wisdom, are succeeded by the Elves in *The Lord of the Rings*. Nevertheless, during the scene on the mirror of Galadriel, which takes place in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Galadriel, the symbol of the mother earth, suggests that she has the potential to go after the ultimate power Sauron is also after:

In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair. (Tolkien 1999a:480)

Although Galadriel manages to refuse Frodo's offer to keep the One Ring and hence, passes the test, she still shows how dangerous she may become if she possesses such a power. This can be interpreted as a sign of the duality in the nature of the Elves, which is in accordance with the etymological meaning of the word "Elf".

3. Conclusion

Each text, as well as each national identity, can be regarded as a re-writing of another one. In accordance with the concept of national identity, myths and folktales play a crucial role in constructing what is “national”. It is quite difficult, and almost impossible, to draw a clear line between nations and communities with respect to the common heritage and past they share. Thereby, it is most natural to find traces of other nations, cultures and communities within the national identity or mythology of a given nation. This can be observed in Tolkien’s Middle-earth, which is defined by the author himself as an attempt to write down an English mythology.

The major concern of this study was to underline the common features of Germanic mythology and Tolkien’s fictitious world. The figure of the elf, in particular, and its metaphorical significance are analyzed both within the context of Germanic mythology and Tolkien’s Middle-earth. The outcome of this study can be summarized as follows: The elves, in both contexts, refer to a more direct relationship and unity with nature and the universe. This direct relationship is the basis of the wisdom and knowledge the elves are representative of in both cultures.

Tolkien’s ambition, undoubtedly, was to create a nation through narrative. And this, on a larger scale, brings us to the theme of importing texts. Tolkien’s work, inevitably, is based upon the attempt to imagine a mythology that is essentially English. This is an attempt to invent a past of its own, which makes it necessary to transfer a foreign heritage. Basing his creation on a fiction, namely Germanic mythology, Tolkien transfers a cultural resource to another geography through literature. Like all other mythologies, Germanic mythology is a way of understanding and interpreting the world, and hence re-imagining/re-fictionalizing it. By carrying forward a foreign cultural resource Tolkien doubles the act of interpretation and by re-writing a mythology merges two different cultures in his works. Besides, this is precisely what we mean by cultural transfer.

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“I TALK WHITE”

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Abstract: *Mother: Danish. Father: African-American (G.I.). Daughter: biracial, blue-eyed, confused, survivor. Rachel Morse, The Girl Who Fell from the Sky, grows up in her grandmother's Portland house, haunted by personal trauma and communal prejudice. Heidi Durrow's coming-of-age novel (re)examines issues of identity formation and racial negotiation against a 1980s cultural background wherein color shapes dreams, minds, words, lives.*

Keywords: *identity, memory, (mixed) race, Nella Larsen, stereotype.*

1. Introduction

At the beginning of 2010, a fresh and intriguing debut novel managed to capture American reviewers' attention. *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times' Sunday Book Review*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Boston Globe* hurried to welcome a new literary contribution to the ardent debates on multiculturalism and multiracialism: *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* (Algonquin Books) by Heidi W. Durrow - Stanford, Columbia and Yale graduate, winner of the 2008 Barbara Kingsolver Bellwether Prize for Literature of Social Change.

While the book foregrounds ethnicity and race as prominent elements of contemporary social and mental structures, it equally relies upon particularization, empathy and emotion. It is the case study of a parentless little girl who abruptly finds herself in the uncomfortable position of having to deal with the everyday dramas and dilemmas of adolescence, while facing a personal difference she has been largely unaware of. The present article's main interest lies in the way in which (auto)biography feeds the literary account and facilitates its underlying exposure of social inequity and bias. The interconnectedness of fact and fiction is well worth dwelling on, particularly given the amount of verifiable information that, in Durrow's case, accompanies the writing in various complementary forms.

In the hyper-technologized Blackberry age, virtual reality seems to be taking over the front stage of interpersonal communication. To many, forums and social networking websites are growing into more appealing, effective, reliable media and sources than the traditional ones. Although discussion is ongoing as to such means of information and expression's actual or potential risks (de-personalization ranking ironically high), writers' sites and blogs have opened an entirely new territory to explore, which can run parallel to, intersect and quite often enrich their fictional accounts.

Taking into consideration such spectacular developments and literature's latest conjunctions with the public and personal spheres, we shall place *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* against the backdrop of Durrow's essays and blog entries, and examine the ways in which they work together to a better understanding of the writer's complex universe. While letter-, memoir- and diary-writing may seem obsolete to the high-tech, confessionality as such has certainly not withered away. We shall, thus, read Durrow's novel alongside interviews, reviews, articles, her official website (<http://heididurrow.com>) and her blog, *Light skinned-ed girl. A mixed chick's thoughts on a mixed-up world*, in order to shed new light upon the autobiographical dimension of the protagonist's journey to self-discovery.

2. Writing, Heritage, Memory

Highly sensitive to her audience's needs and curiosities, Durrow takes advantage of interviews to summarize her work in thought-provoking manners:

It's the coming-of-age story of a young biracial and bi-cultural girl, Rachel, who loses her family in a terrible accident. She moves to a racially divided community in the Pacific Northwest where her African-American grandmother becomes her new guardian. She's eleven and struggling with the regular difficulties of puberty but she's also trying to find a place in the mostly black community, a community she knows nothing about. She has light-brown skin and blue eyes and is confused by the mixed attention it brings her at her new school and neighborhood. It's a story about a girl who is becoming a young woman without her mother. It's a story about a girl's journey into womanhood, a journey complicated by society's ideas of race, beauty, intelligence (<http://myamericanmeltingpot.blogspot.com> 2008).

The richness of this account is, in itself, telling. *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* is an ambitious undertaking; the story is, by and large, quite similar to Durrow's own. Daughter of a Danish mother and an African-American father, strikingly blue eyes contrasting with her darker complexion, her character feels the constant pressure of specificity/difference. Up to a certain point, the living prototype (Heidi) and its fictional rendition (Rachel) illustrate the disquieting *neither... nor/ both... and* condition. They share what Durrow calls 'emotional truths', as well as the challenges of their position in a world that has yet to overcome the shallowness of stereotyping.

While the girl in the novel has literally fallen from the sky, surviving what seems to be her closest relatives' murder/suicide, the narrative goes beyond the mystery to follow the protagonist's strenuous becoming. Written in an undeniably postmodern vein, the story is retrieved from Rachel's and others' minds and memories. Growing up into adulthood in her practically

unknown grandmother's household, the teenager is surrounded by people whose versions of the truth eventually come to shape her (and the reader's) reality.

A series of voices alternate to build a coherent epic. Apart from dazed and confused Rachel, the stage is taken by 1) Nella, her European mother, defeated by the unbearable burden of race. Diary entries provide insight into her journey to America and her irreversible slide towards annihilation; 2) Jamie/ Brick, the only witness to the dramatic fall that opens the novel and changes his life, his name and his whereabouts; 3) Laronne, Nella's employer and Rachel's protector; the diary and memory keeper, and 4) Roger, Rachel's reclusive father who looks back on a lifetime of alcoholism and abuse. They all draw the final picture and help putting the pieces of the puzzle (no matter how crippled or torn) back together.

Even more interesting from our chosen perspective is the fact that much of Durrow's own family tree and experience is translated into the book, influencing the protagonist's understanding of and meditation upon her appearance-defined condition. Apart from certain settings, names and circumstances that undoubtedly overlap, subtler correspondences can be traced. In an essay entitled *Dear Ms. Larsen, There's a Mirror Looking Back*, the writer takes it upon herself to clarify her intellectual and spiritual evolution, influenced by the natural mother she remembers dearly:

I am seven when this photograph of my mother is taken and had you asked me to tell you more about mother, then I would have said: My mom is a writer. She is the most beautiful, smartest woman in the whole wide world. *Oh, and she's from Denmark! And she's white. My mother is white.*

No, at seven I wouldn't have said that. I didn't know what white was. I didn't know what black was, either, for that matter. What I knew was my mother (Durrow 2008:102).

Observing Rachel's sinuous path to self-knowledge and comprehension, the informed reader will certainly notice the way in which fiction echoes real life. Although suddenly left by a mother whom many judge hastily and harshly for her alleged cruel deed, the girl cannot but preserve fond memories of their relationship and their life as a family. Many a time, her reactions and revelations closely reflect Durrow's, as can be deduced from the study of the latter's non-fiction pieces. One clear example has to do with Rachel's attempts to adjust to her new school's rules and regulations. While procedures are quite common and clear, people's minds and behaviors are much harder to read:

There are fifteen black people in the class and seven white people. And there's me. There's another girl who sits in the back. Her name is Carmen LaGuardia, and she has hair like mine, my same color skin, and she counts as black. I don't understand how, but she seems to know. I see people two different ways now: people who look like me and people who don't look like me (Darrow 2010:9).

3. "Black, but not really black"

Rachel's pondering of the situation is quite simplistic, matching her tender age. However, in terms of viable narrative voices, this seems the perfect way to expose the reductionism of the unbridgeable color-divide. The girl's naiveté and her genuine confusion as to group inclusion or exclusion criteria emphasize the community's power to label and, accordingly, embrace or reject. Interestingly enough, her dilemma is presented in the context of numbers, as if she were looking for some reasonable explanation in the color distribution within her own class.

Thus, oblique allusions to historically infamous "color calculus" episodes seem to play out in the text. Take, for example, the cases presented in Werner Sollors' *Neither Black nor White yet Both*, which highlight the sheer absurdity of numerous attempts to 'scientifically' justify racial discrimination:

The premise [...] would seem to be that "race" was foremost a mathematical problem, and that "algebraical notations" could resolve some of the political issues of mankind. Hence a social assumption could be presented as if it were a mathematical law [...] The real individual disappears behind images of "blood" and "generation" that are no less metaphoric for being expressed in precise fractions. The mathematics obscures more than it clarifies: it is a way of saying, in so many formulae, fractions, and equations, that there is a dividing line, a cutoff point for "whiteness" that does not, however, always "coincide" with freedom (1999:114).

Be it white or black, it is the majority that makes the rules. Like Heidi's, Rachel's in-between-ness leaves her little room for acceptance. One of the first lessons she needs to learn is that introducing herself to and being defined by others will first come down to her appearance. White eyes on a black face: the short version of her long story, the obvious burden of double, if not multiple, consciousness. Few nuances are allowed in a limited universe, which merely stretches between similitude and dissimilitude, sameness and difference. Although Rachel finds out quite rapidly that she is living in a universe of binary oppositions, her attempts to define a self-standing identity are almost schoolbook material.

I am light skinned-ed. That's what the other kids say. And I talk white. I think new things when they say this. There are a lot of important things I didn't know about. I think Mor didn't know either. They tell me it's bad to have ashy knees. They say stay out of the rain so my hair doesn't go back. They say white people don't use washrags, and I realize now, at Grandma's, I do. They have a language I don't know but I understand. I learn that black people don't have blue eyes. I learn that I am black. I have blue eyes. I put all these new facts into the new girl. (2010:10)

Rachel's description of her newly-acquired knowledge summarizes her encounters with an overwhelming and intimidating array of stereotypes. Building "the new girl" takes time, alongside a deeper understanding of human nature. Desirable identity-components are not necessarily innate; one's personal profile is not shaped by natural features and behaviors alone. After a whole history of strife and struggle, classifications in 1980s America are still largely made in terms of race and color. Such are the kinds of issues the novel puts forth, the writer having experienced them herself as a child. Durrow's recollections provide inspiration to her later fiction, as clearly illustrated by the following passage:

I am eleven now and learn that when people ask "What are you?" they do not want to hear: a) I'm a great speller; or b) I'm the best at math. They want to know what race I am. They expect me to say that I am black. I learn not just how to say I am black. I learn how to be it, from criticism – "You talk white" – as well as praise – "You got good hair". Still, the other black girls in school do not befriend me, but they also do not beat me up. So this little black girl – bookish and shy – goes about her schooldays mostly alone. She learns her lessons well. (2008:103).

Once more, Durrow's confessions generously illustrate a destiny that is not hers alone, but most likely speaks to and for many other women's. Although the U.S. prides itself on its historical and cultural (r)evolutions, mentalities appear harder to change than laws. Growing up with racial bias and deeply enrooted clichés is all the more interesting in the case(s) under discussion: a biracial child is gradually forced by a racially compact community to perceive the world in 'colored' terms. The very definitions of selfhood are suffused with racial awareness; identification and categorization bring along a series of stereotypical expectations. Made obvious by Durrow's confessions, they can easily be traced in Rachel's case as well, as

she discovers that her hair can "go back" to its unstraightened texture and that she is "tender-headed" when she has her hair combed. She eats day-old bread at the

Wonder Bread factory but longs for "wienerbrod" and pastries made with marzipan. She learns she is "light-skinned-ed" and that being a blue-eyed black girl has its pros (boys like her) and cons (girls don't). (Page 2010)

In communal terms, one's identity is a social construct rather than a natural given. It is not a place of intimacy, but rather an open showroom, wherein exhibits lie exposed for the onlookers to evaluate. What one is is less a matter of how one feels than a matter of how one is perceived by the group one interacts with. Although much of the debate in American culture has focused on the white majority's discrimination against African-Americans, Durrow's account takes the reader to the other side. By bringing the dilemmas of mixed heritage to the fore, she focuses on the hardship of self-search within a mostly black community, whose stereotypical thinking is, paradoxically, just as uncompromising.

Superiority and inferiority complexes surface easily. If the mechanisms of the "raced" discourse become transparent upon critical analysis, an innocent child's headlong confrontation with social judgment is certainly different and, most often than not, painful and diminishing. Once aware of the existing limitations in the black and white universe she inhabits, Durrow's protagonist appropriates stereotypes. She even voices her convictions, echoing what she has been taught on a daily basis.

I told Tracy that I know Jay doesn't like me, for sure. He's white. White people don't think black people are pretty. Mostly it's because of our hair. It works different. And it smells different with more lotions in it. Also, black women are not as pretty as white women. There are exceptions – Aunt Loretta, Miss America – but not many (2010:59)

Bias evidently works both ways; clichés are perpetuated within and without the immediate community. Therefore, one is compelled to make a choice, to assume a clarifying position. One of Durrow's strongest messages is the necessity of a responsible, mature self-affirmation. Being too dark-skinned for the whites and too light-skinned for the blacks is evidently problematic. The controversy is rather one of a private nature; the issue can only be settled by means of personal choice. In the writer's case,

I chose black women writers as my literary models: Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor, Zora Neale Hurston, Nikki Giovanni, Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Audre Lorde. They were all real black women writing about real black things [...] To be a black woman writer was to be part of a tradition and a growing movement (2008:104).

As a developing character, Rachel has not yet acquired so strong a public voice as Durrow's. However, her inner strength and growing determination mirror her creator's. From the (dis)privileged position her mixed heritage places her in, she has the opportunity to fully grasp and assess how institutional discourse differs from communal truth, how official histories most habitually represent the dominant side, lying at the mercy of the ones who write them down. Rachel becomes increasingly aware of inequities more severe than those that concern her personally.

At school everything about black history you learn in one month. I already learned about most of the things in my other school. The main ones are slavery and how Lincoln made the slaves free, how there were different water fountains, and about Martin Luther king Jr. There are black women in history too – Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, and Phillis Wheatley. I hear the stories different now though" (2010:61).

4. In the Name of the Mother

Education plays an important part in shaping the growing child's self-perception, confidence, and, ultimately, identity. Cultural and historical representations create a background which can fortify or shatter the structures of personal development. History and the past, however, depend on whose version of the facts is provided. From this point of view, guidance is always necessary. Whether actual or merely spiritual, it is essential to one's eventual worldview, preoccupations and beliefs. In this line, Durrow has never ceased to acknowledge her deep connection to Nella Larsen, whom she considers her predecessor and inspiration, her twin over time. "*Larsen's published writing became the permission I needed to write the only stories I knew how to tell: of being black and Danish, and of being a white woman's child*" (2008:105).

Finding a spiritual kin whose voice once raised similar issues to the ones she now faces seems to have been crucial to Durrow's evolution as a writer in her own right. Apart from other signs of gratitude (among which placing a headstone upon Larsen's until then anonymous grave), she chooses to name her protagonist's mother after the author of *Passing*, as a token of their strong connection. In the already mentioned 2008 essay, Durrow commits to saving Larsen's legacy and continuing her efforts to speak about ethnic specificity, proclaiming herself "*another black woman writer who is also white, who is trying to continue the work you began*" (2008:109).

Besides Rachel's mother's name, one can find several examples of Durrow's indebtedness to Larsen in *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*. One powerful passage in *Passing* addresses one of Durrow's central issues, i.e. protecting children from the raging effects of discrimination:

You know as well as I do, Irene, that I can't. What was the use of your trying to keep them from learning the word 'nigger' and its connotation? They found out, didn't they? And how? Because somebody called Junior a nigger." "Just the same you're not to talk to them about the race problem. I won't have it" [...] Is it stupid to want my children to be happy?" Her lips were quivering (Larsen 1990:192/193)

In Durrow's novel, Rachel's mother's diary entries seem precisely aimed at explaining the mental processes behind a mother's tragic decisions as to her children's fate. Frustration, powerlessness, humiliation feed the woman's desperate attempts to keep her children from experiencing the pain that society can inflict. This, however, turns out to be impossible. Although not physically harmful, verbal abuse is the most obvious, sometimes lethal, weapon in the battle for supremacy. Living at the borderline between white and black communities, trying to free herself of racial determinations, Rachel cannot help being affected by the 'difference' everybody points out:

The sirens have died. But now there is a loud honking. Two or three cars. Honking like they are speaking to each other. Loud rock music. A scream. "Nigger!". "Nigger!" And then "Nigger lover!" Again and again and again [...] "Don't mind them," Jesse says. But I do [...] It's the light or Jesse's very white skin that makes me brown. Or maybe it is something else. Maybe it is just words" (Durrow 2010:233)

Upon a parallel reading of *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* and *Passing*, one notices how similar backgrounds give rise to comparable issues - to be discussed both in fiction and in real life. Larsen articulates her protagonist's struggle most clearly, exposing injustice in an outspoken manner. The social pressure for an "either... or" can become unbearable in a contemporary reality suffused with multiracial determinations, particularly for people who consider other elements as far more intimately defining than race.

She was caught between two allegiances, different, yet the same. Herself. Her race. Race! The thing that bound and suffocated her. Whatever steps she took, or if she took none at all, something would be crushed. A person or the race. Clare, herself, or the race [...] For the first time she suffered and rebelled because she was unable to disregard the burden of race. It was, she cried silently, enough to suffer as a woman, an individual, on one's own account, without having to suffer for the race as well. It was a brutality, and undeserved (Larsen 2002:180/181)

The expectation of a clear-cut positioning within or without the prerequisites of a certain race seems all the more obsolete in Durrow's case

and in her literary rendition of such challenging circumstances. Therefore, the emphasis shall lie on personal accomplishment and inherent qualities rather than on the debatable values society holds dear.

When Jesse and Brick talk, I can forget that Jesse's white, and I can forget that Brick's black. Or Brick's something like that. I don't ask Brick what he is. Brick is light-skinned with golden colors in his brown eyes. He could be black or Mexican or mixed like me. He's twenty-five and maybe at that age it doesn't matter. When I hang out with Jesse and Brick at lunch and sometimes after work, we talk about [...] real things: like what's happening in the world, or books, or things like that. I forget that what you are – being black or being white – matters. Jesse makes me see there's a different way to be white. And Brick makes me see there's a different way to be black (2010:202)

5. Conclusion

In more ways than one, Durrow's fictional and non-fictional purposes seem educational. By the end of the novel, her protagonist is prepared to settle into a new mentality, make herself comfortable, appreciate and promote the open-mindedness which has granted her such opportunities. It is exactly what the writer's non-fiction-related initiatives converge towards. By designating May as "Mixed Race People History Month", she makes it a point to post on her blog short biographies of biracial/ bicultural and multiracial/ multicultural notable people in history throughout the entire month. She thus pays homage to a host of personalities that have created a legacy she now feels compelled to pass on. In her literary and real-life existence, she attempts to instruct a broader audience - not necessarily biased, but rather lacking accurate information.

It is incredibly important to recognize that multiracial people have a history. Multiracialism and multiculturalism may be relatively newly coined words for our country, but they are not new realities. Mixed Race People History Month is designed to educate the public about the contributions of mixed race people. We are not tragic mulattoes. We are part of the vital fabric of America's history (both black and white). My purpose is not to wrestle great accomplishments or great accomplished people from the credit of African-American history (a history which is also my own history). I simply want to recognize the complexity of these mixed-race individual's experience and the way they made a difference (Durrow 2007).

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EXPRESSING CANADIAN IDENTITY THROUGH ART: *THE GROUP OF SEVEN'S* IMPACT ON LITERATURE AND MUSIC

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Abstract: *The article deals with the Canadian landscape painters of the 1920's known as "The Group of Seven" who, while trying to build up a genuine Canadian artistic identity, promoted both in their paintings and their "algomaxims" the unique beauty of Canadian nature, meanwhile making the mistake of presenting the land as terra nullius, neglecting the permanency of native culture. However, their works had a certain impact on some of the best Canadian writers, such as Margaret Atwood, as well as on several Canadian musicians.*

Keywords: *Canada, identity, literature, music, painting*

1. Introduction

The question of Canadian identity has attracted much attention especially from post-modernist and post-colonial theorists, who even discussed the possibility of using the general term "Canadian-ness" when referring to the specific features of the country.

In the contemporary environment, to speak confidently of "a national Canadian character" or to define nationality in broad cultural (as opposed to socio-political) terms becomes more and more difficult. In English Canada especially, the "national character" is not so strong as compared to the clearer cultural nationalism of French Canada. While affirming the cultural legitimacy of other ethnicities that are integrated in the Canadian "salad-bowl" culture, Anglo-Canada almost fails in claiming dominant cultural legitimacy.

The Canadian (mainly the Anglo Canadian) spirit seems to experience the same dilemma that the British had to face years before, when they were complaining that multiculturalism might prove to be the Trojan horse of Britishness. (http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropology_journal/vol14/iss1/PDF/allen.pdf)

In fact, as George Woodcock (Woodcock 1981:10) rightly observes, *Canada has never been a nation in the same way as classic centralized European states like England and France.* Taking into account the vast territory occupied by Canada and the fact that various autonomous entities came together by mutual agreement to form a compact, one cannot speak of homogeneous traditions of any kind. The general culture of the country is a

huge patchwork made up of diverse singular units and *can only be seen in its full richness if we understand how they differ mutually and how they interweave*. (Woodcock 1981:11) However, the past of the country witnessed several efforts of getting a stable Canadian cultural identity, among which the attempt at giving an account of Canadian character begun by Northrop Frye and continued by Margaret Atwood to analyze Canadian literature and visual arts for a coherent set of social and psychological characteristics.

2. Expressing Canadian Identity through Art: The Impact of *The Group of Seven* on Literature and Music

While trying to build up a genuine Canadian artistic identity, the early twentieth century landscape painters known as “The Group of Seven” promoted both in their paintings and their philosophy the beauty of Canadian nature.

The Toronto-based collective of artists, initially formed of Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frederick Varley, Franklin Carmichael, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald and Frank Johnston, who got together in the ‘20s, after the death of their mentor Tom Thomson, was strongly influenced by the European Impressionism and Post-Impressionism of the late nineteenth century in colour and style, but determined to have Canadian sources of inspiration. To the initial group other artists became affiliated over time, such as A. J. Casson, Edwin Holgate and LeMoine Fitzgerald.

The artists traveled all over Canada, sketched and painted what they saw using bold colors and strong decorative brushstrokes. Canadian wilderness was to be the main source in their quest for the soul of Canada, *the true north, strong and free* (Streijffert 1995:173) The Canadian wilderness, forests, lakes and cliffs, the strong colours of the Canadian landscape had for them a specific symbolism: that of the harsh, grave and somehow merciless north. Their main sources of inspiration were the Algonquin Park, located between Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River in central Ontario, Canada, the Algoma District, Ontario and the Canadian North. The Algonquin Park inspired the term *algomaxim*, coined by the members of the group for statements expressing their philosophy and feelings concerning art. A famous *algomaxim* is for instance: "Get in the habit of looking at the sky. It is the source of light and art", while talking about the way in which Canadians should receive art they counted on their open-mindedness: "Canada consists of 3,500,523 square miles mostly landscape. It is apparently intended for the home of broadminded people." (<http://www.golivewire.com/forums/peer-bayyna-support-a.html>)

The Group of Seven contributed in revealing how Canadians saw their own country and they also created a new Canadian expression. Their first exhibition was held in 1920 and made them popular as the first artists to capture the feel of the Arctic on canvas. The Group of Seven's last exhibition all together was in 1931, when MacDonald passed away and the Group disbanded.

Although the ideas of the group were similar, each artist developed a distinct style. According to many, Arthur Lismer's *A September Gale*, J.E.H MacDonald's *The Solemn Land* and Tom Thomson's *The Jack Pine* are the best known Group of Seven paintings, representing what the group stood for in a general sense.

Like the European *fin de siècle* symbolists and post-impressionists, the Group protested against the constraints of 19th-century naturalism and tried to establish a more independent relationship between art and nature. They shifted emphasis away from similitude - the imitation of natural effects - towards the expression of their feelings for their subjects and little by little as time was passing, an expressionist vision came to be more and more evident in their works. In spite of the interest for similitude, the Group of Seven's style was not illustrative or photographic. Most works focused on one particular scene in an 'interpretive realistic' sense, that is the artist took a real subject and emphasized or even exaggerated certain features he felt were significant. The colours were not always realistic, but they were meant to convey a mood of roughness and boldness, the attitude the artists felt was needed for survival in a wild land.

Although the Group made patriotic statements of working in a uniquely Canadian way, that was not always the case, as the European influences, mainly the late 19th century European styles that they insisted to get rid of, were there to stay. They tried to capture the shifting light and colour in the Impressionistic manner, then adopted the bolder colours and brushstrokes of Post-Impressionism and were even tempted by the Art Nouveau tendency of using simplified elements that were based on plant forms, organic shapes and curving, vine-like lines and flat bright colours. The sinuous lines appreciated by all the « Art Nouveau » artists come from the attentive observation of flora and fauna, the study of botany and the illustrations representing birds, flowers, herbs or sea creatures, such as those in the work of the German biologist Ernst Heinrich Haeckel (1834–1919) entitled *Kunstformen der Natur* (*Artforms of Nature* -1899). Perhaps the most illustrative painting in this respect is Tom Thomson's *The West Wind*, in which the tree's Art Nouveau shape is more than obvious.

However, if the Group were using some of the European styles, their subject matter was uniquely Canadian and here is where their originality must be sought.

The same sources seem to have been used by Margaret Atwood when describing in *Cat's Eye* Elaine Risely's first steps in becoming a painter, starting with the close examination of insects, plants or even parts of the human body. The microscopes in the science lab offer her details that matter, providing the reader with organic landscapes.

Sometimes we're given slides to look at: butterfly wings, cross-sections of worms, planaria stained with pink and purple dyes so you can see the different parts. At other times we put our fingers under the lenses and examine our fingernails, the pale parts curved like hills against their dark pink sky, the skin around them grainy and crested like the edge of a desert. Or we pull hairs out of our heads to look at them, hard and shiny like the bristles that grow out of the chitonous skins of insects, with the hair roots at the end like tiny onion bulbs. (Atwood 1989:38-39)

Some of Atwood's descriptions of nature and wilderness, seem to render in words the same places that the Group of Seven rendered in paint, such as the following description of an autumn sunset beside a lake, that can be very well illustrated by such works as *Mirror Lake* by Franklin Carmichael, *October Gold*, 1922 by the same artist, A. Y. Jackson's *Terre Sauvage*, 1913 or others.

We're near the road, beside a raggedy anonymous lake. The trees around the shore are doubled in the water, the leaves of the poplars are yellowing towards fall. The sun sets in a long, chilly, lingering sunset, flamingo pink, then salmon, then the improbable vibrant red of Mercurochrome. The pink light rests on the surface, trembling, then fades and is gone. It's a clear night, moonless, filled with antiseptic stars. (Atwood 1989:27)

The serene, clean, undisturbed wilderness seems to be peaceful and soothing; life far from the polluted city has a peculiar quality that is both luring and scary in its silent, unpopulated beauty. However, the landscape becomes frightening at times and humans can feel danger lurking in the dark unexplored places, such as in Lawren Harris's *Beaver Swamp, Algoma*, 1920, a painting that was banned by the authorities at the time it was first exhibited, as it was apparently discouraging for the immigrants in search of a land of happiness. (<http://artchive.com/artchive/groupseven.html>) The almost barren trees in dark hues of brown and grey, projected on a leaden sky, with ashen clouds all over it, reflected on the waters of a deserted lake give a feeling of uneasiness and discomfort.

The water is gelid, murky; down there, past where the sand drops away and it's deep, there are old rocks covered with slime, sunken logs, crayfish, leeches, huge pike with undershot jaws. (Atwood 1989:72)

The same sense of desolation that Harris's painting conveys is felt in Atwood's description of a caterpillar infestation in the forest.

The caterpillars are everywhere in the woods, striped and bristly. They dangle from the branches on threads of silk, forming a hanging curtain you have to brush out of the way; they river along the ground like a rug come to life, they cross roads, turning to greasy mush under the tires of the logging trucks. The trees around are denuded, as if they've been burnt; webbing sheathes their trunks. (Atwood 1989: 70)

The double symbolism of places is evident in both the paintings of the Group and in literature. The lake is a natural mirror, an element with cleansing and transformative powers, but in the same time it may become a hideaway, a descent into the underworld. The forest symbolizes a source of life, but also a labyrinth where hidden monsters lurk. The island or any other place far from civilization might suggest either a pastoral retreat, a blissful refuge or a trap, alienation, danger.

The great range of plant and animal life which characterizes the vast area of Canada, with its varied geographic and climatic zones can be partially recognized in the paintings of the Group of Seven: white pine, hemlock, sugar and red maples, yellow birch, spruce, balsam fir, white cedar, aspen, oak, the conifers that dominate the northern section and even the low-growing grasses, mosses, and bushes that the great Arctic region is covered with. Here and there one can also see some of the animals and birds belonging to the rich Canadian fauna: deer, moose, wild geese, herons or lake gulls.

Contemporary Anglo-Canadian as well as French Canadian literature still focuses on nature and wilderness. Poetry generally reflects the same interest for the vast unpopulated spaces, where the wind is savagely blowing, as in A. J. M. Smith's poem *The Lonely Land*:

Cedar and jagged fir
uplift sharp barbs
against the gray
and cloud-piled sky;

and in the bay
blown spume and windrift
and thin bitter spray
snap
at the whirling sky;
and the pine trees
lean one way. (Smith in *Mirrors* 1975: 32)

The Arctic landscape, with its frozen beauty seems to be tempting and forbidding in the same time, like in Lawren Harris's paintings or the haiku-shaped poem by David Keenleyside entitled *Arctic Spring*, in which the peculiar Anglo-Saxon alliteration creates an additional musical effect:

Arctic spring:
First flash of gulls against frozen sea,
Shrieks in soundless air.
Northern landscape:
Vistas of rose and mauve light
Shimmering on sea ice. (Keenleyside in *Mirrors* 1975: 19)

Landscape art, whether in painting or literature, can record stories that are not only personally important to the artist, but also important to a community or culture. It can therefore be a valuable communicator of history, and it can be an important part of strengthening personal and collective identities. In the prose fiction of Atwood, Findley or Ondaatje the idea of *wilderness* (bearing various connotations like "cleanliness",

“purity”, “justified cruelty”) comes always as an antonym of *civilization* (carrying the implicit meanings of “corruption”, “dirt”, “violence”). The presence of man changes the basic dichotomy “good – bad” into a more complex union of elements, while isolated human dwellings form a space apart, something in-between wilderness and the great city. As suggested by Andreea Șerban in her *The Call of the Wild: M/Other Nature in Margaret Atwood’s Novels*,

...pseudo-wilderness (often a rural cottage or camp) is a third space which fractures the nature-culture duality problematically assumes that “wilderness-the-good” is a restricted and vital space one enters and exists. [...] In Margaret Atwood’s work, wilderness and its metaphors represent fertile ground for narrative of personal identities, standing for a site where the self can be reinvented and allowing for the experience of intense personal subjectivity. (Șerban 2010: 28-29)

The presence of humans in the paintings of the Group of Seven is almost non-existent, the wild nature predominates. Actually this is what the members of the Group of Seven were criticized for: the absence of people, and especially the absence of the natives, a feature that was considered a mistake, or a tendency of presenting the land as *terra nullius*, neglecting the permanency of native culture. The painters of the Group had a specific way of portraying Canada's barring landscape, mixed with sharp edges and colours that contrasted, without including humans in the picture. In addition to this omission, an *algotaxim* that sounded as follows: *The great purpose of landscape art is to make us at home in our own country.* (<http://russellmcneil.blogspot.com/2007/08/group-of-seven-1920-1932.html>) apparently reinforces the frustrations of the new-comers, confronted with a land that was not theirs, but somebody else’s, a land in which new identities could be invented and constructed.

The same thing can be observed in Margaret Atwood’s work, in which wilderness and its metaphors represent fertile ground for narrative of personal identities, standing for a site where the self can be reinvented and allowing for the experience of intense personal subjectivity. (Șerban 2010: 28-29)

The twentieth century had brought significant changes in the social, economic, political life of Canada and the artists either knew or felt their impact upon interhuman relationships.

The nineteenth century Canadian painters had a different vision on the Canadian landscape and some of them, such as Cornelius Krieghoff (1815 – 1872) or Paul Kane (1810 – 1871) were interested in reflecting a

closer link between nature and men, especially the First Nations representatives. They were definitely inspired by European models and especially Krieghoff's paintings – under the influence of the Düsseldorf school – reflect a 19th century reality that has some sort of greeting card quality in it. The Indians in their works are busy with everyday activities like hunting, fishing or cooking; sometimes, especially with Kane, one can feel the artist's Romantic vision of the Noble Savage, destroyed by civilization. It was the time of the Hudson Bay Company at its best, and both whites and Indians had a place and a role in the Company's multiethnic chain of production. Kane's paintings are true ethnographic documents depicting Indian chiefs, Indian costumes and homes. The artist's idea was to reveal as much as it was possible of the almost unknown country that was Canada. The Hudson Bay and the Quebec atmosphere dissipated after 1867, when the Dominion of Canada was created and the Anglo-Canadian side developed from an industrial point of view. The Ontario School of Art was founded in 1872 but by that time the old masters were dead.

The new attitude triggered by the development of a new way of living changed inter-human relationships and art too: as a new century began, the cooperation with the natives took a different shape. The Indians withdrew so that newcomers did not meet them so frequently. As a result of the education provided by the new residential schools founded in the 19th century to force the assimilation of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada many natives came to give up their culture and traditions. No wonder the Group of Seven's paintings are deprived of Native presence – the same as the literary works inspired by them. Wilderness was a better choice for the place in which power and self-construction could be obtained, the pride of having been capable of surviving in a hostile environment becoming a characteristic feature of a new nation in the process of shaping its Canadian identity.

In Margaret Atwood's novels the Natives appear fugitively, they are like shadows in the distance, like the ghosts of the past. Her *Surfacing* better illustrates the idea, as the heroine is in search of her father, actually her roots, in the vast Canadian wilderness where the mysterious subtle presence of an ancient culture can be at least felt, if not touched.

As mentioned by Andreea Șerban, in *Surfacing*

Staels (1995:1) sees the relationship between the narrating "I" and her unexplored inner self as a metaphor for the relationship of Canada with its unexplored north. The protagonist's search for her true self and past mirrors the Canadian attempt to find a voice, an identity of its own. [...] The narrator, as well as Canada, seems to have (re)discovered and redefined her identity in retrieving the past, discovering the treasure hidden in the wilderness of the island and bringing it back to the "land

of the living”: on one hand, the repressed memories of abortion and split from parents, and on the other hand, the Native American element in the form of submerged drawings. (Şerban 2010: 44-45)

Just as in *Cat's Eye*, in *Surfacing* the forest and the lake play a crucial role in the lives of the protagonists, in their evolution. These key elements of the Canadian scenery observed and depicted by the Group of Seven and then described by many Canadian writers serve not only as a background, but also as meaningful symbols bearing various connotations. Consciously or not, the newcomers step on trodden paths: they reiterate the way of their forerunners, the First Nations, passing through experiences new to them but familiar to others. Canada, the Brave New World of the newcomers, meant a series of experiences in survival that others have already learned to master.

The impressive paintings of the Group helped the Canadian Indie-rock band *Rheostatics* (active from 1980 to 2007) compose an album called *Music Inspired by the Group of Seven*. On a natural background with birds chirping and leaves rustling, the musicians offer explanations for both their music and the images that inspired it. The colours that link the works of the painters, such as gold, purple, blue or green are mentioned as belonging to the specific Canadian landscape and the tunes that follow these spoken presentations have a peculiar sound. Most tunes have the quality of relaxation music, the basic instruments employed being the piano and the cello, but in some of them the members of the band used their voices as well. The French poet Arthur Rimbaud devised a colour for each vowel in a famous sonnet: *A black, E white, I red, U green, O blue*, but in the complex and colourful world of the Group of Seven the artistic discourse is more complex as the other colours can be attributed to consonants too. Still, the general impression is that of lack of native inspiration – except, maybe, for some parts in which a lamellophone (Jew's harp or mouth harp) was used for special effects.

3. Conclusion

About the time the Rheostatics were performing, a Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation, better known as the *Indian Group of Seven*, was founded as a group of professional Indian artist from Canada (1973). The group combined forces to promote their art work and Indian art in general, into the world of western art and to a change the way the world looked at this art. The group, also known as The Woodland Artists, consisting of Daphne Odjig, Alex Janvier, Jackson Beardy, Eddy Cobiness, Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray and Joseph Sanchez had in view a

shift from an emphasis on Indigenous (Native or Primitive) to artistic value. The new Group of Seven had in view the development of the concept of Indigenous Indian art as part of the Canadian cultural art world and it meant rethinking the definition of First Nation's art and a change in re/affirming the importance of native culture in a country that has long been neglecting the presence of old traditions.

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SEARCH FOR SELF-RECOGNITION IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' 'THE GLASS MENAGERIE'

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Abstract: *The sense of being uprooted from one's culture and not being able to find alternative moorings, creates the necessary space for the playwright to dramatize his views on the search for self-recognition. The study aims at analyzing the quest for Self-recognition through a nostalgic yearning for the past, which has been lost due to one reason or the other.*

Keywords: *self-recognition, Glass Menagerie, study, quest,*

1. Introduction

In the modern world man is often caught in a net of dreams and illusions which, he himself fabricates. Under various adverse conditions he tries to imagine that he is different from what he really is, and tries to escape from the stark realities of life, which face him. As Williams quoted in Haller (1983:60), "I deal with the decadence of the South. I don't ever deal with the decadence of the North. It's too disgusting. But I'm writing about a South that is fast becoming a memory"

Presley (1944:53) believed that Williams wanted to reach a better knowledge of people's mentality. "Men pity and love each other more deeply than they permit themselves to know". Tennessee Williams traces the effect of illusion upon the individual in adverse circumstances by exploring the physical, mental, and spiritual condition of the Wingfield family. These members are hell-ridden creatures conditioned by extreme poverty, constant ill-health, and the consequent mental distress. Tom Wingfield, the narrator-actor, opens the play with:

Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion (Williams, 1964: 4). (henceforth Williams)

Williams struggles to reconcile past and present in his plays. As Bigsby (1984) commented,

Williams could not disentangle his present from his past. The characters of *Menagerie* are not able to create a bridge between Time, Place and Themselves. The inability to relate to the reality of their present environment imprisons them in "distorted memories of the past or wistful dreams of a redemptive future (45).

Funke and Booth (1986) commented that Tennessee Williams created an imaginary world as a haven to escape from the real world, and Wingfield is the apt protagonist of his illusion.

Tom Wingfield the hero of the play is bound to his mother and sister because his father had disappeared and left them destitute. Thus, the Wingfield home is caught in a hopeless situation. Interestingly, the father of the family has left his family before the play starts and Tom his young dreamy son and as well as the narrator also follows his father's example when the play ends. Tom realizes how much he is needed and yet he knows that he must escape from the family if he is ever to find himself. He considers his escape as an act of guilt. He is really torn by two inner conflicts: his earnest desire to be free and his emotional bond with his mother and sister. So it seems that he is conscious of his guilt but still he does not come back. Williams in Nelson (1961:97) said: "His nature is not remorseless, but to escape from a trap he has to act without pity." When Tom gets closer to his self-recognition, he comes to know that the freedom he desires is not what he has imagined. Janardanan (2007:3) very pertinently quotes Bigsby:

The Glass Menagerie is not narrated by a confident voice. Tom is as lost in the supposed present as he had been in the recalled past. Imagining that the suffocation of his spirit, the warping of his ideals, and the stultification of his aspirations were a product of his physical environment, he had broken free. But his freedom, like that invoked by Miller's Linda at the end of *Death of a Salesman*, is an ironic one. The space which he needed was not a physical one after all. Like Albee's Jerry, in *The Zoo Story*, he comes to realize that all his retreat from human relationships has won him is 'solitary free passage.

Tom's mother, Amanda lives in two worlds: the demanding world of the present and the pleasant dream of the past. Tischler (1997) believed that Amanda is the one who hurts and at the same time treats her daughter, Laura. She tries to encourage her to walk, but indeed discourages her from natural walking. Laura cannot accept the harsh reality of her life and so she has withdrawn into the world of glass figurines she has collected. Amanda is trying her best to instill some confidence in her by sending her to some secretarial school but it proves to be a dismal failure. The last and only hope for Amanda is to find a suitable husband for her daughter who will save her from submerging into a world of imagination.

Tom finally brings home a gentleman caller. Jim O'Connor, a young man who also works with Tom in the shoe company. Jim is invited to supper at the Wingfield home. Laura, for a short time emerges from the glass menagerie. By ill luck however Jim in due course admits that he is already

engaged. Thus, the world closes in on Amanda and Laura. Tom Wingfield breaks free after the heated argument between him and Amanda. Laura makes her final retreat into the world of illusion. Thus, the play projects a vision of lonely human beings who fail to communicate, who are isolated from the society and also from each other. Stein (1988) believes that *The Glass Menagerie* projects not a series of violent confrontations leading to catastrophe but a vision of lonely human beings who fail to make contact, who are isolated from each other.

2. Argument

The existential question today is not whether to be or not to be, but how one can become what one truly is. (Golomb 2005:143)

The search for the self-recognition can be examined in the play on two levels: the psychological and the sociological. *The Glass Menagerie* is a memory play. It is often spoken of as an exorcism of the past. It is a complex psychological study. Parker (1985:517) asserted that “Tom Wingfield casts a magical web over experience, transforming the ordinary and ugly and even painful, into a thing of beauty”.

The sociological level pertains to the decline of the American South, a myth that appears repeatedly in Southern writers like William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, Carson McCullers, Eudora Welty, William Styron and others. In fact the dark vision of man in Williams’ plays may be attributed to his Southern heritage. Williams in Hirsch (1979:15) has identified the spirit of the South in the following manner:

There is something in the region, something in the blood and culture of the Southern State that has made (Southerners) the centre of this Gothic school of writing.... It is the incommunicable something that we shall have to call mystery which is so inspiring of dread.

Thus, Williams is obsessed with a romantic vision of the past—the Old South. It is this ‘noble’ life in the Old South that Amanda refers to with nostalgia. For Amanda the South is the lost paradise of her Blue Mountain youth referred to in brief glimpses throughout the play—a beautiful and enviable picture, of graceful and elegant living conditions. In the opening scene of the play she recalls her life in Blue Mountain, Mississippi when she was the beauty much sought after by young men. Girls in South required not only beautiful face and graceful figure but a nimble wit and a honeyed tongue to meet all occasions. In the sixth scene Amanda recalls how she had all those virtues in abundant measures.

"Amanda: I led the catillion in this dress years ago. I won the cake-walk twice at Sunset Hill, and I wore it to the Governor's ball in Jackson", (Clark 1951:363). And above all, she had entertained one Sunday afternoon no less than seventeen gentlemen callers. She was supposed to marry one of them and raise her family on a large plantation with plenty of Black servants. This is the dream of Old South she repeats to practically everyone she meets in the play. After the defeat of the South in the Civil War (1861-65), the aristocratic Southern way of life had disappeared. It had a far-reaching effect on the mind of Southern people. They suddenly came to realization of failure and frustration. In spite of the reconstruction and industrialization the South remained poor; life had been shattered beyond revival. The tragic sense of the Southern people coupled with their love for the place, their nostalgia and their 'noble' way of life of one time, loss of homes, savings, moreover their self-respect and confidence were some of the consequences of the depression. All that could be seen reflected in the writings of Faulkner, Williams and others who belonged to the Renaissance of the South.

For Tennessee Williams, the Universe is the greatest antagonist and it is as malignant as it is implacable. It has, in due course of time destroyed a way of life, culture, civilization and tradition. It has evolved a society that is gasping, repressive and destructive. Everything that was honorable, noble has gone and the 'codes' of the past have become ridiculous, absurd in the present time. In the face of this impending darkness Williams' characters are trying to find themselves, they are trying to search their own identity. This search may be futile but still their desperate struggle is significant. Tennessee Williams sympathizes with them, because they are, by temperament or by character itself or by birth 'Fugitive'.

In *The Glass Menagerie*, all those who appear in the play are trying to establish a meaningful relationship with each other, but within, everyone is lonely. In fact loneliness of the human existence is the basic concern of the play. Everyone is a dreamer. Amanda, Tom, Laura—all of them want something to happen, something which would change their lonely condition, but they are unable to do more than dreaming. Their quest or search for a meaningful identity is futile because nothing moves, everything is static. It is mainly because they have their one foot in reality and the other in the world of illusion.

Amanda, the mother is the strongest character in the play; but she is wrapped up in the two worlds – her past and present. She is often unaware of the realities of the world around her. Her husband is present only in the blown-up photograph over the mantle—a telephone man, fell in love with

long distance and left for 'good'. Tom and Amanda refer to him on various occasions. Amanda, years before, had been deluded by his uniform; just as in the play she deludes herself about her girlhood and her youthful gentlemen callers, now grown rich. After all those gentlemen callers, she had loved Mr. Wingfield! She tells Laura, "That's the only thing your father had plenty of—charm!"(Williams 1971:349) He was the pride of her life but now she is uncomfortable about Wingfield's picture because it reminds her of her failure to keep husband and at the same time she has a fear whether she would be able to find one for Laura. In scene four she refers to Wingfield when she observes Tom living an irregular life, "I see you taking after his ways!"(355). Finally her fear comes true. Tom abandons the family like Mr. Wingfield did years before!

Thus, Mr. Wingfield left Amanda with a tough job of raising Tom and Laura. With a meager income of Tom, living in the two-room apartment in St Louis is a struggle for survival. In order to make a little more money she tries to sell women's magazine subscription to her friends. Thus, Amanda with grim feminine energy tries to change her pathetic world.

Amanda's character can be scrutinized through her relationship with her daughter Amanda. As Janardanan (2007:34) asserts:

The mother-daughter relationship in any culture is complex. The relationship between Amanda and Laura is no exception. This is a mother-daughter relationship that is hindered by the effects of loss, abandonment, and guilt, but is still filled with love, genuine affection, and concern.

Amanda has the qualities of the Aristocratic civilization; her refined tastes, her concern for minute details, her obsession for perfection—all that shows that she really belonged to the 'class'. But everything is rotting at the roots. She appears to be split into two personalities—her struggle to hold the family together and her gentle tag with the Aristocratic South. She is unable to reconcile them. What she needs is to be a little more realistic. Even Tom tells her the same thing!

Tom: Well, Laura seems all those things to you and me because she is ours and we love her. We don't even notice she's crippled anymore.

Amanda: Don't use that word.

Tom: Mother, you have to face the facts; she is, and and that's not all.(Williams: 361)

But Amanda refuses to listen to Tom. She is a very dominating mother and wants total submission from her children. She willfully ignores the present reality and so she refuses to admit Laura's shyness and crippled leg. She makes plan for Tom and Laura not realizing that they also want

freedom, that they have their own personalities that they must rise-up to face the hard facts and challenges of life. Instead she displays the strength of her mind to fight for her portion of life. And for this she knows how to justify her moves, her plans. She wants Laura to attend church socials with the intention that she might meet men. When Laura fails to attract the gentleman, she directs her to secretarial school so that in future she would be self-supporting. She tries to distract Laura's attention from her physical weakness by developing charm and vivacity. Behind this hammering, there is an awareness of the situation. As it is a first-hand experience, she knows it for sure what happens to a Southern girl without a shelter of her own. As she says:

I know so well what happens to unmarried women who aren't prepared to occupy a position in life. I've seen such pitiful cases in the South-barely tolerated spinsters living on some brother's wife or a sister's husband-tucked away in some mouse-trap of a room-encouraged by one in-law to go on and visit the next in-law, little birdlike women without any nest, eating the crust of humility all their lives!
(348)

Regarding Tom, she does not understand that Tom is a very sensitive artist. He desires to be a poet and that the warehouse is the last place on earth he loves. Amanda is insensitive to his position. There is continuous friction between the mother and the son. She scolds him repeatedly for his eating habits, his smoking, his going to the movies, his late-hour returning to house etc. Almost every talk leads to a verbal fight. When Tom speaks of how man is ruled by instincts and how he wants to be a lover, a hunter, a fighter, she nearly explodes. She argues that instincts belong to animals and that Christian adults look to "superior things! Things of the mind and the spirit!"(355). Her continuous 'lectures' and nagging, the home for Tom is a prison and he wants to find his own place, his home where he can feel free at home and where he can find his self!

When Tom brings a novel by D H Lawrence from the library, she again has something to argue. Lawrence is a writer, who offends her sense of propriety and so she calls him 'insane' (350)

Tom: Yesterday you confiscated my books; You had the nerve to -
Amanda: I did. I took that horrible novel back to the library- that awful book by that insane Mr. Lawrence. I cannot control the output of a diseased mind or people who cater to them, but I won't allow such filth in my house....

The only motive of Amanda's life is to find for Tom and Laura, if not extraordinary, at least average positions in life. She tells Tom: "Life is not easy it calls for- Spartan endurance." (355) Later she makes him

understand, “The future becomes the present” (360)

Unfortunately all her plans fail. She is desperately trying to hold a disintegrating family together. Everything that was honorable is gone and the standards of the past have become ridiculous in the present. All the same, the quest goes on. All her plans indicate that she strongly desires to give a meaningful shape to Wingfield family. This process itself is nothing but her search for self-recognition. She faces her present ordeal, covering herself up in her occasional reminiscence of her aristocratic Southern upbringing. It seems that for Amanda, her illusion is her shield and the same is her weapon to fight. Fantasy is her compensation for the unkind reality. She is very much aware of the world around and her main goal in life is to communicate that awareness to her children. In fact Amanda’s anxieties are largely, economic. It may be one of her illusions, but she thinks money as one of the solutions to some of her problems. Her gentlemen-callers were rich and so are her magazine heroes. She wants Tom to stop smoking and save money. When he complains about his factory life, she says “You just keep on trying and you’re bound to succeed.” (354) Interestingly, that is another illusion of Amanda. She believes the traditional motto of the American dream of success. With all her illusions she is trying to place herself and her family. Her search for self-recognition can be seen in all her attempts in establishing the name ‘Wingfield’. She wants to bring her past back into the present. But the irony plays its vital role in crushing her dreams. Tom’s father was not a successful businessman, but a telephone person who ‘fell in love with long distances’. Tom, the substitute father of the family, refuses to pay the light bill and runs away. Amanda herself sells subscriptions and brassieres only at the loss of her dignity. She and her daughter are searching for a savior who will come to help them, to save them, to give them position and to give their drab lives meaning. So though Amanda’s picture of life, in the ultimate analysis depicts the series of failure, her search cannot be neglected. It is an illustration to the readers or audience of the play that illusions are weak defenses against the demands of harsh reality.

For many readers of *The Glass Menagerie*, Tom is the most intriguing character indifferent to his sister. Amanda, his mother accuses him of not caring for “a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who’s crippled and has no job” (Williams 1964:379). Thus in her eyes Tom is selfish and indifferent towards his own future and the future of Laura. Amanda says: I don’t say me because I’m old and don’t matter! I say for your sister because she is young and dependent, (356). Before Tom makes his final departure, Amanda accuses him of living in illusion.

Amanda: You live in a dream; you manufacture illusions! Go to the movies, go! Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who's crippled...! (379).

But Tom is a part of the dilemma of his family. Even if he decides he cannot break himself completely free from the bond. Tom in the role of a narrator speaks a good deal about truth, reality, illusions, dreams etc; but actually Tom as the hero of the story has a soul of a dreamer. In other words Tom's entire journey can be called a journey for search for self-recognition. He is just trying to overcome the situations one after another without success. He is just disgusted with his mother for her nagging and accusations. She is unable to understand him; she cannot cope with the reality. Tom does have sympathy for his mother and sister, Laura, but he cannot accept their failures. In the fitness of the situation, Tom knows he has to make his stand in the world and so he decides to quit the family "for nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura – And so good bye....."(379). Thus bidding the family good-bye, Tom walks out of the darkness toward the challenging, illuminating world outside. Tom's love towards his sister could be seen when he admits in retrospect, "Oh Laura, Laura I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be." (379).

It is possible to identify a deep brother-sister love, almost bordering incest, in the play. There is an ambiguity in the Tom-Laura relationship. The characters in the play are quite similar to those of Williams' own family members. In his *Memoirs*, Williams (1975:524) has written:

My sister and I had a close relationship, quite unsullied by any carnal knowledge. As a matter of fact, we were rather shy of each other, physically.....And yet our love was and is, the deepest in our lives and was perhaps very pertinent to our withdrawal from extra familial attachment.

This incestuous overtone can be also traced back to Williams' attraction for his sister Rose, about which he confesses in his: "Some perceptive critic of the theatre made the observation that the true theme of my work is 'incest'...." (Parker 1985:517-513). Tom-Laura relationship certainly parallels Williams' intimate relationship with his sister. This aspect of familial relationships in the play imparts an additional dimension to the search for self-recognition.

In the final analysis of the character it becomes evident that Tom has full sympathy for Amanda and Laura. He walks out in the search for self, for identity, for a meaningful existence for himself as well for his family. He wants to make them happy, and see them happy.

Tennessee Williams has given a beautiful structure to this play, and

Tom the narrator plays very important part in it. He offers, in all, five soliloquies and through soliloquies his search, his struggle for search, his attempt to gain an identity becomes clear.

The first soliloquy is important in the sense that it sets Tom's mood. There is a delicate balance between irony and nostalgia. The Wingfield family, the social background, etc. has been given an appropriate exposition. The second soliloquy presents Amanda's nostalgia, the gentlemen caller. The third soliloquy turns on the incongruity between the drabness of the domestic life and the adventure of the outside world. The fourth soliloquy explains the nature of Jim O'Connor, the gentleman caller before he arrives on the scene and the play ends with Tom's final soliloquy, which explains how he abandoned the family to join Merchant Marine, sailed across the sea but carried the memory of his mother and sister throughout. Thus through Tom's narration and through all the five soliloquies one can examine his search for self-recognition. He talks about himself, his mother, his sister, their traps, his traps, their failures, his dreams, adventures, his fears and his final decision and so on. Tom's character is a beautiful creation of Tennessee Williams. Tom's role as a narrator should be carefully studied. His is not only an expression of a wistful nostalgia for the lost, doomed world of Amanda, Laura and the glass menagerie but it also contains a good deal of irony and humor. The readers can see Tom as an artist whose utterances show how the artist creates, using the raw material of his own life.

Tom wants to be a poet and he has a poets' weakness for symbols. Jim calls Him "Shakespeare". His perception that "man is, by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter and none of those instincts are given much play at the warehouse..." (Williams 1964:355) is quite true and interesting. His late night visits to movies and magic shows are perhaps the escape activities from the domestic and ordinary existence but then he is aware that this can't go longer. He knows that he has to seek adventure, and do something for the fulfillment of his instincts in real life. He knows for sure that he cannot be Jim, who seeks satisfaction in 'hard work' (American dream) and success. He cannot respond to Amanda's appeal on "Rise and shine!" (353). His answer is: "I will rise – but I won't shine." (353)

Tom loves Laura very deeply with all her problems. Because she is the only one in the world who accepted him without reservation. He has shared with her his emotional secrets and so on. He has sincerely found a gentleman caller for her, but when he learns that Jim is already engaged and Amanda accuses him of being selfish, he leaves everybody, like his father, to join Merchant Marine. This is how with the family, without the family, Tom's is an endless journey. Whether he finds himself or not, whether he

gets an identity for himself or not, or the search remains to be endless – all these questions, in a sense are futile. ‘Tom’s search for himself’ is the reality.

Laura Wingfield has been portrayed by the playwright as a delicate alienated person. Perhaps the epigraph of the play, “Nobody, Not Even the Rain, Has Such Small Hands” is taken as Tom’s feelings for Laura, (Commings 1968: 366). She is far removed from the world of Tom and from that of her mother. Her association with the glass menagerie is symbolic because she never emerges as a human being in her own right. Her beauty and her fragility, her mental imbalance, her limp, caused by a childhood illness which crippled her and her inferiority complex—all this is the ‘treasure of this personality! Otherwise nothing can be said about Laura. In other words, she exists only on the single dimension of sympathy. ‘Blue Roses’ is the nickname given to her. The ‘blue’ color suggests the atmosphere of sadness and melancholy that envelops Laura’s slight, real person.

In addition to being handicapped she suffers from the inferiority complex, probably that developed because of her mother’s absolutely dominating personality. She all the time submits herself to the supreme will of her mother. Her extreme shyness caused by the crippled condition showed itself in high school and she dropped out. Her failure at Business College is another episode that drives her to the life of an introvert. Even buying butter is a problem for her. Thus she has taken a refuge in the two-room apartment with mother as the guardian and Tom, the brother, as bread earner. If home is a prison for Tom, it is a heaven for Laura. ‘Time’ doesn’t disturb her as she is absorbed fully with the music of 1920’s on phonograph. The old tunes are recorded on “those worn out phonograph records her father left as a painful reminder of him.” (Williams: 347). Thus her love of the Old Victoria may be a part of an unconscious search for a father, her instinctive quest for protection against her overpowering mother.

Another object that Laura has developed an association with is her glass menagerie. Sitting around or revolving around the favorite collection of the menagerie, perhaps she is trying to find herself; perhaps she is searching the meaning of her life or trying to bring meaning to her life and thereby proving her own existence, which is otherwise the same! She is like a piece of her own glass collection, too fragile to be moved. When she proudly displays the glass menagerie to Jim, especially the thirteen-year-old unicorn, Jim awakens Laura but accidentally breaks the horn of the unicorn. That symbolizes the fate of Laura.

The name of Jim D O’Connor (D for Delaney) establishes him as an Irishman. Tom refers him as “an emissary from a world that we were

somehow set apart from.” (343) He is simple, vibrant and hearty. He creates a tremendous hope for Tom, Amanda and Laura “the long- delayed but always expected something that we live for.” (343) He is comfortable with Amanda at the dinner table and after dinner when he is alone with Laura, he begins to persuade her that her limp is only a minor disability. She need not fear for anything. He jokes with her taking her to the past – to the school days. In the same mood he tells her how ambitious he is:

I want to be ready to go right up along with it. I’m planning to get in on the ground floor. Oh, I’ve already made the right connections. All that remains now is for the industry itself to get under way! Full steam! – You know, Knowledge- zzzzppp! Money zzzzzzpp! – POWER! Wham! That’s the cycle democracy is built on!
(374)

Thus, Jim is an ardent advocate of the American dream which believes in the myth of hard work and success. It seems, through Jim, Tennessee Williams has satirized this popular belief. Jim works in the warehouse. He has taken evening courses in public speaking and electrodynamics, hoping to get a break as a public executive or as a radio engineer. He believed that the USA is on the right path to knowledge, science and technology etc. It is a sign of power and if a young man has the right connections, he will be able to go up in life. While encouraging Laura, Jim shows her another dreamland, but it is sheer self-deception on his part. Jim is not as confident as he appears to be. Perhaps he is afraid of that democracy – the good old USA—may leave him behind. His words of encouragement do not seem that convincing. For instance while convincing Laura he admits:

But just look around you and what do you see, a lot of people just as disappointed as you are. You take me, for instance. Boy, when I left high school I thought I’d be a lot further along at this time than I am now. (372)

Further he says, “I may be disappointed but I am not discouraged.”
(373)

In other words he is aware of his failures and fears, but he is trying to patch them up or cover up. It is such kind of dreamy words, brave talk that cheers him up and keeps him up to keep life moving. Jim’s search lies in this very fact that he has not got anything in life so far but as it is said “low aim is a crime” Jim talks about high aim and objective in life. It could be a timely solace for Laura but for Jim he is still on the search for himself and the path for him is dangerous because the fundamental base is not concrete. He has not really understood what is to be done to achieve the

‘American dream’. He has not realized the significance behind this dream so he is shallow, superfluous and so on.

3. Conclusion

The study shows the *Search for self-recognition* of the characters on different levels. Hitchcock (1993) commented that that Williams’s incessant search is to find the complementary half of his self. This can be seen in the unyielding efforts of his characters. All the three major characters living together but for each of them the search and the attempt towards the search is different. Their levels of attempts, their ways, their psyche—everything is different, even Jim, an outsider is not an exception to that.

Amanda has her past, Laura has her glass menagerie, and Jim has his baseless, dreamy world for search for self-recognition. Tom has to break the walls to go out and find himself. Therefore the study tries to give a vivid picture of the human predicament and shows how difficult it is to exist and take a search for self.

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DECONSTRUCTION AND/OR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES HISTORY IN CARYL PHILLIPS'S *CAMBRIDGE*

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***Abstract:** Cambridge is part of the deconstruction and decolonizing process mainly encouraged by the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o's motto "decolonizing the mind". As such, it depicts the most vulnerable spot of colonialism, that is, the real character of slavery and plantation economy in the British West Indies largely regarded as the only shaping factors of Caribbean history and culture.*

***Keywords:** History, institution of slavery, intertextuality, juxtaposition of tales, postcolonial theory*

1. Introduction

Cambridge undertakes to change the historical subjectivity by bringing forth new appalling facts and insights in support of the marginalized "other". As such, the novel rises above dichotomies and/or categories such as colonizer versus colonized and centre versus periphery. Furthermore, Phillips revisits the lasting effects of the so-called "notorious institution" of slavery. As Kirpal (1989:138) argues, "Today African's novelist wishes to teach his people how to come out of the long night of slavery and to brave problems on the social, political, and cultural front".

In addition, the novel aims at deconstructing the centre, especially its way of recording the events, particularly its way of writing the History (capital letter). To achieve such a mission, Phillips makes use of intertextuality, that is, interpretation of various texts aiming at reconciling with the past, which brings it in line with Caribbean and minority discourse at large:

First, Black Latin American minority discourse forces us as readers to consider some of the so called 'universals' of history, to abandon monolithic reading, and to open our minds to multiple readings of reality. Second, it nourishes and is nourished by some of the most cogent cultural values of Traditional Africa. Third, it is inseparable from the integrity of the race, but it does not attempt to raise the latter above all others; it simply affirms and reclaims its roots where the dominant culture overrides or tries to override the marginal groups. Finally, ejects the politics of control, especially where this control is cultural. This is because minority discourse operates from the awareness that, as Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o has put it, 'once you control how a people look at themselves, you can in fact make a move in any other direction' (Kubayanda 1990:263).

2. Juxtaposition of Tales in *Cambridge*

Post-colonial writers including Caryl Phillips employ different literary techniques to analyze the past and ever-present condition of colonies largely regarded as peripheries of dominant colonial and neo-colonial centers. As such, the past is revived and scrutinized by casting doubts at the verity of official texts of colonial powers. In fact, *Cambridge* depicts a very delicate time in the history of British West Indies between the evolution of slave trade and full emancipation. Thus, the novel consists of three main stories narrated by three different voices in between a prologue and an epilogue.

The first story is a travel-journal of Emily Cartwright, an English spinster of about thirty dispatched to an unnamed West Indian island, (similar to C. Phillips's native island St. Kitts), her father's plantation, to see how the estate is run before marrying an unwanted elderly suitor in England. During her voyage to the island she loses her faithful personal servant Isabella due to a disease and during her stay on the island she develops an intimate relationship with Mr. Brown the overseer of her father's estate and eventually gives birth to an illegitimate child. She also comes into contact with the Bible-reading slave Cambridge whose proficiency in English and mannerism impressed her greatly. Her narration ends with the murder of Brown by Cambridge: "... the Negro ... hanged from a tree, no longer able to explain or defend his treacherous act" (Phillips 1991:128).

The second story is narrated by Cambridge in a state of rush trying to defend himself before being hanged without a trial according to the existing laws for killing a white man. His story enlightens the reader about his past, (true Guinea name, Olumide) enslaved, liberated, and finally re-enslaved again to be sold into slavery in Emily's father's estate. He was then rechristened Cambridge and had to endure all the bullying and discouraging attitudes of Mr. Brown ranging from physical beatings to the violation of his obeah wife Christiania in his presence and in the presence of the black community. Cambridge ends his narration with a meaningful quotation from the Bible: "Praise be the Lord! He who 'has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth'" (Phillips 1991:167).

Part three of the novel has all the characteristics of a canonical document in the form of a newspaper article. It describes the murder committed by an "insane" slave named Cambridge against a righteous Christian named Mr. Brown. A footnote further explains that, "The Negroes say that no grass has ever grown in the spot where the blood dropped since the time of the murder" (Phillips 1991:173).

Yet, Emily's narrative stands as a counter-argument against her father, the centre, who against her will has arranged her marriage and whose dispatch to the island is part of his exploitative scheme to secure enough financial means. Emily's silence: "Papa I have buried feelings ... Feelings locked up inside of me, hopes that demand that I must not abandon them ..." (Phillips 1991:4) soon comes to an end and the rest of her narrative consists of critical letters to her "Centre father" and to the chaos that his policies and absenteeism have created on the island. Furthermore, Emily doubts in Mr. Brown's "civility" when she first encounters him and reaches the conclusion that "this man's ignorance knew no boundaries" (Phillips 1991:30-31). Regarding Cambridge, she holds the opinion that he is "lettered, can read his Bible, and even endeavors to teach it to his fellow blacks, which leads me [her] to conclude that, indeed, this *ancient* Cambridge is no ordinary Negro" (Phillips 1991:118).

Cambridge's narrative, on the other hand, is more than a mere defense. From being accused, he turns out to be an accuser of the centre and the standards set by it. He uses the language of the colonizer to pronounce his hidden thoughts and secrets, to discredit the so-called universal values and white man's natural supremacy. He starts with the argument of how the natives were considered savage, "ungodly men", even cannibals, to continue with the denouncement of the slave trade carried out by people "whose eyes were blinded" by strong rum and "hearts stupefied by the prospects of profit" (Phillips 1991:163, 134). He further argues that Mr. Brown's violation of his wife was a disgrace not only to his race ("this humiliation was something that we had to endure as a company (p. 162)", but also to "his own people and their civilization" (Phillips 1991:162).

As for the third part, it represents the official text of what happened. In fact, after reading the first two narratives, it is not difficult to remark such report's falsehoods and prejudices: "The negroes on this property had been for a long time in the habit of pilfering, and in many instances Mr. Brown had discovered the pilferers (offenders) which caused him to be disliked, and determined one among them, more heartless, perhaps, than the rest, to undertake his destruction" (Phillips 1991:171). In addition, the text considers the relationship and violation of Christiania by Mr. Brown as "innocent amour" and that Cambridge "had held her in bondage, his mind destroyed by fanciful notions of a Christian life of moral and domestic responsibility which he, in common with his fellow slaves, was congenitally unsuited of" (Phillips 1991:172). Surprisingly, the previously "brute" and "bullying" Mr. Brown is now called in this article as "the good Mr. Brown ... and ere a prayer could rise to his lips, his soul flew to meet his God, and

his murderer was left standing alone, with the stain of human blood upon him” (Phillips 1991:173).

By presenting three narratives each different from each other, Phillips hints at the construction of history and concludes that the official texts used in the writing of History (capital H) by colonial powers are unreliable, full of biases and need to be reconsidered. Paul Sharrad (1994:214) in “Speaking the Unspeakable” argues about the possibility of the third text to survive and be used as a primary source by scholars and historians, the other two narratives are mere silence:

The ‘document’ in the novel most likely to survive in real world is the most official and also the most unreliable – the sensationalist report of the murder of Brown, biased by white prejudice, ‘yellow press’ cliché and the report of an interested witness from a group otherwise repeatedly depicted as willing to say anything on oath. The rest is silence.

Even Christiania’s obeah and her refusal to speak is a sign of resistance. As such, Phillips seems to undertake the heavy burden to speak for the *subaltern*. As a post-colonial writer, he revives the silent voices. By employing two narratives, alongside the official report, Phillips skillfully makes the reader listen to the voice of marginalized, the “other”, the silenced voices that had historically been shut down by the ideology of the dominant culture. To Phillips, the *subaltern* can speak and *Cambridge* proves it.

3. The Father of the Centre

The best representative of the centre in the novel is Emily’s father, that is, the wealthy estate owner who stays in London and what the reader knows about him is only through Emily’s narrative. In fact, he tries to maintain the privileges of the centre through the exploitation of the slaves on the plantation. His prejudices against women and the “other” in general, even his absenteeism, indicate the primary aims of the centre.

Phillips’s refusal of allowing the “father centre” to speak and enter the novel, as well as Emily’s low opinion of him: “And what of father, no doubt in his cups at the planter’s club in London ... I can only assume that a romantic liaison with some vulgar cockneyess will provide him with his Christmas supper” (Phillips 1991:127) reveal that the centre is losing the grip on the periphery. Even Emily’s father’s idea to sell the estate together with the new social and political changes taking place on the island under the slogan of enlightenment counts for the centre’s lack of hegemony. We lose sight of the centre the moment Emily contemplates of not going back

home: "Papa, was dead? His endless pleas for her to return. To Thomas Lockwood. Papa dead? (Phillips 1991:183).

Nevertheless, Cambridge's status is sealed once and forever as long as the influence of the centre is deeply rooted in colonizer's consciousness. Furthermore, his death by hanging, without going on trial, remains the best evidence of the dominant character of the centre which crushes and exterminates, if needed, all those who deign to oppose the settled system of exploitation and those who incite rebellion among the obedient slaves. Memmi (1965:820) in "The colonizer and the colonized" argues about the way colony shapes not only the colonized but also the colonizer, especially the new white comers who are first shocked then active participants in the ideology: "Whenever the colonizer adds, in order to fall prey of anxiety, that the colonized is a wicked, backward person with evil, thievish, somewhat sadistic instincts, he thus justifies his policy and his legitimate severity". Thus, the dismissal of the centre is accompanied with ambiguities and the reader wonders if Emily will ever fully recover from the influence that the centre has had on her. In the epilogue, she would say: "Dear Papa, your Negroes are a deep, oily black, with the occasional matt one dulled by the sun" (Phillips 1991:181).

By employing Emily and Cambridge as denouncers of the centre, Phillips remarks that they haven't truly rejected the centre that exists within them and which leads them in their lives. These binary categories emphasize the existence of many "others" not the existence of a single centre. By the end of the novel, the reader naturally reverses the statement: "England, the truth" (Phillips 1991:4) into: England, the truth? Emily's decision to stay on reinforces the possibility for a negative answer.

4. Intertextuality

In order to deconstruct the power of the traditional centre, Phillips uses other technical and structural devices apart from dismissing the father's authority or the official text's unreliability. Textual doubles or intertextuality is another way of challenging the concepts and notions of the dominant ideology. Therefore, as many critics agree, *Cambridge* remains a pastiche of historical documents ranging from slave narratives to Victorian women's travelogues. It is important to mention, though, that Phillips's textuality is "a defiant textuality" for it "forms a double with these documents" by "setting the facts contained in at odd with each other" and "reveals "the suspect second hand knowledge on which their authority rested" (Sharrad 1994:216).

In fact, Phillips makes use of a late eighteenth-century style including phraseology, diction and italicized words. The whole novel

consists of descriptions regarding the colonial house, the Negro festival, the extravagance of the planter's table, explanations of the plantation system, Dr. McDonald discourse on medical care, bookkeeper's speech on creolisation, slave songs and parodies. In short, *Cambridge* is heavily larded with anything typical of enlightenment and abolitionist nature of the 19th century (Low 1998:129). Even Cambridge's personal story resembles a well-known abolitionist poem, "The dying Slave" (Sharrad 1994:212). The only difference from other famous literary characters of the time is that Cambridge neither led a mutiny, nor leapt overboard. O'Callaghan (1993:34), on the other hand, stresses the fictionality of the novel:

Cambridge itself is a novel that attempts historical reconstruction in order to interrogate and, possibly, rewrite the European record of the West Indies. In a sense, then, *Cambridge* wears the mask of fiction (as the term is commonly used), but reveals its matrix in historical narratives, which are in turn unmasked by the text's process and shown to be rather insidiously fictional in their claim to 'the truth'.

O' Callaghan (1993:33) and Low (1998:129) further argue about the striking similarities that *Cambridge* has with Monk Lewis's "Journal of a West Indian Proprietor", Lady Nuget's "Journal", Mrs. Carmichael's "Domestic Manners", particularly Emily's shipboard observations, her account of the cabin boy and his dog, and her account of her own seasickness (1993:33, 1998:129). Nevertheless, the greatness of the novel lies in the fact that it interrogates the sources colonial powers drew upon while compiling the History (capital letter).

By relying on different sources, Phillips comes up with a post-colonial version of rewriting the history by looking critically at all the knowledge that we have taken for granted, especially the knowledge regarding the periphery. As such, *Cambridge* provides ways of dismantling colonialism's signifying system and exposing its operation of silencing and oppressing the colonial subject. As O'Callaghan (1993:34) argues:

At the same time, in calling attention to the parent narratives, that inform these sections, text which intend a particular (Eurocentric) historical construction of the colonized Other and simultaneously exposing the 'fictionality' of such accounts; and enabling both colonized other (*Cambridge*) and colonizing other (the woman, Emily) to speak through such discourses while evading reductive labeling (objectification) by the retention of incongruity, discordance, contradictions, silences in their narratives, *Cambridge* casts doubt on the very possibility of definitive historical construction".

5. The Institution of Slavery

Phillips also tries to take up the theme of “Black Atlantic” and explore not only the unfounded bases of the whole enterprise, but most importantly, the lasting scars and consequences caused by it. Yet, the theme of slavery is viewed from different angles: “Phillips addresses dialogically and explores what has been called the ‘woven complexity’ of colonial societies by not yielding to that Said calls ‘a rhetoric of blame’ or to use Wilson Harris’s formulation, without following the course of self-righteous deprivation” (Ledent 1995:56).

As a matter of fact, Phillips looks at slavery from a post-colonial point of view and dismantles all the hegemonic theories regarding the institution of slavery. Thus, Emily, as a colonizing narrator, seems to have been influenced by such theories regardless of her generosity and attitudes against the peculiar institution of slavery. Even her abolitionist ideas are a sign of naivety and lack of experience as a new comer. The first impression that she had with black community is revealing as it shows her prejudices. She calls blacks “Negro men” and can’t “disguise [her] revulsion” (Phillips 1991:21) at their “savage curiosity” (Phillips 1991:22), “lack of common cleaning”, therefore she turned to observe from a distance the “new varieties of wild animal” (Phillips 1991:25) and feels disgusted to hear her “mother-tongue mocked by the curious thick utterances at the Negro English” (Phillips 1991:29).

Furthermore, plantation economy stripped slaves from their traditional values due to lack of family units and forbiddance of native languages. Thus, they were transported “in a state of nudity” (Phillips 1991:38), forcibly uprooted as a “cargo of livestock” (Phillips 1991:38) and enjoyed no human rights, whatsoever. Yet, the social hierarchy of the whole system was based on color. As such, colonies attracted large numbers of white adventures and losers, including “*carpenters* who knew not a saw from chisel, *bricklayers* who knew not wood from store, book-keepers who were illiterate and innumerate so that the number of Negroes in proportion to whites was not only growing, but the equality of the whites is rapidly falling” (Phillips 1991:59).

In addition, the institution of slavery was based on forced labor, lack of collective memory, and racial attitudes. The education of the slaves with Christian moral values was feared of encouraging “over-bold Negro conduct, even insurrection” (Phillips 1991:97) because they would demand equal rights in “the eyes of the lord” (Phillips 1991:97). So, it was crucial to maintain the “moral and spiritual superiority of the whites” (Phillips 1991:97), against the “physical superiority of the blacks” (Phillips 1991:97),

otherwise their natural condition of servitude would be seriously shattered and endangered.

However, the true face of the institution of slavery was revealed in the laws and judicial system on the island. Emily herself witnesses the trial of a young black girl of seventeen who tried to poison her cruel master. In fact, no formal procedure of cross-examination took place due to notorious “practice of perjury” (Phillips 1991:106) among blacks who were unable to understand the “serious obligation of an oath” (Phillips 1991:106). Consequently, poor Punch, the defendant, was condemned to death by hanging. Arthur L. Stinchcombe (1995:3-4) gives the best description of the ‘slave society’ and its lasting scars:

But ‘slave society’, as we use the term here, does not mean only the lack of anarchism or the prevalence of restrictions of social life. Instead, it means that a pervasive purpose in many kinds of social relations between more and less powerful people is *to keep the others (slaves) from deciding or being able to decide*. Some major part of the energy of political, familial, social and economic social relations is devoted to the purpose of restricting the freedom of slaves ... In the economy, restriction of the right to learn new trades, to choose for whom to work, to spend the returns from work as one wishes, to take rest at no greater cost than the value of production forgone by resting, to shape one’s children for work chosen by the parents all move one from ‘wage slavery’ as a mere metaphor to a slave society.

Therefore, Phillips intends to recover and revive the past whose effects are closely related to the present and even the future of the region. He also takes up a topic which has not been fully explored. By depicting racism, racial prejudices, and natural superiority as the foundations of the canonical centre, Phillips once again reveals and “speaks the unspeakable” and talks about something that others try to forget, that is, the institution of slavery.

6. Conclusion

Cambridge reveals the real character of slavery and plantation economy as the only shaping factors of Caribbean history and culture. Yet, the importance of the novel lies in the fact that Phillips deconstructs the canonical dominance from the Other’s point of view, from the ‘voices’ that have been silenced by the colonial ideology and its infamous institutions of exploitation. By the end of the novel, the authority of the traditional ‘centre’ has been challenged and Phillips has succeeded in providing an alternative fictional history (lower case) for the whole region.

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APOCALYPSE NOW IN DON DELILLO'S *WHITE NOISE*

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Abstract: DeLillo's novel is a wry critique of postmodern American society and its blind faith in institutions, consumerism, medicine or the media, whose combined effect is to induce a certain social numbness to imminent disaster. The author counterpoints the actual and the metaphysical by focusing on the deepest human fear, i.e., the fear of death, a feeling which colors the protagonist's entire professional and personal life.

Keywords: consumerism, death, evasion, irony, media, noise, simulacra, vision.

1. Introduction

Don DeLillo's *White Noise* was published in 1984 and won the American Book Award in 1986. Eversince then, it has been celebrated as a postmodern prototype that seems to signify upon reigning theories of cultural postmodernism, written as it was in the wake of a number of much discussed theoretical works about our present sociocultural condition: Jean Baudrillard's *The Ecstasy of Communication*, Fredric Jameson's (1991) *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, or Jean-Francois Lyotard's *Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?*

The novel can be taken as yet another anthropological perspective which reads as "an anatomy of America the Beautiful" (Weinstein 1993:298), except that the *American Pastoral* becomes here a chronicle of the terrors lurking in the environment and the family. The setting is a lazy college town called Blacksmith and the story is that of Jack Gladney, an academic and now Head of a Hitler Studies Program at The College-on-the-Hill, and his fourth wife, Babette. Theirs is supposed to be a new, modern family with its four children from previous marriages, ex-spouses that drop in unexpectedly, children that fly long distances to spend the vacation with their biological parents, their ritual visits to the supermarket or their addiction to the media.

At a deeper level, however, the novel seems to reach down to a certain buried awareness that the most familiar aspects of life: the shopping malls, television, and the press, family life, and the semiotics of these things – they all harbor deep and resonant mysteries and bring about a defamiliarization of the daily life routines. If only one can read and hear the signs, that is.

2. Innocenting Vision, Understanding the 'Language'

My reading of the novel focuses on the visual and auditive strategies employed in the narrative, as instrumental in highlighting the way in which human belief and passion are displaced, renamed, shaped and commodified in a materialistic age. Our cultural myths are shallow and hollow at the core; they are broadcast in the news, present on the front pages and they speak to us of our own private wishes and fears, trying to shun what in the novel appears as the most haunting anxiety of both Jack and Babette: the fear of death.

The fear of imminent disaster is here portrayed as 'the airborne toxic event' (also the title of the middle section of the novel), i.e. the spillage of an extremely toxic gas from a punctured tank that becomes a hovering cloud threatening to affect the lives of the inhabitants by chemical poisoning, causing suffocation, cancer and death. This powerful vision of an imminent apocalypse beyond the bucolic veneer of the sleepy American small town serves to bring to surface the repressed fears about cataclysm and nature's revenge and the day of the final reckoning.

Murray Jay Siskind, Jack's colleague, who has a seminar on car crashes and is the resident guru on the campus, stresses the importance of the innocent gaze in our attempt to understand immediate reality: 'We have to learn to look as children again' (DeLillo 1984:50) he says, and, indeed there are several descriptive passages in the novel, of otherwise trivial activities, that are remarkable in their power to evoke fresh perceptions. There is, first, the opening paragraph of the book depicting the return of the students to campus for the new academic year, which reads as a sort of re-enactment of the great migrations and the conquering of the American West:

The station wagons arrived at noon, a long shining line that coursed through the west campus...The roofs of the station wagons were loaded down with carefully secured suitcases full of light and heavy clothing.; with boxes of blankets, boots and shoes, stationery and books, sheets, pillows, quilts; with rolled-up rugs and sleeping bags; with bicycles, skis, rucksacks, English and Western saddles, inflated rafts. As cars slowed to a crawl and stopped, students sprang out and raced to the rear doors to begin removing the objects inside, the stereo sets, radios, personal computers; small refrigerators and table ranges; the cartons of phonograph records and cassettes; the hairdryers and styling irons; the tennis rackets, soccer balls, hockey and lacrosse sticks, bows and arrows, the controlled substances, the birth control pills and devices; the junk food still in shopping bags-onion-and-garlic chips... peanut creme patties... fruit chews and toffee popcorn; the Dum Dum pops, the Mystic mints. (DeLillo 1984:3)

The second example is the supermarket scene. The known world is here depicted as if the viewer were searching for an underlying pattern in

the everyday confusion and routines, marked by numbers, data, codes. The swarming life of such a place where we make our weekly pilgrimages is compared by Murray to Tibetan theology:

This place recharges us spiritually, it prepares us, it's a gateway or pathway...It's full of psychic data...Everything is concealed in symbolism, hidden by veils of mystery and layers of cultural material...Energy waves, incident radiation. All the letters and numbers are here, all the colours of the spectrum, all the voices and sounds, all the code words and ceremonial phrases. It is just a question of deciphering, rearranging, peeling of the layers of unspeakability. (DeLillo 1984:37-38)

“Peeling off layers of unspeakability” is, indeed, an important concern of the novel. To see like a child is to see dimensions, to perceive auras, to grasp the connectedness of what is discrete, the odd magic of our material world.

Concomitantly though, Don DeLillo's project of innocent vision is counterpointed by the awareness of vision as construct, pointing to the media's enormous role in what we see and the way we see it. Speaking about “the most photographed barn in America”, Murray comments: “Once you've seen signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn” (DeLillo 1984:12). DeLillo highlights here the inevitable gap between the concepts handed down to us by the social order and the evidence of our own eyes. As one critic points out, “this kind of analysis comes right out of Baudrillard, with his grandstanding hyperbole about the postmodern world as pure simulacral system” (Bonca 1996). It also recalls Fredric Jameson (1991:14), with his notion of “the fragmentation of the subject”, or of “a new depthlessness”, or Baudrillard's and Deleuze's ideas of simulacra. And this all the more so as in the age of media power television makes it possible for us to savor erupting disasters, to watch with impunity catastrophes and global tragedies, comfortably seated in our armchairs. The pleasure of such visual representations of disasters is linked to the feeling of being untouchable. When it seems that Blacksmith is about to have its own disaster, Jack is convinced that there must be a mistake: “Society is set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters...Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his own street in one of those TV floods?” (DeLillo 1984:114)

The media play a crucial role in *White Noise* as they perform the double function of *actualizing* and *derealizing*, as if one's experience were not real until packaged and narrated in the evening news. When the airborne toxic event reaches their town, the Gladneys' yearning for a yet more

terrible disaster is satisfied. The description of the toxic cloud itself, seen during the frenzied exodus from the town is done in almost mythical terms:

The enormous blackmass moved like some death ship in Norse legend, escorted across the night by armoured creatures with spiral wings...It was a terrible thing to see, so close, so low, packed with chlorides, benzines, phenol, hydrocarbons, or whatever precise toxic content... Our fear was accompanied by a sense of awe that bordered on the religious. It is surely possible to be awed by the thing that threatens your life, to see it as a cosmic force, so much larger than yourself, more powerful, created by elemental and willful rhythms (DeLillo 1984:127)

Le Clair has perceptively observed that the nuclear cloud “packed” with chemical substances “is presented in consumerist terms, like a new item in the supermarket” (Le Clair 1987:219). To be understood as real experience and internalized it has to be not only packaged, but also narrated, turned into a story to be consumed by the public. This is the significance of the episode in the refugee camp for the evacuees, when Heinrich, Jack’s son explains the events to a group of people:

What a surprise it was to...discover that my own son was at the center of things, speaking in his new- found voice, his tone of enthusiasm for runaway calamity. He was talking about the airborne toxic event in a technical way, although his voice all but sang with prophetic disclosure. He pronounced the name itself, Nyodene Derivative, with an unseemly relish, taking morbid delight in the very sound...No doubt, his listeners were influenced by his age. He would be truthful and earnest, serving no special interest; he would have an awareness of the environment; his knowledge of chemsirty would be fresh and up-to-date. (DeLillo 1984: 130)

It is interesting to note that the airborne toxic event is explored by DeLillo not in terms of tragedy or heroism but in terms of the light it sheds on our deep seated needs to believe in the supernatural and the messages it sends. The American environment becomes demonic and potent, echoing Melville’s white whale or Poe’s white shrouded figure at the end of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.

The visible signs that we receive and need to decipher are coupled with equally strong messages that we all hear, but not always listen to, in our “Muzak age” (Weinstein’s term, 1993). For, scientifically, *white noise* is “a periodical sound with frequencies of random amplitude and random interval”, while in music it is “sound produced by all audible sound-wave frequencies sounding together” (Le Clair 1987:230), which explains why the initial title of the novel was to be *Panasonic*- an all pervasive sound scheme. In other words, *white noise* is the media noise of a consumerist culture that penetrates our homes and our minds with its ceaseless, subliminal flow

of brand-name items and fragments of TV and radio talk shows, or the human buzz of transactions taking place in shopping malls, offices, banks and other such public places. From the point of view of the left wing theories of the Frankfurt School, *white noise* is the manifestation of the final triumph of capitalist appropriation, specifically of late capitalism's "prodigious expansion... into hitherto uncommodified areas... One is tempted to speak in this connection of a new and historically original penetration and colonization of Nature and the Unconscious" (Jameson 1991:78). From Baudrillard's perspective, *white noise* is "the realm of the ecstasy of communication, of mass culture's signifying swirl which disperses the subject into links in the signifying chain, into a mere terminal in Communication's Mainframe. In such a scenario, life and death have no subjective reality unless they are confirmed by the System" (Bonca 1996).

Human life is pitted in the novel against this immense spectrum of noise and image made audible, visible or imaginable by the semiotic strategies of the text. The human story of love and passion as epitomized by Jack and Babette is counterpointed to the technological indices of power and fuel, data, numbers, codes or marketing slogans. In this roaring world of sounds and images, human happiness and freedom are rendered problematic; people are automatons, complex biochemical entities ruled by forces unknown and unmanageable, as Jack's son Heinrich explains in a conversation with his father on the notion of human will, direction or knowledge:

Who knows what I want to do? Who knows what anyone wants to do?... Isn't it all a question of brain chemistry, signals going back and forth, electrical energy in the cortex?...It's all this activity in the brain and you don't know what's you as a person and what's some neuron that just happens to fire or just happens to misfire (DeLillo1984:45-46)

Much of the novel's power lies precisely in the conflict it stages between the family unit, its poetry and frail structure and the omnipresence of chaos and death, for Death is the major white noise of the novel. For DeLillo, *White Noise* is contemporary man's deepest expression of his fear of death, a strange and genuinely awe-inspiring response to the fear of mortality in the postmodern world. Society's greatest weapon to ward off death is technology, but here the vision is that of technology gone wrong: computers that replace our history with data and numbers, toxins that escape control and threaten communities, drugs such as Dylar that are meant to eradicate the fear of death. In the supermarket, amidst "the toneless systems, the jangle and skid of carts, the loudspeaker and coffeemaking machines, the cries of children," Jack Gladney hears "over it all, or under it all, a dull

and unlocatable roar, as of some form of swarming life just outside the range of human apprehension” (DeLillo 1984: 36).

As Ernest Becker shows in *The Denial of Death*, “the idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity-activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man”. The death fear is with us from birth, and all human “projects” – especially the language we use to help us construct our belief systems – are designed to evade or deny or conquer the fear of death (Becker 1973:ix). These ideas permeate the narrative at every turn and help explain important episodes in the novel. All along, *White Noise* encompasses numberless examples of human utterance, both denotative or not: the signs concerning lost dogs and cats, sometimes in the handwriting of children; family chats; the background noise of humans in an enclosed space; or the discussions of the New York emigres. What all these phenomena share is a desperate need for a language that would bridge human distances and withhold the terror inside. It is language as the denial of death, as the evasion of what cannot be evaded: “Pain, death, reality,” says Murray Jay Siskind, “we can’t bear these things as they are. We know too much. So we resort to repression, compromise, and disguise. This is how we survive in the universe. This is the natural language of the species” (DeLillo 1984:289).

What the novel brings together then are two kinds of white noise: that which is a product of late capitalism and a simulacral society, and that which has always been “the natural language of the species” – death evasion – and which now gets expressed in the jargon of consumer culture. The result is a vision of contemporary America that bypasses cultural critique in favor of recording the potential disaster that our civilization has wrought. Because for DeLillo, if *white noise* certainly registers the ways in which Americans evade their death fear, it is also audible, provided we learn to listen properly – as a moving and strangely beautiful expression of that death fear.

Three important passages in the novel reveal that there is a curious kind of revelation in the recognition that white noise communicates the death-fear. In each one, Jack hears a different kind of white noise, and he experiences what can only be called an epiphany, although one which does not transform Jack’s character.

The *first* moment comes during Wilder’s seven-hour stint of crying. Ernest Becker (1973) argues that even for infants, the death-terror is all-consuming. As Jack drives Babette to her posture (sitting, standing, and walking) class, Wilder is crying his heart out, and the father begins to feel that “there was something permanent and soul-struck in this crying. It was a

sound of inbred desolation” (DeLillo 1984:77). The boy’s crying becomes a secret we all share without knowing it. In his hysterical terror, Wilder is expressing (however unconsciously) his death fear, and in an instinctive manner is trying, in the author’s words, to bridge the lonely distances.

A *second* epiphanic moment comes during the Airborne Toxic Event. Having had a computer just confirm that “death has entered” his body, Jack overhears his daughter Steffie whisper in her sleep the words “Toyota Celica”. He responds by saying that “the utterance struck me with the impact of a moment of splendid transcendence” (DeLillo 1984:141; 155). Critics have so far been baffled by what they consider to be an exaggerated response to his daughter’s words, but we could probably see Steffie’s outburst as an example of the death-fear speaking through the jargon of consumerism.

The *third* epiphanic moment takes place near the end of the novel, after Jack has shot Willie Mink and is being treated by Sister Hermann Marie for a wounded wrist. What she tells Jack, in effect, is that priests and nuns of the Catholic Church just speak another kind of *white noise*. They don’t believe in their teachings; they help people evade death with dogmas, litanies and catechism. The job of the church is to give comfort, and the *white noise* of religion provides that. At first, Jack rejects her argument, insisting that real faith is necessary, that the Church can’t just be pretending. But Sister Hermann Marie mocks at his naivete:

Faith, religion, life everlasting. The great old human gullibilities. Are you saying you don’t take them seriously? Your dedication is a pretense? Our pretense is a dedication. Someone must appear to believe. Our lives are no less serious than if we professed real faith, real belief. As belief shrinks from the world, people find it more necessary than ever that someone believe. Wild-eyed men in caves. Nuns in black. Monks who do not speak. We are left to believe. Fools, children. Those who have abandoned belief must still believe in us.... Hell is when no one believes. There must always be believers. Fools, idiots, those who hear voices, those who speak in tongues. We are your lunatics. We surrender our lives to make your nonbelief possible...There is no truth without fools. We are your fools, your mad women, rising at dawn to pray, lighting candles, asking statues for good health, long life. (DeLillo 1984:319)

As Weinstein (1993:309) shows, “if technology represents the failure to conquer death, fascism represents its supreme effort to serve it. Hitler is finally understood as a magic talisman against death itself, the kind of epic figure” to whom “helpless and fearful people are drawn”, not so much larger than life, but “larger than death”. Fascism is ultimately the conversion experience for Jack Galdney, his transformation from “dier” into “killer” (Weinstein 1993:287, 290). And it can be argued that Jack has shot

Willie in a psychological re-enactment of the effort to conquer his own death fear by killing others. His transformation is coded into linguistic terms ranging from his efforts to learn German to his final descent into Germantown where he finds and attempts to kill the wack scientist who had administered Babette the Dylar pill in exchange for sex.

3. Conclusion

The strategy of death-evasion – the natural language of the species that characterizes *White Noise* – illuminates much of the novel. Jack's immersion in Hitler studies is clearly his attempt to bury himself in a discourse so horrible that his own death-fear appears insignificant. (Says Murray: "Hitler is larger than death. You thought he could protect you... You wanted to be helped and sheltered. The overwhelming horror would leave no room for your own death. "Submerge me", you said. "Absorb my fear" (DeLillo 1984:287). And Dylar is a kind of pharmaceutical reification of *white noise*: a pill to evade the death fear. Finally, DeLillo explicitly associates Jack's attempt to kill Willie Mink (the ultimate strategy for evading death, as Murray makes clear, is to kill someone else) with *white noise*: after listening to one of Willie's rambling speeches, Jack "heard a noise, faint, monotonous, white"; getting ready to fire, Jack notes "the precise nature of events. Things in their actual state. White noise everywhere". Finally, when Jack actually fires the gun, this is how DeLillo describes it: "the sound snowballed, in the white room..." (DeLillo 1984: 306, 310, 312).

In conclusion, Don DeLillo's *White Noise* reads as a meditation on the nature of the modern man, modern personhood in modern, contemporary society. Once again, it reveals the *self* as a construct: of our culture, our genes, our environment, media or cultural signs, or ideology - since all of these precede us and shape us and position us in relation to the others and to our culture in general.

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WHERE IS LITERATURE NOW IN THE FIELD OF AMERICAN STUDIES?

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Abstract: Acknowledging the major contribution made by literature to the rise of American Studies, the paper focuses on the reconfiguration of the fields of American literature and of American studies and the dynamic of their cross relations in the last decade, and addresses the negative implications for American studies of the field's present marginalization, if not total neglect, of American literature.

Keywords: cultural studies, literature, Old/New American Studies, A New Literary History

1. Introduction: The Role of Literature in the Rise of American Studies

The rise of American Studies in the late 1920s and early 1930s, first as an intellectual movement and, later, as an institutionalized interdisciplinary area was the result of the dedicated work of several progressive scholars, who brought together two separate research domains—American history and American literature—so as to identify a paradigm of American experience that would explain America “past, present and as a whole” (Smith 1971:3) and give to long-neglected American literature and culture their due academic recognition. Parrington’s *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927), Perry Miller’s *The New England Mind* (1939, 1953), Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance* (1941), and the path-breaking *Literary History of the United States* (1946), edited by Robert Spiller are only a few of the milestones that mark this paradigm that Gene Wise so aptly called “the intellectual history synthesis.” Despite its nationalistic and deterministic limitations and simplifications, this kind of work successfully illustrated the uniqueness of the American experience and the endurance of the American myth, discovered a usable past, certified the identity of the nation and endorsed a “rhetoric of consensus,” which in the Cold War years of American studies internationalization and institutional expansion, turned into the powerful ideology of exceptionalism.

2. The Old American Studies: Intellectual History Synthesis and the Myth-and-Symbol School

As Philip Deloria observed in his ASA Presidential Address entitled “Broadway and Main: Crossroads, Ghost Roads, and Paths to an American Studies Future” (2009), the intellectual history synthesis “institutionalized an inter- or cross-disciplinary history/literature synthesis as the central

dynamic in American studies” (2009:4). In their search for a method, American Studies in the 1950s tried to appropriate the organic principle of the structural unity of the literary work in which New Critical contextualism was grounded, and at the same time, open the language context to larger social and cultural vistas. Under the somehow simplifying name of “Myth-and-Symbol” School, at the junction of history/literature synthesis, sociology and New Critical methodology, American Studies undertook the difficult task “to incorporate the key doctrine of the generally anti-historical new criticism... into the essentially historical enterprise of American Studies” (Marx 1969:80, n.9). Without ignoring the ideological construction of the myths, their search for a holistic method to integrate social reality and aesthetic value resulted in a series of provocative studies of the uniqueness of culture and the dynamics of cultural change, in which unifying myths and symbols provide a holistic understanding of culture and new interpretations of American literature: *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950) by Henry Nash Smith, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (1955) by R.W.B.Lewis, *The Machine in the Garden. Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964) by Leo Marx, *Brooklyn Bridge. Fact and Symbol* (1965) by Allan Trachtenberg, and a late one, *Regeneration through Violence* (1973) by Richard Slotkin.

A member of the second generation of Americanists, Linda Kerber speaks about her generation’s indebtedness to the Myth-and-Symbol School in her keynote address delivered at the 1988 ASA Conference:

At a time when New Critics reigned in English departments, insisting on separating text from context, ‘art’ from the world, the Myth-and-Symbol writers broadened the definition of what qualified as art, and devoted to the imagery of ‘second-rate’ literature the attention which the New Critics reserved for ‘high’ art. Long before deconstructionist literary criticism destabilized our understanding of what makes up a text and insisted on the instability of narrative, Myth-and-Symbol scholars were already engaged in a similar task... They were the new historicists of their day, restive with the narrow definitions of literary history and theory which they had inherited and groping for an understanding of literary text which was inseparable from the discursive context in which they had been created. American Studies writers of the Myth-and-Symbol school struggled to decode the processes by which social meaning is constructed, and to widen the definition of what constitutes a text. (Kerber 1989:54)

3. The New American Studies: Reconceptualizations of America

The revolutionary changes that started in the 1970s and continued all through the 1980s under the combined effects of the political radicalism of the explosive 1960s and the wave of European poststructuralism and

feminism that reached America at about the same time, determined the radicalization, democratization and diversification of American Studies as well. Seen as nationalistic, monolithic, homogeneous and exceptionalist, the Myth and Symbol just like the Old American Studies in general, came under heavy attack; the focus shifted rapidly from intellectual to social history, culture was no longer approached from the unifying perspective of history/literature synthesis but from the multiple perspectives of race, class and gender differences in a multicultural society. The New American studies were heterogeneous, pluralistic and transnational. They would employ a wide variety of methods from such diverse areas as social and political sciences, film studies, media studies, anthropology, ethnography, feminist theory, critical theory, poststructuralist philosophy and the study of material culture. Moreover, American studies' interdisciplinary, trans- and multidisciplinary tradition set an early example for numerous new programs such as women's studies, African-American studies, ethnic studies, Native American studies, Chicano and Chicana studies, Asian American studies, popular culture and urban studies. Despite this extraordinary diversification, as Deloria admits "the somehow creaky relationship between the historical and the literary continue to seem so central to American studies" (Deloria 2009:4). In the mid 1980s, the revisions of the literary canon (see Paul Lauter's *Heath Anthology of American Literature*) and the projects of rewriting the history of American literature(s) (Columbia and Cambridge histories of American Literature), the new American studies focus on "rhetoric" versus "ideology" and the "civil war within representation," the New Historicist investigation of the textual nature of history, the historical nature of literary texts and their close connection with non-literary texts—all point to a new relation between literature-history and culture. But, as Janice Radway observes, the New American Studies

explored alternative ways of making sense of American history, [...] articulated new grids of intelligibility for making sense of the American experiment by focusing on different principal actors, different signal events, and different chronologies from those that had dominated traditional Americanist narratives. The familiar American pantheon that included people like Jefferson, Adams, Lincoln, Hawthorne, Melville, and James was enlarged and transformed by the addition of intellectuals like Margaret Fuller, Frederick Douglass, WEB Du Bois, Jose Marti, Marcus Garvey, Anzia Yezierska, and Abraham Cahan. (Radway 2009:5)

4. Post-Cold War American Studies as Cultural Studies. Marginalization of Literature

The attacks against the Old American Studies and the Cold War image of America they promoted, which transformed the field into a battleground of fierce culture wars over the reconceptualization of America, reached a peak in the 1990's after the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War. A new interest in what Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease called "The Cultures of US Imperialism" (1993) marked the "imperial turn" in the critique of American exceptionalism, the rise of cultural studies triggered the interest in border studies and in what Jameson and Miyoshi called the "cultures of globalization" (1998). Moreover, the cultural studies deal with cultural rather than literary texts, with

new historical narratives focused not only on the writings of insurgent elites but [which] sought as well to uncover popular logics and modes of thought as they were expressed in vernacular forms and everyday life. Advertising, the shotgun house, vaudeville, jazz, women's clubs, Hollywood cinema, country music, parades, and zoot suits...became as important to the exploration of American history as written documents like the Constitution, the lectures of William James, or the poetry of Ezra Pound. (Radway 2009:3)

Literature has definitely lost the central position it once held in the American studies field. *American Studies. An Anthology*, edited by Radway, Gaines, Shank and Von Eschen (Blackwell 2009), gives an approximation of the alterations in the reconfiguration of the fields of American literature and of American studies and in the dynamic of their cross relations in the last decade. As its editors point out:

Recent work in American Studies is characterized more generally by an attention to social processes and practices and the complex relations that obtain among them ...than it is by attention to discrete, self-contained objects as such. Events, institutions, organizations, and even objects themselves such as books, films, paintings, and different technological forms more generally tend to be treated as the contingent, only temporarily fixed result of a complex and always contested set of social practices. (Radway et al. 2009:5)

I will illustrate the present marginalization of literature in the field of US-based American Studies by taking two recent examples. One is provided by the Call for Proposals for the ASA Convention (November 18-31, 2010, San Antonio, Texas) suggestively titled: "Crisis, Chains, and Change: American Studies for the 21st Century." The ASA Program Committee is

interested in projects that engage broadly with the ways ordinary people create power—understood as the capacity to compel or help others do things they would not do on their own. Some examples are: alternative household formations, resistance to rent and mortgage evictions, workplace activism, communities that challenge polluting industries, informal economies, economic delinking, sitting in, sitting down, tossing shoes, sabotage, queering politics, buying in, walking out, redefining sexuality and sovereignty, underground armies, implacable pacifism, territorial imperatives, total war. ...Why? So that we might ask how our understandings of “there” or “then” inform the distinct yet densely interconnected geographies of the present. (ASA Newsletter 2009:1)

My second example is offered by the index of *American Quarterly* (2009: 999-1001) vol.61 (March 2009 to December 2009) where among the 53 essays of more than 900 pages only one refers to a literary work (Dennis Childs, “‘You Ain’t Seen Nothing Yet’: *Beloved*, the American Chain Gang, and the Middle Passage Remix”).

4.1. What Is Literature Now?

Perhaps the right question to ask would be *What is literature Now?* (the title of vol.38 of *New Literary History* in 2007). Commenting upon Tzvetan Todorov’s distinction between functional and structural definitions of literature, that is definitions which explain what literature does and definitions that show what distinguishes literature from other cultural objects and texts, Jonathan Culler (2007:229) considers one of the main functions of literature that of “establishing or contesting a national culture,” which means that literature is “a set of stories that seduce readers into accepting the hierarchical structures of society, and a practice where ideology is challenged or subverted.” Among the main characteristics of literature in a structural definition Culler includes “fictionality, the noninstrumental use of language...” (Culler 2007:229). However, as he accurately observes, both the functions (“constituting a nation, contesting ideology”) and the characteristics (its literariness) can also be attributed to nonliterary texts, which leads to a “deeply unsatisfying conclusion” that “literature is whatever is treated as literature by a given society” (Culler 2007:230).

Since the concept of literature has developed in close relation with the rise of the nation-state, globalization, which gradually erodes the boundaries of the nation, calls for a redrawing of the boundaries of literature. The redrawing of the boundaries of American literature is a project initiated by a collection of essays titled *Shades of the Planet. American Literature as World Literature*, edited by Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell (2007). The contributors discuss “the deterritorialization of

American literature” (the title of Paul Giles’ essay), question “the adequacy of the nation-based paradigm” (Dimock and Buell 2007:2), the “nation-centered mapping” (Dimock and Buell 2007:3) of American literature, and suggest instead, a remapping of the territory—“alternate geographies” (Dimock and Buell 2007:8) that project the field’s contours on a planetary scale and foreground its fluid borders in a global context. As the subtitle of the collection indicates, shifting the critical eye from the US-center to the planetary circumferences, shifting the perspective of the critical eye could also result in a re-territorialization of American literature so as to encompass the world. In the long run, this is an oblique way of re-enforcing America’s exceptionalism, for how many countries in the world are in America’s privileged position of having absorbed the whole world while being omnipresent in it.

4.2. Re-writing the Literary History of America

The most recent attempt to rewrite the literary history of America from an American Studies perspective is *A New Literary History of America*, edited by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (2009).

The post-Cold War direction taken by the New American studies was marked by the shift from the Cold War nationalism and exceptionalism to the re-positioning of the United States into a comparative, international and global perspective, which destabilized the very term America (Radway, Kaplan) and engaged a radical critique of American exceptionalism, nationalism and imperialism at home and abroad.

Symptomatic of the crossroads reached by the attempts to define America at the dawn of the new millennium, George Lipsitz’s book *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (2001) distinguishes between two American studies traditions, which are related to different views on the “congruence between culture and space” (Lipsitz 2001:28): “One is the institutional American studies canonized within easily recognized paradigms like myth-symbol-image, uses-and-effects anthropology, the new social history, and cultural studies” (Lipsitz 2001:27) based on the granted relation between culture and space (the USA) and the second, the “other American studies,” is “the organic grassroots theorizing about culture and power that has informed cultural practice, social movements, and academic work for many years” (Lipsitz 2001:27). The practitioners of this kind of American studies are “exiles, migrants, and members of other groups that have been displaced and consequently are less likely to take for granted the automatic congruence between culture and place” (Lipsitz 2001:28). In Lipsitz’s definition:

[This] is the American Studies of Duke Ellington, who used to respond to questions about “Negro” identity by playing a dissonant chord on the piano and saying, ‘That’s us. That’s our life in America. We’re a thing apart, yet an integral part.’ This is the tradition of Americo Paredes, whose extraordinary 1958 book about the ballad of Gregorio Cortez, *With His Pistol in His Hand*, explains what culture means to people for whom displacement, bilingualism, code-switching, and struggle have been constant realities. (Lipsitz 2001:28)

The crossroads of these two American studies traditions, can be approached, in Lipsitz’s opinion, only by making “a new synthesis” of the two. This is the great achievement of *A New Literary History of America*—it is a major attempt to reframe America from the perspective of such a new synthesis.

If in *Shades of the Planet*, the idea was to de-territorialize American literature by placing it in a transnational, global context, the intention here is to destabilize the very concept of literature and to suggest the shifting, fluid boundaries of American culture while subverting the very notion of national history. Intertextuality, dialogue, inter-acting, a network of interconnections are challenges and fun for the reader. To quote Priscilla Wald in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the final result “...resembles something more like a Bakhtinian carnival”—“a range of voices expressed in a variety of media and forms.” (Wald and Bauerline, 2009: web)

“A literary history of America?” wonder the editors in the opening sentence of their Introduction. Indeed the 400 topics arranged in chronological order orchestrate the nation’s many voices over a span of five centuries in a way never attempted before by any other literary history, for the reader will find among them entries on canonical writers from Poe, Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman, to Bellow, Pynchon, Norman Mailer, Philip Roth and Toni Morrison, but also on Joseph Smith and the *Book of Mormon* (1826), the Winchester rifle (1875), *Steamboat Willie* (1928, November 18), Superman (1932), Alcoholics Anonymous (1935, June 10), *Porgy and Bess* (1935, October 10), the first issue of *Life* magazine (1936, November 23)—the other two entries illustrating the year 1936 being an essay on “*Gone with the Wind* and *Absalom! Absalom!*” (1936) and “Two days in Harlem” (1936, July 5) —on “the atom bomb” (1945, August 6, 10:45 a.m.), Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960), Bob Dylan (1962), Ronald Reagan’s 1964 campaign speech for Barry Goldwater, *Deep Throat* porn star Linda Lovelace’s autobiography (1970; 1972), Maya Lyn’s Vietnam Memorial (1982) and New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina (2005, August 29). The last entry, on Barack Obama (2008, November 4), is not an essay but a series of nine collages created by African-American artist Kara Walker, whose famous black cut-paper silhouettes are always suggestive of

complex issues of identity, race, gender, sexuality and violence. Four of them include scraps of text, the last one is framed by a few sentences from President Obama's autobiography *Dreams from My Father* and the other four are just images, without words. It is a strange, yet not surprising, wordless ending to a literary history based on an all-inclusive and non-normative notion of "literature," which applies the concept of the "literary" to a wide range of cultural texts, the significance of which is given not by their aesthetic or imaginative qualities, but by the cultural work they perform. The idea of a literary text as cultural text includes not only written language, but all the meaningful artifacts of culture— in this particular case, "all those things that have been created in America, or for it, or because of it.... 'Made in America' – America, made" (Marcus and Sollors 2009:xxiv).

In fact, aside from entries that refer to a variety of written texts, such as "poems, novels, plays and essays...histories and travel diaries, sermons and religious tracts, public speeches and private letters, political polemics, addresses, and debates, Supreme Court decisions, literary histories and criticism" (Marcus and Sollors 2009:xxiv), the topics include a lot of other cultural texts, meaningful artifacts of culture, such as "folk songs, magazines, dramatic performances, the blues, philosophy, paintings and monuments, jazz, war memorials, museums, book clubs, photographs, comic strips and comic books, country music, films, radio, rock and roll, cartoons, musicals, and hip-hop: 'Made in America'" (Marcus and Sollors 2009:xxiv). Thus the literary history of America is a "a reexamination of the American experience as seen through a literary glass, where what is at issue is speech, in many forms" (Marcus and Sollors 2009:xxiv).

Among the 201 contributors there are some well-known writers, scholars and artists, like Gish Jen, Bharati Mukherjee, Walter Mosley, Michael Tolkin, Helen Vendler, Camille Paglia, Ishmael Reed, Ted Gioia, Sarah Vowell and Michael Kazin, to name only a few.

The new literary history of America (not of the US!) gives us a precise idea about the place literature can claim in the field of the New American Studies, for apart from being a postmodernist literary history that defies genres and blurs the boundaries between literature, popular culture and history, the compendium is also a meta literary history, a commentary on the writing of history and the re-interpretation of the concept of the "literary." From the perspective of a cultural studies approach, *A New Literary History of America* is, what the editors call a "broadly cultural history—a history of America in which literary means not only what is written but also what is voiced, what is expressed, what is invented, in whatever form" (Marcus and Sollors, 2009: xxiv). Literary history has turned from a nationalistic project into a multicultural one, literature has

been dissolved into cultural texts. Critical discourse does not aim to revise the canon, but to “generate a new and fresh sense of America” (Marcus and Sollors, 2009: xxvi).

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the question “what is literature now?” and therefore, “what are its roles?” refers to what literature does rather than to what it is. As Said argued in his *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983:35): “texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society—in short, they are in the world, and hence worldly”. Literature’s *unique* wordliness is one strong reason for keeping it central to American Studies. For, “the one thing we know about literature is that it always seeks to outplay itself in acts of reinvention” (Culler 2007:237) that urge us take a fresh look at the world.

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“THE LAST LARGENESS, BOLD TO SEE”: A BOHMIAN READING OF WALLACE STEVENS’S EARLY POETRY

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***Abstract:** This paper proposes a reading of Wallace Stevens’s poetry by recourse to David Bohm’s holistic philosophy. We argue that the sense of “direct knowledge of the whole” is a key characteristic of Stevens’s first poetic cycle, and in stark contrast with the “contemplation of oneness” pervading his later verse (consequent on the imposition of a more speculative mode).*

***Keywords:** Bohm, holism, implicate and explicate orders, reductionism, Stevens, the immeasurable, “Undivided Wholeness in Continuous Flow”*

1. Introduction: the world “unfolded,” or holism as a response to fragmentation and apartness

Most critics who have dedicated their efforts to studying Stevens’s poetry have remarked the fundamentally tension-ridden nature of his verse, bespeaking a poetic stance that resists generalisations. On the one hand, there is the Stevens of “gaps,” “absence,” “severance,” and conflicting “impulses”; at the other end, we find the advocate of harmony, selfless meditation and reintegration—a spirit whose impetus for order arises from the intuition of a mysterious underlying commonality of being and world. Common to these “two versions of the same poe[t]” (1984:354-356) is the relentless “motion of thought,” the prime-mover of Stevens’s universe and the necessary ingredient for the revelation of what he described as the “amassing harmony” (403), at once “savage and subtle and simple” (468).

In the light of these, this paper is dedicated to analysing one of the sources of the Stevensian “amassing harmony,” illustrative of a worldview that brings the poet remarkably close to some central tenets of modern science. More precisely, we will attempt to align his poetry with the principles of holistic thought, in particular the perspective championed by the late scientist-philosopher David Bohm. In the latter section of our study we will provide a close discussion of a selection of Stevens’s early poetry, arguing that the integrative spur, peculiar to his final creative stage, finds a more direct expression in the sensuous world of the *Harmonium*, rather than among the frequent theoretical exaggerations of his later works.

Given the complexity of such an interpretive frame, we find it necessary to circumscribe its meanings, characteristics and manifestations more precisely. Thus, despite the fact that the twentieth century has often been described as a space of fragmentation, polarised forces, upheavals and conflicting drives, it has also been, inevitably, one of the most favourable

grounds for testing, challenging and validating novel perspectives. In effect, we may argue that the advanced scientific theories striving for recognition at the beginning of the Modern Age contributed in a significant measure to the imposition of a holistic perception, obsoleting the former dualistic-deterministic approaches to the knowable. The “signs” indicative of the primacy of a holistic strain in modern consciousness are numerous. Among them, we may mention: (i) the primacy of “convergence,” “reconciliation” and “fusion,” or the importance of the centre as a point of unity and superintegration in Modernism (McFarlane, 1991:92), (ii) the complementarity of the Postmodernist and holistic perspectives, as well as the differences and similarities between them—especially their interest in what McKinney describes as the “non-hierarchical interplay of opposites” (1988:310), (iii) the holistic alternative as a path to coherence / an imaginative mode of thought which transgresses boundaries (Rorty, in Ragg, 2002:369), and (iv) holism as a possible solution to rationalist absolutism and extreme secularism / intellectualism (Bloom, 2005:85). Besides these examples from the field of culture / philosophy, modern science abounds in proposals exemplary of a holistic drive: the uncertainty principle and its emphasis on the unity and interrelatedness of parts, F. Capra’s proposal of a shift toward a universal “ecology” (1982), or the holistic kernel of relativity theory / quantum physics and their insistence on appearances relative to observers and the act of observation (for further details, see Zukav, 1980).

As a theoretical framework though, holism is prone to criticism too. Despite its practical usefulness as an alternative to antiquated conceptions, holism often fails to convince completely. The reason for this has to be sought, principally, in the tensions inherent in holism, consequent on two distinct views on the “whole”—as “inexpressible oneness” and as a “unity of opposites”. Indeed, as McKinney argues (1988:304-305), there is a certain paradox at the most fundamental level of this proposal. Thus, through its constant opposition to reductionism, holism may become an overly exclusivistic answer to it, thereby running the risk of eventually becoming “anti-holistic.” Furthermore, the holistic view is conducive to the creation of an endlessly recursive argumentative loop, given that any solution to the aforementioned opposition necessitates the integration of both holism and reductionism into a larger “whole” (in its turn likely to be included in an even larger structure, along a process that would go on *ad infinitum*). To resolve such logical shortcomings, the solution proposed by many scientists and philosophers implies a reconciliation of opposites by relating to them as to sides of the same coin—for instance, to approach “order” and “chaos” as forms of the same reality. This, however, begets

another paradox, that of simultaneously having to affirm and deny the members of the dichotomic pairs.

Given such problems, we consider it necessary to adhere to a well-defined line of holistic thought that may prove useful for evaluating Stevens's own view of the "whole." To this end, in what follows, we will focus on *the main characteristics of David Bohm's gnosis*, the physicist-philosopher who has advocated a type of "ontological holism" which, in our view, can most closely be associated with the poet's own conception. As formulated mainly in his seminal *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, Bohm's declared intention is to construct a theory that could combine *noetic monism* and *monistic idealism*, at the same time aiming at reconciling holism with the materialistic creed. We find Bohm's views on the sources of "fragmentation" (2005:9, 19 and 29-32) especially useful for discussing the tensions underpinning most of Stevens's poetry. In Bohm's view, rigid thinking and reproduction of knowledge through mechanical learning are conducive to the perpetuation of dualism. In addition, the Western conception of "measure" as a means to reveal the essence of reality is another source of confusion and fragmentation, given that ultimate reality should be viewed fundamentally as "immeasurable" (32). These points enable us to formulate a number of preliminary remarks on the similarities and differences between Stevens and Bohm: their mutual emphasis on the fluidity of thought and the necessity of creative, active engagement with knowledge (i.e. the importance of "creative perception" as a way to reveal the "immeasurable") (XVI), but also their disjunctive views on the practical usefulness of "absolute thought" or the possibility to create an "ultimate poem" (or "supreme fiction").

Furthering our inspection of the principal characteristics of the Bohmian holistic matrix, we find it important to draw attention to the scientist's interpretation of mind and matter as "abstractions" from a "universal flux" (61). A concept that may prove essential for analysing Stevens's poetry is the view that reality is a flow of things in becoming. Thus, Bohm's formula for inseparability is that of "Undivided Wholeness in Flowing Movement" (or "holomovement"), a perspective which attests to the primacy of "flow" over "thing" (13-14). In addition, what makes Bohm's gnosis unique in relation to other holistic approaches is the distinction he proposes between the "implicate" ("enfolded") and "explicate" ("unfolded") orders. The world exposed to ordinary perception is that of the "explicate" order—a liminal manifestation of the sum total of deeper, imperceptible "implicate" orders, each of which contains, "enfolded," all other "implicate" orders" as potential waiting to become manifest (XVII-XVIII and 225). That we do not perceive these "implicate"

forms of order is explainable by the intensity of our experience of the “explicate” order and on account of the limitations of memory (dependent on the knowledge of time and space—concepts that make sense only within the “explicate” order). Our inevitable exposure to the “explicate order” makes us regard it as the sole form of “order,” thereby aggravating causality and fragmentation (262).

2. Measuring the “immeasurable”: Stevens between the experience and the perception of the “whole”

With Stevens, recourse to the aforementioned Bohmian concepts may prove useful in that it may shed light on a certain “circular trajectory” along which his poetic epistemology progresses, corroborating thus the assumption that holism has been fundamental to his sensibility from its earliest artistic manifestations. At this point, we should, however, call attention to another necessary distinction—between the “*perception*” and the “*experience*” of the “whole.” We consider this of seminal importance, since *belief* in the harmonious “whole” prevails in almost any segment of the poet’s oeuvre, yet it does not necessarily attest to a genuinely holistic perspective. Along a large segment of the Stevensian oeuvre unity and harmony are contemplated from a distance, and the closest the poet gets to a holistic matrix of the Bohmian sort is in his emphasis on the complementarity of opposites. To explain this, we propose a short critique of Dana Wilde’s arguments in connection with “Description without Place,” a poem which may be read through the conceptual lens of quantum physics. According to Wilde (1996:11-12, 19-20), the points on which the quantum view and Stevens’s appreciation converge are: (i) the view that reality is a result of the interaction between percipient and thing perceived, (ii) the contextual nature of truth, (iii) the role of the imagination as a form-giving force, and the inefficiency of language to establish and maintain order. However, upon closer inspection, we may argue that this poem is merely a partial illustration of Bohmian holism. Thus, although he intersects with the scientist, especially in section III of the poem (e.g., in his emphasis on the existence of some “universal intellect” or the image of a seed that contains encoded the concrete pattern toward which reality as a force evolves), Stevens dismisses “intellectual arrangements” as foreign to the structure of reality (while Bohm considers the process of knowledge integral to the “explicate” order—viewing it as an abstraction similar to matter). In addition, in the conclusive section of the poem, Stevens’s insistence on the primacy of the “theory of description” leads to reifying thought and comes to illustrate one of the major sources of dissatisfaction along the poet’s

search for the “amassing harmony”—the preoccupation for validating abstract notions, conducive to his distancing from concrete experience.

For examples of actual experience of the whole, we should therefore return to Stevens’s first volume, *Harmonium*. Many of the pieces included in this cycle can support the observation that in this initial phase of poetic development, wholeness is sensed and accepted as *a truth of nature*. In our opinion, the reason for this has to be sought in the poet’s lesser concern for poetic imagination, which ensures fewer intrusions of the subject in the process of knowledge.

The poem that introduces the set in Stevens’s first volume is “The Load of Sugar-Cane” (1984:12). It is also one of the more conspicuous expressions of a holistic perception akin to Bohm’s perspective, in that it captures both central constituents of his definition of “one-ness”—“unity” and “unstoppable flux.” That this text does not build on complementarity, but rather on identity and connections, transpires in its construction and sequencing of images. Stevens begins with an indirect reference to the anthropic component (“glade-boat”), continues through a quick succession of references to natural elements (“water,” “saw-grass,” “rainbows,” “birds,” “wind,” “kildeer”), and returns in the conclusive stanza to the subjective realm (“red turban,” “boatman”). And yet, this circular trajectory is not sufficient in itself to sustain a holistic view. The idea of “interconnectedness” is suggested in fact on a lower level, by the poet’s reliance on simile and repetition in the first three stanzas. The advantage of simile over metaphor for capturing “wholeness” consists in its capacity to allow for perception to be part of the process being described: the connections are not activated by the mind of the observer, nor are they “imposed” by the poet’s aesthetic angle—they are sensed as inherent in the contemplated scenery.

Peculiar to Stevens’s early holistic vision (and different from his later stance) is the final *return* to the human element. On the one hand, the reason for this lies in the fact that at this stage the subjective factor has not yet been exposed as a source of severance; on the other, it is motivated by the more sensuous nature of the *Harmonium* universe, within whose limits, “the human” is less an abstract concept / a manifestation of “being” than a physical body made of the same substance as the surrounding objects. In truth, this angle of approach can offer more insight into the Bohmian form of holism, in its turn largely reliant on the subjective factor. Each of Stevens’s holistic poems of the *Harmonium* era is constructed as a series of scenes in which the anthropic element is a central occupant. Thus, “Life Is Motion” (83), reproduces the progression of the aforementioned text, introducing the human component early on (“In Oklahoma, / Bonnie and

Josie / [...] / Danced around a stump”) and centering on it again, in the closing lines (“Celebrating the marriage / Of flesh and air”). Given the brevity of the piece, the holistic suggestions are still limited. Except for the characters’ dance, they surface in the metaphoric implication of the stump as an “unfolded” particle uniting humans with their environment, or in the more direct reference to their inseparability in the final scene—both a concrete fusion of physical particles and another symbolic pointer to the interdependence of time and space (the word “flesh” being suggestive of “growth” and “decay,” and “air” connoting “natural expanse”).

If in these two pieces Stevens’s placement of the subject in wilderness points to manifestations of flux, unity and interdependence in nature, at other points such ideas are evoked by juxtaposing the inner and outer realms and examining their intercourse—thereby exemplifying another central Bohmian idea, the interconnectedness of thought and matter, perception and knowledge. Such is the case of “Of the Surface of Things,” “The Curtains in the House of the Metaphysician” and “Tattoo”—poems revealing different images of “movement.” The first of them opens by focusing on a man-made habitat, seen as an obstacle to comprehension, due to the limits it imposes on mobility: “In my room, the world is beyond my understanding; / But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four hills and a cloud” (57). Knowledge of the “whole,” Stevens implies, requires immersing oneself in the flux of things. Such a perspective is the exact opposite of the above mentioned contemplative approach in “Description without Place,” supporting Bohm’s own claim about knowledge being a living process. However, this realisation does not occur instantaneously, requiring a period of accommodation with objects and intense effort on the part of the percipient, before the “one” or “three” or “four” distinct elements reveal their commonality. After the transitional phase has ended, not only do some hidden nuances spring to sight (such as some subtle colorations caused by the weather) but “words” (mechanisms of knowledge) become, in their turn, integral part of the whole, while temporal distinctions disappear. As the concluding formula suggests (short positive statements that do not enumerate but point to equivalence), this experience of “wholeness” has a *lasting* impact on the subject and on the process of knowledge itself, leading to the dissolution of conceptual boundaries and to the collapse of the whole into the part: “The *gold tree is blue*. / The singer has pulled his cloak *over* his head. The moon *is in the folds* of the cloak” (ibid., italics added).

The second piece of the set offers an opposite view on movement. Here, the exterior drifts in, and is captured by the décor of the room, “the drifting of the curtains” being “full of long motions; as the ponderous / Deflations of distance; or as clouds / Inseparable from their afternoons”

(62). The construction is, nevertheless, more complex. In addition to indicating unity and similarity by plainly asserting it, the poem is reliant on enjambment, a device which not only signals the contiguous nature of the series of independent scenes but, implicitly, draws attention to the necessity of a distinct form of perception for comprehending the whole. As the poem progresses, this idea is reinforced by the increased rhythm and the combination of enjambment, enumeration and repetition.

Read from a Bohmian perspective, this piece is doubly relevant. On the one hand, it bespeaks the interdependence of thought and matter (i.e. the perception of “one-ness” takes place in the mind of the “metaphysician,” but it is activated at a sensorial level, as implied by the references to “clouds,” “light” or “silence”); on the other, it echoes the physicist’s words on the “immeasurable,” whose comprehension is “beyond us.” As Bohm has argued, knowledge of the whole requires “creative insight.” In a similar way, in the final line Stevens admits that the understanding of what the “curtains” may uncover will imply an even more sustained effort than the path leading to its revelation: “[...] as the firmament, / Up-rising and down-falling, bares / The last largeness, *bold to see*” (62, italics added).

In the third poem, the movement from exterior to interior is compensated by the reverse motion from the inner space to the outer one, as well as paralleled by an expansion in all directions. The title, “Tattoo,” is exemplary of Stevens’s intention to capture diverse connotations of wholeness. The first suggestion is that reality has a liminal quality: it exists as a permanently imprinted mark on any person—a replica of some deeper order, immutable in spite of the transformations affecting its conduit. Stevens’s “tattoo” is not a mere static image though. Rather, like Bohm’s concept of “holomovement” (associated with the hologram), it contains the entire whole in any region of it. Its primary manifestation is “light”—that which makes the design visible. In its turn, this reminds of a living organism extending its habitat to various areas of the physical realm and carrying over the part to areas occupied by other parts: “The light is like a spider. / It crawls over the water. / It crawls over the edges of the snow” (81) and once it has broken the perceptive barriers, it becomes inextricably compounded with the self.

The manner in which Stevens conveys the idea of “inseparability” in the poem’s conclusive section is similar to the “marriage / Of flesh and air” in “Life Is Motion” or the image of the moving glade-boat in “The Load of Sugar-Cane,” hinting, once again, at the double-layering (substratum vs. surface) and the dynamic character of a “holographic” universe. The final stanza further refines this picture by changing the direction of the movement, from subject to the outer reality. Thus, the two moments of this

poem come to complement each other, while also underlining the difference between holism and the analogous worldviews of noetic monism and monistic idealism: “mind” and “matter” do not merely imply each other (as through causal determination), but are essentially conjoined at any point of the “flux”: “There are filaments of your eyes / On the surface of the water / And in the edges of the snow” (ibid.).

3. Spectacles re-shaped: challenging “unity” in the wake of the *Harmonium*

As the above poems illustrate, one of the finest qualities of Stevens’s holistic perspective in this early stage is that he neither excludes nor appraises the anthropic element. Furthermore, by resorting to a series of depictions and assertions, he avoids walking the more sinuous argumentative-persuasive path of theoretical explorations. However, this does not mean that all of the *Harmonium* poems concentrating on the “whole” provide us with a sense of complete or direct experience. Thus, in one of the earlier pieces of this segment, “Indian River”, the perception of unity in diversity is not conducive to the persistent harmonisation of thought and matter. While the “jingle” of the “trade wind” is sensed as being identical to that of the water cutting through the green, the subject is severed from the scene, since at the end of the perceptive act he becomes engaged with “measuring” the forces responsible for “sameness”: “Yet there is no spring in Florida, neither in boskage perdu, nor on the nunnery beaches” (112). This effort to re-align perception with previous information contradicts the view propounding the necessity of “creative insight,” and, as in “Description without Place,” is conducive to a momentary interruption of the natural flow and a partial reification of the process of knowledge.

At other points, the source of the problem lies elsewhere. This is the case of “Anecdote of Men by the Thousand” and “Theory,” where the series of images intended as proof of a holistic perception fail to convince as a result of the temporal divide between the perception and the conveyance of “one-ness” and of a somewhat didacticist overtone. Both texts attest to the dependence of the subject on the characteristics of the environment: “The soul, he said, is composed / Of the external world” (51), respectively, “I am what is around me” (86). However, in “Anecdote...” the initial statement is exemplified through rather weak assertions: “There are [...] there are [...]” (ibid.). Except for a succinct parallel (first with a bird and then with a musical instrument, admittedly meant to suggest the isomorphism of the non-anthropocentric and anthropocentric realms), there is no indication regarding the grounds for “one-ness” or the physical identity of these characters. In fact, what makes the examples lose in persuasive power is consequent not only

on the largely simplistic line of thought, but also on Stevens's intention to turn this poem into an anecdote. More concretely, since the anonymous instructor behind this lesson in holism does not speak to us directly, he becomes but another example, like the protagonists of his own discourse. As a result, he dwells in a second-level reality, with which the reader can not commune personally. By contrast, "Theory" can be considered a partial redress: the examples of "wholeness" are at least relayed to us without mediation by a third party. In addition, they do not simply repeat the original postulate, but enlarge upon it by pointing to related ideas, such as the question of the contextual nature of truth and self ("One is not duchess / A hundred yards from a carriage" (86)) or the distinction between the "implicate" and the "explicate" orders (the "black vestibule" and the "high bed sheltered by curtains" described as "portraits" or "instances" of a less than obvious form of reality). On the whole though, lacking the dynamic perspective of the previously discussed poems, it still remains an imperfect holistic exercise.

In fact, these poems announce the direction in which Stevens's treatment of the "whole" will evolve. Thus, in the anthological "Anatomy of Monotony", he already shows awareness of the main impediments to experiencing unity: our emotional needs, the sense of a separate self, the impulse to shape nature in our own image. As progenitors of "an earth / that bore us as a part of all the things" (107), we take delight in moments of reunion, when "the body walks forth naked in the sun" (108), but we are forced to admit that behind "the bare spaces of our skies" there lies a "barer sky that does not bend" (ibid.). With the later Stevens, the world remains in flux, but the human undulatory course, amplified by dualistic thinking, is rarely twined with it. Sometimes, as in "Yellow Afternoon," the distant "one-ness" of an earth where one is "at the bottom of things / And of himself [...]" (236) is temporarily counterbalanced by the lesser unity of human bonds, only to discover the vacuity of the alternative—"a face / Without eyes or mouth, that looks at one and speaks" (ibid.). Given that the post-*Harmonium* world is mainly the realm of fragments and of opposites, it is not surprising that even at the point where Stevens's *vocabulary* of "wholeness" most closely intersects with Bohm's formula ("Two Versions of the Same Poem") unity is dissolved by rational analysis, and the "enfolding" and "unfolding" spectacle is subjectified by the percipient (the persona of "old John Zeller" bemused by the lack of a "golden solvent" in a sea of "unreconciled" elements (355)).

Despite such falterings, the poet's occasional later *reflections* on unity still testify to a certain achievement. In particular, the interdependence of "apartness" and the now "distant" whole for the knowledge of the

“amassing harmony” and the tacit acknowledgment of the possibility to reunite the subject with an unbroken world are signs that fragmentation has not taken a definitive toll. Indeed, in the poems heralding *The Rock*, Stevens intuits the ingredient required for this reunion—a “solitude of the self,” (397) as he calls it in “Things of August”. Such musings pave the way to the composed stance of his final series of poems, where mind and matter, together with one’s “peculiar speech” (397) become one with the “river motion, the drowsy motion of the river R” (501).

By drawing on Liam F. Heaney’s conclusion to his own brief survey of the holistic elements in the works of some Anglo-Irish writers, we may argue that Stevens’s achievement in his early poems is that he “purposefully extends and challenges our thinking” (1998:401). By doing so (and implicitly, by testing the limits of his own dualistic impulses), Stevens claims occupancy within the gallery of the most radical and daring poetic sensibilities of the first half of the twentieth century.

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THE MAD, BAD AND DANGEROUS TO KNOW HEATHCLIFF

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Abstract: *The paper makes a text-based analysis of Wuthering Heights, a multi-layered novel, and draws a psychological portrait of its central character, Heathcliff.*

Keywords: *cruelty, masochism, pain, psychopathic personality, sadism, violence*

Motto:

Experience is not necessary, when the heart knows.
Geoffrey Moore

1. Introduction

Uncrushed by the fact that they sold only two copies of the poems published under pseudonyms “Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell”, the Brontë sisters started working on their novels. Charlotte’s *Jane Eyre* received immediate success, whereas Anne’s *Agnes Grey* and Emily’s *Wuthering Heights* were received with less favourable attitudes. *Wuthering Heights* enjoyed a very unsensational publication, shocked through its uniqueness, and stood apart not only from the work of the other members of the family, but also from all other novels. As Geoffrey Moore (1959:6) mentions, the main objection to *Wuthering Heights* was summed up by the “*Hang, Draw and*” *Quarterly Review* in the following words:

“... people like Cathy and Heathcliff are too odiously and abominably pagan to suit the tastes of even the most shameless class of English readers.”

As Ileana Galea (1985:86) states, another reaction, symbolical for the way in which the Victorian literary audience responded to the publication of *Wuthering Heights*, is the review made to the novel in the *Athenaeum* of December 25, 1847:

“In spite of much power and cleverness, in spite of its truth to life in the remote corners of England, *Wuthering Heights* is a disagreeable story. The Bells seem to affect painful and exceptional subjects - the misdeeds or oppression of tyranny, the eccentricities of woman’s fantasy. They do not turn away from dwelling upon these physical acts of cruelty, the contemplation of which true taste rejects.”

The Victorian reading public was used to the tone of Sir Walter Scott, of Dickens and Thackeray and was not yet ready to face the truth of *Wuthering Heights*. The savage love story that goes beyond the grave and the rough, satanic character of Heathcliff were too shocking for the Victorian audience. The pain, the raw power of the characters, the setting, the narrative techniques and the symbolic texture of the book alienated both the critics and the reading public.

With regard to the genesis of *Wuthering Heights*, Mary Visick (1984:210) states:

“To investigate the origins of this amazing novel is a critical task worth undertaking. These origins may be found quite specifically in the Gondal poems.”

The critic then gives us details about the Gondal Poems manuscript, whose first seventeen poems fall into five sections, each section referring to an episode in the life of the heroine Augusta Geraldine Almeda or Rosina, a heroine who is going to be used in the making of Catherine Earnshaw and who is referred to by Emily Brontë as A.G.A.-Rosina. A.G.A.-Rosina has then four lovers. The poems referring to the lover Fernando de Samara, who was driven to suicide by A.G.A., contain his reproaches which remind us of Heathcliff. Glen Heather (2002:62) mentions the fact that one poem, *Remembrance*, a poem that refers to Rosina’s lament:

“Cold in the earth, and the deep snow piled above thee...”

reminds us of what Cathy (WH:125) declares in *Wuthering Heights*:

“they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me, but I won’t rest till you are with me.”

On the other hand Mary Visick (1984:213) associates the same line as prefiguring the eighteen years of Heathcliff’s mourning for Catherine.

For years before writing the novel, the Gondal poems dealt with an orphan boy, black in appearance and having a savage temperament, who was passionately involved with a fair girl, superior to him in social standing, which point to Heathcliff and Catherine’s situation in the novel. Even Emily’s belief in the indissoluble nature of earthly love was treated first in the poems, and found its complete expression in the novel, where death fails to break the spiritual connection between Catherine and Heathcliff.

In depicting Heathcliff, Ileana Galea (1985:69) states that Emily Brontë used details of her own life:

“Branwell’s tragic experience and his condition of an outcast served Emily in the portrayal of both Heathcliff and Hindley Earnshaw. In the figure of the rebel demon-lover one may find traits of the Gothic and Byronic heroes, but Emily Brontë’s characters belong to our world, she has endowed them with the quality” of nearness.”

Dorothy Van Ghent (1984:181-182) states about Heathcliff:

“Heathcliff’s is an archetypal figure, untraceably ancient in mythological thought – an imaged recognition of that part of nature which is ‘other’ than the human soul (the world of the elements and the animals) and that part of the soul itself which is ‘other’ than the conscious part... Heathcliff is no more ethically relevant than is flood or earthquake or whirlwind. It is impossible to speak of him in terms of ‘sin’ and ‘guilt’ as it is to speak in this way of the natural elements or the creatures of the animal world. In him the type reverts to a more ancient mythology and to an earlier symbolism. (...) But Heathcliff does have human shape and human relationships; he is, so to speak, caught in the human.”

2. The Bad, Mad and Dangerous to Know Heathcliff

In order to analyse Heathcliff, we must start from Charlotte Brontë’s verdict on him, mentioned by Phillip Drew (1984:245):

“Heathcliff, indeed, stands unredeemed; never once swerving in his arrow-straight course to perdition”.

According to Phillip Drew, this is the crucial point in her criticism of the novel, as her assessment of Heathcliff depends on a recognition of his superhuman villainy.

From the very beginning of the novel Heathcliff is described as hot-tempered, very aggressive and anti-social (WH:9, 13):

“Thrushcross Grange is my own, sir,” he interrupted, wincing. I should not allow anyone to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it – walk in!”

The “walk in” was uttered with closed teeth and expressed the sentiment “Go to the Deuce”.

“Guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive them.”

After the episode of Mr Lockwood’s nightmare, Heathcliff is described as being violently tormented by an inner pain he is not able to control (WH:31):

“And who showed you up to this room?”, he continued, crushing his nails, and grinding his teeth to subdue the maxillary convulsions.”

He also shows signs of masochism (WH:32):

“And he struck his forehead with rage.”

Heathcliff is the most mysterious character of *Wuthering Heights*, as nobody knows anything about his history (WH:39):

“It’s a cuckoo’s, sir – I know all about it, except where he was born, and who were his parents, and how he got his money, at first.”

When Nelly Dean starts “knitting” the story, we find out that Heathcliff was found in the streets of Liverpool by Mr Earnshaw. He was a dirty, ragged, black haired child, who looked like a gipsy and spoke gibberish that nobody could understand. The strange intruder seems to be used to ill-treatment and prone to violence, which he manifests at verbal level (WH:52):

“I’d not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here, for Edgar Linton’s at Thrushcross Grange - not if I might have the privilege of flinging Joseph off the highest gable, and painting the house-front with Hindley’s blood!”

Although still young, Heathcliff proves to be revengeful and calculated (WH:63-64):

“I’m trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don’t care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!”
‘For shame, Heathcliff!’ said I. ‘It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive.’
‘No, God won’t have the satisfaction that I shall,’ he returned. ‘I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I’ll plan it out: while I’m thinking of that I don’t feel pain.’”

But surprisingly, despite all his plans for revenge, Heathcliff displays a natural impulse towards goodness, when he accidentally saves Hareton, later regretting, as Nelly Dean states (WH:77):

“Had it been dark, I daresay he would have tried to remedy the mistake by smashing Hareton’s skull on the steps; but, we witnessed his salvation...”

In his famous essay *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?*, with regard to Hindley’s death which may or may not have been caused or aided by Heathcliff, John Sutherland (1996:57-58) concludes:

“There are no clear answers to this puzzle. As Ian Jack has noted, ‘*Wuthering Heights* is one of the most enigmatic of English novels’. Whether or not Heathcliff

is guilty of capital crime remains a fascinating but ultimately inscrutable enigma at the very heart of the narrative. For what it is worth, I believe he *did* kill Hindley, although for any unprejudiced jury it is likely that enough 'reasonable doubt' would remain to acquit him."

I tend to agree with Sutherland and, even more, to say that Heathcliff has carefully planned (or at least mysteriously predicted) the way in which Hindley dies (WH:78):

"It's a pity he cannot kill himself with drink,' observed Heathcliff, muttering an echo of curses back when the door was shut. 'He's doing his very utmost; but his constitution defies him. Mr. Kenneth says he would wager his mare that he'll outlive any man on this side Gimmerton, and go to the grave a hoary sinner; unless some happy chance out of the common course befall him."

After his three years absence, he returns a changed man: he is now distinguished, rich, dark-faced, dark haired and wearing dark clothes, intelligent, retaining no mask of his former degradation, but (WH:96):

"A half-civilised ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified, quite divested of roughness, though too stern for grace."

He reveals Catherine his violent side again; he had come to murder Hindley and later commit suicide (WH:97):

"while waiting in the yard below, I meditated this plan - just to have one glimpse of your face, a stare of surprise, perhaps, and pretended pleasure; afterwards settle my score with Hindley; and then prevent the law by doing execution on myself."

When Isabella becomes infatuated with Heathcliff, both Nelly Dean (the reliable narrator) and Catherine advise her to the contrary (WH: 103-104):

"He's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man...
Banish him from your thoughts, Miss, I said. He's a bird of bad omen: no mate for you."

That *Wuthering Heights* is a novel mostly about Heathcliff needs little reminding. As long as Catherine and Heathcliff are together, as long as they are not separated from their essential selves, everything is harmonious in the novel. As long as Heathcliff is loved by Catherine, he does not hurt anyone despite his evil nature. But when Heathcliff hates, he hates and

destroys everybody, including Catherine, the object of his eternal love. He spares Catherine none of his cruelty (WH:112):

“I want you to be aware that I know you have treated me infernally - infernally! Do you hear? And if you flatter yourself that I don’t perceive it, you are a fool; and if you think I can be consoled by sweet words, you are an idiot: and if you fancy I’ll suffer unrevenged, I’ll convince you of the contrary, in a very little while!”

at the same time demonstrating masochistic impulses (WH:112):

“If I imagined you really wished me to marry Isabella, I’d cut my throat!”

There are several instances in the novel when Heathcliff is associated with the Devil:

“but you must e’en take it as a gift of God; though it’s as dark almost as if it came from the devil.” (WH:40)

“Your bliss lies, like his, (Satan) in inflicting misery.” (WH:112)

“The second question I have great interest in; it is this - Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?” (WH:134)

“You fight against that devil for love as long as you may; when the time comes, not all the angels in heaven shall save him!” (WH:138)

“You would imagine I was the devil himself, Miss Linton, to excite such horror.” (WH:256)

“that devil Heathcliff” was coming through the court: should he fasten the door in his face?” (WH:272).

“Mr. Heathcliff, you have nobody to love you; and, however miserable you make us, we shall still have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty arises from your greater misery. You are miserable, are you not? Lonely, like the devil, and envious like him? Nobody loves you - nobody will cry for you when you die! I wouldn’t be you!” (WH:273).

“No! to you I’ve made myself worse than the devil.” (WH:273).

“Th’ divil’s harried off his soul,” he cried, ‘and he may hev’ his carcass into t’ bargain, for aught I care! Ech! what a wicked ‘un he looks, grinning at death!” (WH:318).

He courts and marries Isabella for her property and for revenge on Edgar, stating very clearly from the very beginning that he does not love her and behaving very cruelly to her (WH:148):

“The first thing she saw me do (...) was to hang up her little dog, and when she pleaded for it, the first words I uttered were a wish that I had the hanging of every being belonging to her, except one; possibly she took the exception for herself.”

His behaviour towards her makes Isabella state (WH:149):

“He’s a lying fiend! a monster, and not a human being.”

Heathcliff demonstrates his sadistic side, later, in the same chapter (WH:150):

“I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It’s a moral teething; and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain.”

When he becomes aware that Catherine will die, his animal-like reactions make Nelly Dean say in great perplexity (WH:157):

“... he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species.”

During the night of Catherine’s death, Heathcliff keeps a sad vigil during which he gives Nelly the impression that he has become a part of nature (WH:162):

“He had been standing a long time in that position, for I saw a pair of ousels passing and repassing scarcely three feet from him, busy in building their nest, and regarding his proximity no more than that of a piece of timber.”

In one of the most memorable passages of the novel, in a masochistic fit, demonstrating again animal-like reactions, Heathcliff curses Catherine in death, mentioning again his belief in ghosts (WH:163-164):

“‘May she wake in torment!’ he cried, with frightful vehemence, stamping his foot, and groaning in a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion. ‘Why, she’s a liar to the end! Where is she? Not there - not in heaven - not perished - where? Oh! You said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray one prayer - I repeat it till my tongue stiffens - Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living; you said I killed you - haunt me, then! The murdered do haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always - take any form - drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!’

He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast being goaded to death with knives and spears. I observed several splashes of blood about the bark of the tree, and his hand and forehead were both stained; probably the scene I witnessed was a repetition of others acted during the night.”

From this moment on, Heathcliff will project his climactic hatred against everybody, treating them infernally. After Edgar Linton dies blissfully, Heathcliff, in a fit of necrophiliac impulses, in an attempt to set both himself and Catherine free, digs up her grave and strikes loose a side of the coffin, instructing the sexton to do the same to his coffin when he is laid there.

3. Heathcliff's Death

Towards the end of his life, Heathcliff behaves as if he were his own enemy, going on for days without eating, drinking or sleeping. When he feels death approaching, he demonstrates once again that he neither knows, nor observes any moral values (WH:316):

“As to repenting for my injustices, I've done no injustice, and I repent of nothing.”

He becomes aware of the futility of his revenge and spares Hareton and Cathy who both remind him of Catherine (WH:307):

“Well, Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal love; of my wild endeavours to hold my right; my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish”

Nelly Dean is frightened by the change in her master (WH:307):

“though he was neither in danger of losing his senses, nor dying, according to my judgment: he was quite strong and healthy; and, as to his reason, from childhood he had a delight in dwelling on dark things, and entertaining odd fancies. He might have had a monomania on the subject of his departed idol; but on every other point his wits were as sound as mine.”

After this realization, we witness one of the few instances in the novel in which Heathcliff invokes divinity (WH:308):

“O, God! It is a long fight; I wish it were over!”

Heathcliff starts thinking about his burial and gives Nelly detailed instructions for its procedures (WH:316):

“...you remind me of the manner that I desire to be buried in. It is to be carried to the churchyard, in the evening. (...) No minister need come; nor need anything be said over me”.

Heathcliff's requests remind us of the 1823 statute governing the burial of suicides: the hour, the place, and the lack of a Christian burial service. Nelly seems to realize their significance. In a moment of insight she brings up the fear that has haunted Heathcliff ever since the day of Catherine's death (WH:316-317):

“And supposing you persevered in your obstinate fast, and died by that means, and they refused to bury you in the precinct of the Kirk?”

Heathcliff charges Nelly to secretly remove his body, so that he can be with Catherine, threatening her with haunting, should she fail to comply. The threat seems sufficient to frighten the superstitious servant, and the next evening when Heathcliff dies, Nelly conceals her suspicions about his death from Kenneth (WH:318-319):

“Kenneth was perplexed to pronounce of what disorder the master died. I concealed the fact of his having swallowed nothing for four days, fearing it might lead to trouble, and then, I am persuaded he did not abstain on purpose; it was the consequence of his strange illness, not the cause”.

Nelly carries out Heathcliff's instructions

“to the scandal of the whole neighbourhood” (WH, 319)

Shocked by the fact that Heathcliff is buried side by side with the married Lintons, the people also appear to know the meaning of Heathcliff's burial without Christian rites. It is not long afterward that under the Nab the local shepherd boy sees the ghosts of Heathcliff and Catherine. The final words in *Wuthering Heights* take on a different significance. Referring to the graves of Catherine, Linton, and Heathcliff, Lockwood wonders:

“how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth” (WH, 320).

But hardly could anyone imagine quiet slumbers for such tormented souls.

4. Conclusion

Throughout *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff is cruel, violent, sadistic, shrewd, demonstrates no concern for conventional laws, continually expresses his hatred of all the other characters and feels that social restrictions and boundaries do not apply to him. He demonstrates all the

symptoms of the psychopathic personality (or anti-social personality disorder): he treats everyone badly (including himself), he abuses his wife and son, he loses his temper easily, he is socially isolated, having limited relationships with others. His malevolence is so extreme that he almost impresses us as a grotesque villain.

In spite of all these things, we cannot judge and blame him completely, as Heathcliff is redeemed by his passionate love for Catherine. Phillip Drew (1984:249) considers that critics have responded so readily to Heathcliff as the hero, not the villain of the novel, because the characters set in opposition to him are gentle to the point of weakness:

“The reader is thus tempted to admire Heathcliff, as the Romantic critics admire Satan, for his energy and decisiveness, even his ruthlessness.”

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CHANGING STANDARDS FOR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S TALES

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***Abstract:** The paper presents a literary analysis of selected tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne in their contemporary soci-cultural context. Focusing on elements of Bildung in his works, there is a discussion on generation conflicts and generic questions. At the same time the latter will be related to the idea of nation formation and the intention of the authors of the American Renaissance to create a distinct and unique American literature.*

***Keywords:** Bildung, children, manhood, nation formation, youth*

1. Introduction

Several of Nathaniel Hawthorne's tales tackle the problem of youth and individual development in a time of social and cultural transitions in the United States during the first decades of the nineteenth century. In these tales published in different editions of *Twice-Told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Hawthorne explores the cultural experience of reaching adulthood in a society in which the criteria of youth and manhood are being redefined. He also gives an outline of the contemporary social standards for individual maturation as well as of the cultural discourses related to the process during which young people become adults and responsible citizens.

As in most of the works to be discussed the central characters are young men, the first part of the essay will concentrate especially on the change and development of social ideals concerning manhood. Different types of concepts of masculinity will be discussed with a focus on "The Gentle Boy" (1837) and "My Kinsman, Major Molineax" (1832), tales that explore distinct and uniquely American features of manhood characteristic of Hawthorne's time. The second part covers the topic of social pressure that was put on young men and women in Hawthorne's America, and it presents Hawthorne as a critic of his society. The analysis of "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" (1837) and "The Shaker Bridal" (1842) highlights the different alternatives which were either open and manageable or, in some cases, irrelevant and only utopian for young people of this period.

2. The Social Construction of Manhood

Manhood is a construct, a cultural invention shaped and reshaped during history. American concepts of manhood and manliness originate

from middle-class New England values. Historian E. Anthony Rotundo distinguishes three phases in the evolution of the concept of American manhood: communal manhood, self-made manhood and passionate manhood (Rotundo 1993:2-5). The period of interest for us is that of the transition from self-made manhood to passionate manhood that took place in the middle of the nineteenth century. In Hawthorne's work much emphasis is given to the fate and life of male protagonists, and some of his tales explore the distinct and uniquely American features of manhood.

From the late eighteenth century on self-made manhood eclipsed the communal form of manhood, which was typical for colonial times. There were significant changes in society as a result of the rising of the middle class. As Rotundo contends, life was based on the free play of individual interests, and a man derived his identity and his social status from his own achievements, not from the accident of birth. The new virtues which constituted a man's character were individualism, independence, freedom from reliance on external authority and urge for dominance in order to prove their superiority (Rotundo 1993:3). In the late nineteenth century passionate manhood gained territory, and existing beliefs about self-made manhood were elaborated. Male passions were valued positively, and new feelings were recognized, such as ambition, combativeness, and toughness. (Rotundo 1993:5-6).

In the early 1800s self-made manhood was the dominant cultural form in which there was a sharper conceptual distinction between boyhood and manhood. Men were expected to be sober and purposeful, whereas boys had a sense of play which was unaccepted in a man (Rotundo 1993:8). Men struggled for separation from the feminine sphere of domestic life and tried to create a domain on their own.

In the followings, a discussion of the primary texts "The Gentle Boy" and "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" are presented with a focus on boy culture and the standards of manliness. Hawthorne's narration often contains the explicit satire of gender codes and social constructs, such as manliness, social acceptance and religion. One example for this is present in the tale "The Gentle Boy" in which an outcast Quaker boy is adopted by a Puritan couple despite the hostility of the community towards him. However, the boy cannot integrate into the group of his peers, moreover, he is beaten and tortured by a group of boys when he approaches them with friendly intentions.

Another example can be found in the tale "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" where Robin, a young adult, tries to make progress in his life and become an acknowledged member of society. He wants to achieve his goal with the help of and through the protection of his relative, a major of

high military rank. However, it turns out that the major became an outcast and rejected by the community, wherefore Robin joins the group of townspeople who humiliate the major in order to integrate himself this way.

In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" Hawthorne builds the tale around the spectacle of public humiliation, as strong men collectively try to shame "weaker, yet nobler individuals" (Leverenz 1989:231). The tale introduces a traditional authority figure as a victim of mob violence and demonstrates that upwardly mobile young men are real devils in training. According to David Leverenz, the story displays the dangers of American manhood from a patriarchal perspective. The tale "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" focuses on initiation into manhood and the self-realization of a young man. The events he has to face can be interpreted as part of, or moments of an adolescent rite of passage (Leverenz 1989:234).

The story of "The Gentle Boy" is projected into colonial times. The setting is Puritan New England where religious intolerance was most severe, wherefore religious sects and dissenters were severely banned from, or punished in the community. In this tale the expression and behavior of the boy Ilbrahim is in disharmony with his status of a child, they are more those of an adult.

The appearance of the little boy is followed by disapproval and arguments in the Puritan community. Despite his physical beauty and good manners, the child is received with rejection by the Puritans purely because of his origins: "Even his beauty, however, and his winning manners, sometimes produced an effect ultimately unfavorable [...] their antipathy to the poor infant was also increased by the ill success of diverse theological discussions" (Hawthorne 1982:115). Therefore, the story is more about the character development of the adults in the community than that of the child. The tale demonstrates the processes of development of the adult characters, it describes a range of attitudes from intolerance to conversion and regret.

The tragic fate of Ilbrahim is foreshadowed in the events which occur when he approaches the playing children with the confidence and hope that he will be accepted by them after having succeeded in developing a relationship to one of them. Suddenly, the children become aggressive and attack Ilbrahim with the clear intention to hurt him, or even more, to destroy and liquidate him, the stranger in their community: "In an instant he was the centre of a brood of baby-fiends, who lifted sticks against him, pelted him with stones, and displayed an instinct of destruction, far more loathsome than the blood-thirstiness of manhood" (Hawthorne 1982:128). This part is similar to that of the secret initiation ceremonies in boy culture or to a certain rite of passage in which the individual has to go through a ritual which is accompanied by violence and pain.

Another process of radical change is manifested in the transformation of Ilbrahim's adoptive father, Tobias Pearson, who becomes a Quaker towards the end of the story: "he was thus becoming assimilated to the enthusiasts" (Hawthorne 1982:129). The elements of *Bildung* are observable in the development of Tobias. He grows more open and tolerant, and gains spiritual peace and awareness. Ilbrahim turns into a martyr, so his fate is accomplished and his life finishes without the possibility of a full development and extension of his personality, like it generally happens in the works of *Bildung*.

The standards of manhood are also addressed in this tale in connection with the boy culture and the problem of a boy's integration into the community of local youth. The title already suggests that a boy that is not crude and strong enough but bears feminine features, like gentleness and a fair complexion, wherefore he cannot become an integral member of a society that is based on masculine power, pride and social status. Quakers emphasized other values than those of colonial Puritanism, wherefore this tale is also a critique on boy culture and the ideal of communal manhood which was valid in Hawthorne's times.

The incident Robin goes through is similarly traumatic and painful like that of the gentle boy in the tale discussed previously. However, in this story the main character does not give up his plan to become accepted in society, rather assimilates to the norms and trends of the town. He is ready to modify his moral standards and values in order to become successful in the community because he is determined not to return to his former lifestyle. Robin realizes that he wants to become a self-made man—an ideal introduced by Benjamin Franklin—, wherefore he is after accomplishing himself even without the help of a person who was considered to be socially superior to him: "On the edge between his need for patrician protection and his conversion to the new middle-class code of self-reliant competition, Robin finally takes sides when he sees his kinsman being tarred and feathered" (Leverenz 1989: 234).

It seems that Robin has two faces: one is loyal and faithful to his kinsman, the other, however, is that of a young man striving for individuality and self-accomplishment. Insecurity is the dominant feeling of the main character which radiates onto the reader. The tensions of the initiation into manhood of the central character have a powerful effect on the reader, who continually changes between identification with and rejection of Robin (Leverenz 1989:235). The author uses this technique in order to make the reader relive Robin's conflict, and to make the American society think about its own goals and means of achieving them. According to Leverenz, "Robin has been claimed by [...] the ideology of self-made

men on the make. Such men never look back and never look inward. Instead, they always look a little higher, to see whom they can cut down and trample on” (Leverenz 1989:238).

The tale is also a critique of the American ideal of self-made manhood, of the aggressive and immoral careerism that was expected from young men in Hawthorne’s times: “Hawthorne dramatizes manhood as demonic possessions, often explicitly” (Leverenz 1989:239). As I already mentioned, about until the beginning of the nineteenth century self-made manhood was the dominant trend in the social integration of men in America, wherefore other elements of character, like sensitivity, family and community-oriented morality were pushed into the background, moreover, they were considered to be feminine traits. Hawthorne himself as a writer had to face this problem, because being an author of tales and romances he had ties to the feminine sphere.

The series of events that happen to Robin in “My Kinsman, Major Molineaux” can be interpreted as certain stages of his initiation into manhood. Humiliation and physical pain is an integral part of the rites of passage, which in Western civilization is substituted with other forms of trials, such as psychological effort and the testing of mental capacities. This is what happens to Robin as well, the process of his *Bildung* takes place in his mind and soul. The wandering about the streets of the town is also a symbol, it is similar to that of a labyrinth (Hurst 2002:268). It stands for the mechanism and process of *Bildung* that Robin goes through while he is on the way to meet his protector. The destiny of the physical circulation in the town is to find the Major. However, the real aim of Robin is to find himself, the integral manhood he desires to gain, and the social acceptance into the adult world which he intends to achieve.

Robin also realizes that oneman who he spoke to had a very strange appearance: one side of his face was red, the other black. He supposes that the figure could be the devil himself, wherefore he is frightened and estranged. The two-faced figure also suggests the double personality of the protagonist himself, the humble country boy with good intentions and worthy desires who also has a dark side in his soul, which is responsible for his selfishness, his struggle for power and wealth. He is frightened by his own contradictory self. The motif of the two-faced man is also a hint at man’s hidden self, the element of evil which everyone bears within his soul.

3. The Plight of the Young: Hawthorne as a Critic of Society

Goethe introduced with his work *Wilhelm Meister* a new paradigm which sees youth as the most meaningful part of life. This work made youth for the modern culture the age which holds the “meaning of life” (Moretti

1987:3-4). In traditional societies youth is a question of biological differentiation, where to be young simply means not yet being an adult, wherefore youth is “invisible” and “insignificant” (Moretti 1987:4). Adolescence becomes problematic when society changes, wherefore the social space seems more uncertain, and needs to be explored. The effects of these changes can be mobility, the rise of unexpected hopes and interiority (Moretti 1987:4). There is also example for the social mobility of the young in Hawthorne’s tales, like that of Robin, the main character of the tale “My Kinsman, Major Molineaux,” which was discussed previously.

At the turn of the eighteenth century modernity started to come into being in Europe, similarly in the USA, which attached a meaning to youth as the representative of this modernity. Moreover, in the USA youth was a category applied to the new nation as well. Youthful attributes of mobility, great expectations, dynamism and inner restlessness became specific images of modernity (Moretti 1987:5). Novelists working in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* emphasized that youth must come to an end, it is subordinated to the idea of maturity, and it has meaning in so far it leads to a stable and final identity. The attributes of youth – desire for freedom and happiness, security as well as metamorphosis – are important shaping forces in Western mentality, and they are elementary powers in modern cultural mechanisms (Moretti 1987:9).

In the tale “The May-Pole of Merry Mount” youth, happiness and enjoyment are contrasted to strict Puritan customs and doctrines. The narrator praises the joyful and merry lifestyle of a group of people who live freely in the wilderness without the strict constraints of the Puritan community. The tale is about a May Day celebration, which is the continuation of an Old World custom. It is an ancient rite of fertility, a rite of passage for the young couple who get married on that day, and it also includes the praise of the sun and of youth.

The May-Pole is the emblem of the colony, a sign of youth, joy, happiness and life. Its detailed description suggests that it plays a crucial role in the life of the people of Merry Mount: “This venerated emblem was a pine tree, which had preserved the slender grace of youth” (Hawthorne 1982:360). It reminds the viewer on the Golden Age when everything was different, and even better than in the time the events take place: “Oh, people of the Golden Age, the chief of your husbandry, was to raise flowers!” (Hawthorne 1982:361). Around the May-Pole there is a small gathering of dancers who are disguised in different costumes and resemble popular fairy-tale creatures. It figures out that originally they are human beings who participate in a masquerade on the occasion of the May-Day celebration which is linked to the wedding of two young people. These people smile

and enjoy the festivities, however, they are watched and controlled from a distance by the Puritans, who are shocked, and become indignant of the sight of the celebration: “But a band of Puritans [...] compared the masques to those devils and ruined souls, with whom their superstition peopled the black wilderness” (Hawthorne 1982:362).

The carnival and the masquerade in literary texts refer, according to Bakhtin (1986), to a part of the rites of passage that people go through in certain ages, and the masques facilitate the metamorphosis. The rite of the carnival itself has a regenerative function (Hurst 2002:273). It helps the individual to find his real identity and the new form that a person takes on refers to and expresses the mental forces and the repressed spiritual desires. The carnival is also interpreted as the fruitful chaos (Hurst 2002:264), where not only people but the order of the world is reshaped as well (Nünning 2005:224) and life gains new meaning. For the Puritans, however, the celebrating figures have physical deformation, which is the result of moral decline and a sign of condemnation, that of initiation into a worse state of being. However, the carnival is a constant and crucial element in the life of the people of Merry Mount: “of Merry Mount, where jest and delusion, trick and fantasy, kept up a continued carnival” (Hawthorne 1982:362). This means that the colony on Merry Mount is able to produce new forms of living, and it is in a continual process of regeneration, in a constant rebirth and development, in its eternal youth. This secured the continuity and the creativity in the colony’s life, whereas the conservative Puritans can be seen as banned to be eliminated because of their down-to-earth and old-fashioned lifestyle and way of thinking.

The place is a symbolic and virtual area for those who do not have the possibility for Bildung in mainstream society. The May-Pole is an icon, which is destroyed later on in the plot by the Puritans, and with it the group of people on Merry Mount is ceased in its being; they are wiped out and annihilated. This act refers to the elimination of the chance for creativity and innovation in New England society. Here one can find Hawthorne’s criticism of the way of thinking that Puritans exercised, which is also a projection on his own times, where American writers were not yet totally accepted, integrated and valued in contemporary society.

In the tale “The Shaker Bridal” two young people have to face hardships and iniquity in their youth, wherefore they have to postpone their marriage and matrimonial union. Finally, they join the Shaker community in order to gain social and material security. They are unfortunate among the people of the world, however, real happiness and the fulfillment of their love does not come true among the Shakers either. This tale is about the fate of the young who have to accomplish themselves without the help of their

surrounding community, and who have to struggle to make their dreams come true.

Adam and Martha, the two young people who are in love with each other since their childhood, are appointed to become the spiritual father and mother of the Shaker community. The plot is about the process of their initiation into that position. This is another form of initiation presented by Hawthorne in his tales, in this case a spiritual one. The rite of passage for the young couple is a long process because it takes years until they assure their capacities as respectful and mature members of the community. Nevertheless, in order to be able to become a member of high social status the couple has to neglect and repress their private needs and desires, so this process of development is one-sided and not balanced either, thus it fails in the end. The main goal of their entrance into the Shaker community, to gain material support for their marriage, cannot be achieved. It must be substituted with friendship, as the members of the Shaker community refrain from sexual intercourse with their partners. This is especially unacceptable for Martha: "the long-repressed feelings of childhood, youth, and womanhood, might have gushed from her heart, in words that it would have been profanation to utter there" (Hawthorne 1982:558).

In this tale the fate of young people in a religious sect is introduced to the reader with certain critique on the author's part. Hawthorne suggests that the natural desire to be loved and to love a partner cannot be repressed and banned from the life of each and every individual. There are certain people who cannot consummate their life according to religious doctrines and rules established by society. Young people often have to face difficulties in their life if they want to accomplish their dreams and desires. The confrontation with community rules and social standards usually leads to conflicts, and the young have to learn how to cope with these rules or how to make their inventions and ideas be accepted. This is an integral part of growing up, achieving maturity and gaining experience for the adult life, which is a crucial topic discussed by Hawthorne in the above analyzed tales.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the tales was meant to demonstrate that changing social standards and ideals in the United States during the first decades of the nineteenth century had an impact on the literary production of the American Renaissance. Hawthorne's reaction to the challenges of his social environment was the examination of his own social position and that of his fellow artists, and it was linked to the problems and conflicts of other social groups. Writing these tales, the author himself was embarking on the way of development, of *Bildung*, just like his protagonists. The United States

themselves could be observed as a country in the process of nation formation, an emerging new and modern republic. The struggle of a rising Western counterpart to European culture, social structure and literature is taking shape in the tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

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THE PLATONIC DIALOGUES IN ROBERT GRAVES'S HISTORICAL NOVELS

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Abstract: *The historical novels of Robert Graves are to be classified as thesis novels since the author uses them to propagate his own concepts of history, poetry and anthropology. In doing so Graves applies modern narrative techniques but at the same time he adheres to some centuries old, traditional ones such as Platonic dialogue. The survey focuses upon Robert Graves's historical novels in which the Platonic dialogues are the important structural part.*

Keywords: *dialogue, dichotomy, history, maieutic, rhetoric*

1. Introduction

Robert Graves (1895-1985), one of the most famous English novelists, known as English Tolstoy, belongs to the group of the authors - erudites, who used to write as Marguerite Yourcenar claimed "with one foot in scholarship, the other in magic arts." (Yourcenar 1990:328) These authors often use their works as the convenient means to propagate their own concepts of art. Robert Graves's historical novels, for their part, are to be classified as *thesis novels* since the author does the very thing, using various narrative techniques. As an author Robert Graves is deeply rooted in the tradition of modernism but in his work one can discern slight touches of the literary styles that would prevail a couple of decades after he had created his most popular novels.

One of the most captivating qualities of of the whole body of Graves's work is his iconoclasm that is reflected in the everlasting effort to oppose current literary conventions and poetic principles hold by many of his famous contemporaries. At the same time Graves did a great deal to define and consolidate his own artistic doctrines, some of them not even wholly original and revolutionary, but exposed in such a manner that one can mostly view them as eccentric and esoteric. Graves's thoughts of malleability of historical record, authentic sources of poetry, euhemeristic approach to myth arouse controversy even today. Both Graves's prose and poetic works contain the implicit as well as the open dispute on the crucial questions of literature, mythology even anthropology. It is known that Socratic dialogue provided the basis for Mikhail Bakhtin's attempt to revise rhetorical tradition that would include dialogue, polyphony, heteroglossia, and carnival: a dialogized or dialogical rhetoric. In his *Problems of*

Dostoevsky's Poetics, Bakhtin explains dialogue in its narrow or limited sense as a part of human discourse that we should differ from monologue. He distinguishes several specific types of dialogue such as stylization, parody, and hidden polemic. Monologic discourse is concentrated only on itself and its object, whereas dialogic double – voiced discourse contains reference to other people's words. Such discourse inserts "a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own" (Bakhtin 2003:189). Accordingly, Platonic dialogue not only fits into the poetic arsenal of many famous modern writers but is also the good foundation for building up new theories of prose.

The great tradition of Socratic or Platonic dialogue was therefore still alive in Graves's days. Having originated as a narrative, philosophical and [didactic](#) device not only in Greece but in other parts of the world too, the genre lived through centuries never to be totally rejected by European writers. The English writers who chose Platonic dialogue as a means to confront different views on certain subject for the purpose of its exegesis are numerous. Some of them are the most outstanding authors of English literature such as John Dryden (*Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668), David Hume (*Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, 1779), W. S. Landor (*Imaginary Conversations*, 1824-9), Oscar Wilde (*The Critic as Artist*, 1891) and Gerard Manley Hopkins (*On the Origin of Beauty*, 1865). George Bernard Shaw made use of dialogue in his play *The Apple Cart* (1929). The form of the Platonic dialogue used by the authors we mentioned diverge considerably from the original philosophical Platonic dialogue which is characterized by Socrates appearing as a speaker accompanied by interlocutors. Paradoxically, such kind of dialogue is reborn in the 20th century by George Santayana who composed his *Dialogues in Limbo* (1928) with famous participants like Alcibiades, Avicenna, Democritus and others. Another significant work done in the same fashion is Iris Murdoch's *Acastos: Two Platonic Dialogues* (1986), with well-known characters from the past like Socrates and Alcibiades acting as interlocutors including young Plato.

Although he was known as a polyhistor and philosophically orientated as the two of the authors we mentioned previously, Robert Graves did not, like them, produce the dialogues with Socrates, Plato or Alcibiades as participants. His Platonic dialogues are typically philosophical in the sense that he followed the ancient model of the genre where two or three interlocutors discuss some aesthetic problem, one of them playing the role of Socrates who gradually guides the others to truth.

Platonic dialogues are to be found not only in Graves's historical novels but in his poetry, short stories, essays and other works that are so

versatile end esoteric that could hardly be classified at all such as *The White Goddess*.

2. Antigonus: History vs. Poetry

The first of the dialogues we are going to deal with is the part of Graves's early poem "Antigonus: An Eclogue," from the collection *Mock Beggar Hall* (1924). The participants are two friends, James the historian and John the poet who promote two concepts of history.

"James. Is there much fun in forging history?
Nothing you write can alter facts.
John. When you say 'history,' what does that imply?
The logical or psychological?
Logical? But there is history that refers
To another context with new premises
Not bound by challenge of empiric proof.
One day history may become supreme
As your empiric kind succeeded myth,
And then who'll be the forger, you or I?" (Graves 2000:192)

In the fragment we quoted, James is identified as the representative of *historical truth* while John turns to *poetic truth*. The dispute we are witnessing is based upon the old Aristotelian dichotomy of historical and poetic truth. It is known that Aristotle considers poetry superior to historiography since it "tends to express the universal" or "what may happen – what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity" whereas history is "particular" since it "relates what has happened." (Aristotle, 2007:10) The person who dominates in the exchange is, needless to say John, the poet, and his comments are much longer than those of his opponent tending, in some moments, to become monologues. This so - called monologism in dialogues is, according to Gabriel Tard, characteristic for Platonic dialogues in which the roles of opponents are seldom equal and it is natural that one speaks much more than the other. (Tard 2006:93)

3. Idealistic vs. Objective Historiography

The second and one of the most resounding Graves's Platonic dialogues is the one that is heard in the ninth chapter of his enormously popular historical novel *I, Claudius*. As in previous dialogue we are in the position to observe Janus's face of history. To be more precise, the dialogue indirectly tackles the problem of validity of historical record that was often put to question in the age of modernism whose aesthetics proved to be

particularly subversive in this particular respect. It may be taken as the *differentia specifica* of whole body of Graves's work.

This dialogue, judging by certain characteristics, is more typically "Platonic" than the first one, since the scene where it is performed and the participants involved are carefully chosen. The academic discussion is held in the Imperial Library of Rome and those who take part are two famous Roman historians, Titus Livy and Asinius Pollio. They are accompanied by young Tiberius Claudius who began his history studies and is experienced enough to estimate on the arguments of the two authors he profoundly admires.

In the dialogue, Livy the great stylist is shown as the champion of *intertretative* or *idealistic historiography* while Pollio advocates *objective historiography* based on the careful analysis of sources.

"Livy came slowly towards us. 'A joke is a joke, Pollio and I can take it in good part. But there is also a serious matter in question and that is, the proper writing of history. It may be that I have made mistakes. What historian is free from them? I have not, at least told deliberate falsehoods: you'll not me accuse of that.... If I come across two versions of the same episode I choose the one nearest to my theme, and you won't find me grabbing around Etruscan cemeteries in search of any third account which may flatly contradict both - what good would that do?'

'It would serve the cause of truth' said Pollio gently. 'Wouldn't that be something?'

'And if by serving the cause of truth we admit our reverend ancestors to have been cowards, liars and traitors? What then?'" (Graves 1998:90)

Being asked whom of these two historians he would imitate, Claudius responds diplomatically: "I think I would choose Pollio. As I am sure that I can never attain Livy's inspired literary elegance, I shall do my best to imitate Pollio's accuracy and diligence." (Graves 1998:88)

As we can see, Claudius favours Pollio's *objective historiography* that was the ideal of Graves's famous ancestor Leopold von Ranke. In the dialogue none of the sides wins and after Livy's angry withdrawal from the battlefield, Claudius comes up with something that looks like the reasonable settlement of the controversy since it unites both schools of history:

"I see now, though I hadn't considered the matter before, that there are two different ways for writing history: one is to persuade men to virtue and the other is to compel men to the truth. The first is Livy's way and the other is yours and perhaps they are not irreconcilable" (Graves 1998:91)

As we can see the verbal duel of Livy and Pollio changes course by the unwilling intrusion of the third participant, Claudius the novice historian. Pollio is exhilarated by his comments and Livy quite distracted. Finally, Claudius passes judgment that is quite unexpected for both historians. In certain respect Claudius may be considered a kind of an obstacle in the communication between Livy and Pollio.

French philosopher Michel Serres takes Platonic dialogue as a model for communication analysis and is especially interested in the problem of background noise, jamming, cut-offs, in other words in all of the entropic forces that could endanger communication. He expounds:

“To hold a dialogue is to suppose a third man and to seek to exclude him; a successful communication is the exclusion of the third man. The most profound dialectical problem of the Other, who is only a variety – or a variation of the Same, it is the problem of the third man. We might call this third man the demon, the *prosopopeia* of noise.” (Serres 1982:67)

As far as Claudius is concerned, he may be indirectly taken as “the third man, demon”. And we may also consider him the *prosopopeia* of Graves himself since Claudius in fact expresses Graves’s own views on fictionality of history. Hayden White draws our attention to the fact that “continental European thinkers – from Valéry and Heidegger to Sartre, Lévi-Strauss, and Michael Foucault – have cast serious doubts on the value of a specifically ‘historical’ consciousness, stressed the fictive character of historical reconstructions...”(White 1975:1-2). Hayden White himself shares this attitude and claims that historian “emplots his story” (White 1975:6) holding it to be a poetical act.

4. Socrates’s Disciples at Paphos

The next dialogue in which we distinguish Graves’s own voice from the voice of another person is to be found in the twentieth chapter of his study *The White Goddess*, entitled *A conversation at Paphos - 43 d*. Here Graves in the typical manner of Plato sets the scene for the learned discussion that would resolve some very important philosophical and aesthetic problems. He explains how he fell into some kind of analeptic trance and then witnessed the conversation of Lucius Sergius Paulus, the Roman Governor - General of Cyprus and Theophilus, the Syrian-Greek historian. This time history is not the chief topic of conversation. Through the series of questions and comments Teophilus reveals some aspects, so far unknown to Sergius, about the migrations of old Greek tribes, the origins of Greek religious mysteries and certain sacred symbols thus proving the

parallelism of Eastern and Mediterranean religions including Christianity. We quote a part of their fascinating exchange:

“Theophilus smiled. ‘Your Excellency is a true Roman – “no truth unless hallowed by a tradition.” Well, then tell me from what land did your hero Aeneas come?’

‘He was a king of Dardanus on the Bosphorus before he settled in Troy.’

‘Good: Dardanus is three-quarters of the way back from Rome to the Black Sea. And tell me, what was the priceless procession that Aeneas brought with him from Troy? Pray forgive the dialectical method’

You must mean Palladium, most learned Socrates,’ answered Paulus in ironically academic tones, ‘on the safety of which the fate of Troy once depended; and the fate of Rome depends now.’

‘And what honoured Alcibiades, is the Palladium?’

‘A venerable statue of Pallas Athene.’ “ (Graves 1997: 41-342)

Theophilus’s dilalogical guiding of Sergius Paulus to truth is in fact a very old verbal technique defined in ancient times as *maieutic*. The word is derived from the [Greek](#) ‘μαιευτικός’, meaning [midwifery](#). Socrates is reputed to have created it since he expounds on it in Plato’s *Symposium* (in Diotima’s story the intelligent people are viewed as the “souls which are pregnant”) (Plato 1999:46) and *Theaetetus* where he depicts his skill as the art of midwifery and qualifies himself a midwife to some latent truths and ideas helping his interlocutors to grasp them. (Plato 2004:149-150) The dialogues of Plato are known to be the true philosophical dramas of the kind since the process of reasoning is presented in a rather convincing manner as the part of ordinary, everyday life. The participants are fully developed personalities, living a dynamic life in all its aspects, from joyous to sorrowful. Later on these qualities deteriorated and Platonic dialogues became just a convenient means for the exegesis of certain literary or philosophical questions.

In the whole range of Graves’s Platonic dialogues there are some of them possessing true dramatic qualities. In philosophical dialogue participants take different standpoints in order to come, after the process of arguing, to a certain conclusion or knowledge from which they both will benefit. In dramatic dialogue, the participants are antagonized to the greatest extent, warring, in their spiritual battle, not only their opinions, but also emotions, sympathies and malices. According to Hegel: “It is only in it (dramatic dialogue) that acting individuals could express to one another their characters and intentions with respect both to their singularity and substantiality of their pathos and thereby enter into a fight and by doing this they make the action continue.” (Hegel 1975:1170)

5. John Milton Discredited

In the dialogues we have analyzed so far, philosophical aspect was predominant, the participants were scholarly, reflexive and impartial in their judgements and, we may say, stripped of passion. But Graves is able to produce the Platonic dialogues full of dramatic tension where words that are spoken, their meaning, rhythm, utterance are personalized to the utmost. Such a dialogue reveals, promotes and enhances the basic conflict in his novels. This kind of duel is to be found in Graves's novel *The Story of Marie Powell: Wife to Mr. Milton*, notorious for Graves's condemnation of John Milton and his poetry. Milton's poetic creeds are systematically disputed and discredited and one of the memorable steps in this direction is the dialogue of Milton's wife Marie and her brother James. In the argument about Milton's masque *Comus*, James tries to prove that Milton is but an imitator, a minor author without talent, devoured not by poetic fervour but by sheer ambition. Marie, on the other hand, adores Milton's verses and defends Milton's *Ars Poetica*:

"It is not the single words or phrases so much as the cadence or the very soul of the verse that he has borrowed; here from William Brown's *Pastorals*, and there from John Fletcher's *Shepherdess*, and there from George Peele's *The Old Wives' Tale*, and here again ..."

'I neither see it,' I said, 'nor hear it. This Masque is a lovely poem. Then, as for the literate fame, how can a poet not desire it? Fame assures him readers and patrons; without readers and patrons a poet is undone, his poems are locked up in the prison of his cupboard drawer and serve no purpose.'

'The more that a poet regards Fame, so much the less will he regard Truth,' said James.

To this I objected: 'I had not thought that it was for poets to speak truth, which is rather left to the divines and philosophers to expound.'

'Poetry without truth is mere honey-cake and sugar-works.'

'I am glutton for both,' I confessed." (Graves 2003:72)

James's accusation of Milton's alleged plagiarism of the verses of William Browne, Fletcher and Peele, are in fact Graves's own accusation brought out in the essay "These Be Your Gods, O Israel" (Graves, 1970: 152) and in his correspondence. (Seymour-Smith 1970:377) Besides, in the quoted dispute the questions of poetic truth and glory, that occupied Graves so much, are dealt with.

The dialogue of Marie and James Powell is evidently not a learned discussion. It is performed in the tone of everyday speech and at moments it breaks into an open quarrel.

6. Poetic Duel in the Cave of Machphelah

In the other historical novels of Robert Graves we will find the Platonic dialogues of nothing but poetic quality. One of the most significant among them is included in the twentieth chapter of the historical novel *King Jesus*. The climactic scene in the novel is the encounter of Jesus and Mary the Hairdresser (biblical Mary Magdalene from whom Jesus exorcised seven devils) that happens in the nineteenth chapter. Jesus asks Mary to take him to the cave of Machphelah, which is in fact the sanctuary of the Great Goddess of matriarchal time. He wants to see the sacred drawings and to read them in the manner that they will assume the meanings contrary to the primeval ones which were the testimonies of matriarchal cult. Mary is the priestess of the Great Goddess and not at all tolerant to what Jesus says. That is why she starts a kind of the verbal duel with Jesus and both of them fervently try to prove the validity of their own views by assigning different meanings to the frescoes. Mary sticks to the primary versions whereas Jesus systematically and deftly revises her claims:

“Mary said: ‘See where my Mistress, the first Eve, is seated on her birth-stool under the palm tree. The people are awaiting a great event, for the pangs are upon her.’

Swiftly Jesus answered her: ‘No which this is not the First Eve: that is Deborah judging the Israelities under the palm tree of Deborah. For so it is written.’

‘Not so: for here my mistress is delivered of twins, begotten of different fathers, namely Adam son of the Terebinth, and Azazel son of the Kerm-oak. She ties a red thread about the wrist of Azazel to distinguish him from his brother Adam.’

‘No, but Tamar; Judah’s daughter in law, is delivered of her bastards Zarah and Pharez and ties the thread about the wrist of Zarah. For so it is written.’” (Graves 2006:214)

This captivating, rhythmic exchange of repartees is in fact poetically structured. Here Graves, by making his characters speak alternately in an epigrammatic manner with resounding anaphores and epiphores, is using the figure of speech called *stichomythia* which was also exploited by the ancient authors such as Aeschylus in *Agamemnon* and Sophocles in *Oedipus Rex*. By showing two characters in fierce verbal contest the authors, including Graves, manage to lift emotional intensity of important scenes. Jan Mukarovsky lays stress on the permeating of two different and often completely opposing contexts in such dialogues. The juxtaposition of retorts leads to sudden semantic turnovers. (Mukaržovski 1986:109)

7. Conclusion

The purpose of our analysis was to promote Graves as a true champion of this ancient literary genre. In the mastery of their creation, in our opinion, he remains unsurpassed among his contemporary fellow-writers. As we mentioned, the achievements of George Santayana and Iris Murdoch are remarkable but the frequency of use and versatility of Graves's Platonic dialogues are unprecedented. Graves varies the form from purely philosophical, learned dialogues to the dramatic ones that are lively resembling everyday conversation and those that belong to the realm of poetry. The scope of aesthetic, anthropological and mythological problems treated in the dialogues is also amazing. Having in mind that Graves used Platonic dialogues even in some of his short stories ("Caenis on Incest") we may say that the form is one of his most favourite poetic means. Owing to the syncretic power of Graves' literary genius, this often neglected ancient literary genre was effectively revived for the benefit of both the high quality of Graves's work and us the readers who cannot but admire them.

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YOUTH AND THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE

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***Abstract:** The paper investigates the preoccupations of the 16th and 17th-century English stage for the image of the adolescent male and the promotion of notions of manhood in a predominantly patriarchal society. Reading several Tudor and Stuart comedies but focusing on two Shakespearean texts, the paper explores how masculinity is asserted, achieved, and related to male youth in terms of social behaviours: the vital social importance of marriage, duelling, love-making, fornication, widow-hunting, etc.*

***Keywords:** assertion, comedy, masculinity, social behaviour, stage, youth*

1. Introduction

Early modern gender in England has been under scrutiny lately, yet the focus has been laid on the perceptions or experience of women. Alexandra Shepard's *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (2003) belongs to a new wave, which steers our attention to the construction of early modern masculinity. The book attempts to answer such questions as what made men 'worthy' in the eyes of their contemporaries, or how they achieved manhood and retained it. Unlike for women, Shepard demonstrates that male codes of honour and esteem varied far more according to factors such as age, social status and marital status. Only a privileged few possessed all the required attributes and enjoyed the public credit they bestowed. Although primarily described in terms of the relations between the sexes, manhood was often "worked out between men" and asserted differently according to the various social ranks the men belonged to (Shepard 2003:6-8).

Yet Shepard's book is only one instance that testifies to the shift in the critics' attention from women – the notion of sisterhood, or women sharing common experiences – to men, with their allegedly different experiences. The works of Ilhana Krausman BenAmos (1994), Bruce R. Smith (2000), or Ira Clark (2003) have also shown that, in the early modern period, masculinity is regarded as a phase of life, when youths are entering manhood. Furthermore, masculinity is perceived as a construction rather than an essence, as something that can be achieved. Masculinity is thus a status to be attained in the eyes of others, not a stage in the personal formation. This is mainly triggered by the assumption that real manhood is different from simple anatomical maleness – namely, masculinity is not a natural condition that comes about spontaneously through biological maturation, but an artificial state that boys must 'compete for' and 'win'.

As perceptions and constructions of manhood differ across time, we may argue that masculine worthiness is inherently historical, a political process affected by social change. Masculinity is the fifth among the seven ages of man, which begin with birth, continue with breeching (6-7 years of age), separation from parents for apprenticeship/ school (13-18), the practice of the newly acquired skills (24), in order to lay the foundations of the economical and social bases necessary for marrying and establishing a household (when the youth has to be at least 27 years old). There is only a brief period of adulthood: from 24, the youngest age for release from apprenticeship, which did *not* coincide with manhood, for which they needed to manage their own business or accumulate wealth, up to 27-29, the earliest age for marriage, until the late 40s. Given the short lifespan, prolonged adolescence is a strikingly painful period: “I would there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty [...] for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child [...], stealing, fighting” (Shakespeare 1996b:1116; III, 3, 58-61).

2. How to Become a Man

As mentioned above, manhood in early modernity is an achievement, and boys have to prove themselves men in the ways society designates the construction of manhood. The means whereby boys can attain manhood is by making such radical decisions choosing an occupation or a spouse in order to gain the skills necessary to succeed in life. The much longed-for ‘worthiness’ is asserted in the behaviour of young men aspiring to gentle status. Unlike on the Continent, in England, the aristocracy is not perceived as a unitary whole, there being an important distinction between the higher and lower aristocracy, i.e. between nobility and gentry (Percec, Şerban and Verteş-Olteanu 2010:42). Since the notion of ‘gentility’ (being a gentleman) has already acquired a political connotation, serving as a basis for the allotment of seats in the two Houses of Parliament, this unique aspect of the English aristocracy is further reflected in the right of the first born male child (primogeniture). Frequently alluded to by Shakespeare, this right gives the first born boy both the title and the seat in the House of the Lords, whereas younger sons, who do not enjoy a noble title, but only the status of gentleman, take positions in the army, administration, politics, and even in the House of Commons. Denied the resources to support their status and forbidden to work for a living, such younger sons have to make their own fortunes, seeking a place through warfare, court, or marriage.

One way of proving one’s worthiness is by means of duelling. Arisen from a “crisis of noble masculinity” (Low 2003:3-5), when male English aristocrats could no longer identify with the military elite perished

during the War of the Roses, duelling emerged not as another “form of ritualized violence”, but as a construction of a new heroic ideal. As Low (2003:6-7) further argues, duelling played an essential part in the development of the physical sense of early modern masculinity, as fencers were taught to fight according to their skill and nimbleness (as opposed to the brute force of swordfighters before the sixteenth century). Reflecting the high social status of the combatant through the extension of his personal space, the duel simultaneously reinforced patriarchy, turning the fencer into the main representative of his family. Therefore, basically defined as an honourable (though extralegal) competition between men, meant as a demonstration of courage and worthiness, duelling may be envisioned as both an opportunity and a peril: on the one hand, the fencer may valorize the potential of social and political advancement, while on the other, he risks to lose the widow/ bride to men who have already proved their manhood.

Eager to make their mark, young men turn marriage into a hypercompetitive process. Although marriage ‘makes the Man’, bestowing upon the youth the status of manhood recognized by patriarchy, what young men seek in a marriage is a large dowry – be it by securing a rich widow (the widow hunt), or a girl whose family is well-connected. Such ‘attributes’ in a wife give man access to privileges and assign him responsibilities in the community, forbidden to him earlier without patronage or inheritance. Upon marriage, a man becomes eligible for such public positions as jurymen, constable, justice of peace, or knight of the shire. However, in marriage, the young man has to demonstrate assertiveness in manner, which he can achieve by establishing control over his wife, by proving his capability to govern – ideally, not by physical force but by self-mastery and rational behaviour.

A few examples in this sense are provided by some courtier and city comedies written in late Tudor and Stuart times (Clark 2003:22-24). In the anonymous play, *The Marriage Broker*, Derrick devises a map to calculate the value of prospective brides: dowry, age, sexual conditions and histories in order to simplify the choice. Shakespeare’s early comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, focuses on men’s schemes to woo women (married or single) of a certain financial potential, in order to improve their own situation, severely taxed by intense merrymaking. However, because of the financial potential and, implicitly, the social advancement she can bring, the widow is by far the most fascinating hypostasis of womanhood for a young man. Thomas Middleton’s *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (a city comedy published in 1608) features Witgood, an impoverished young man who deceives a greedy London merchant in order to marry his friend’s daughter. When one of Witgood’s former mistresses passes as a rich widow and his

new fiancée, creditors stop harassing him, but rival suitors arise. The young man's betrothal to the rich widow brings about the perspective of inheritance as well as social respectability. Similarly, Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (printed in 1625, 1633) centers not only on the essential attributes of a potential wife, but also on the strengthening of class distinctions that characterized the early [Stuart](#) period and led to the outbreak of the Civil War. Unlike in Elizabethan plays like Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) or Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (c. 1597-9), where [social mobility](#) through marriage was acceptable and a young nobleman was admired for marrying a commoner's daughter, in Massinger's play, Margaret Overreach's beauty, youth and virtues do not make her an eligible candidate for Lord Lovell, who would rather let his family line perish than make a match with a girl from a lower social class. On the other hand, Tom Allworth's widowed mother, Lady Allworth, retains her country house, where she is visited by neighbors and prospective suitors, one of whom is Margaret's father, Sir Giles. Although her guests are treated with hospitality as it is appropriate, she remains secluded in her mourning. Similar to Middleton's *Witgood*, the young and impoverished Wellborn seeks stability and independence from creditors by wooing the widow, but he finally reforms and takes a military commission. Wellborn's failure to attain his manhood through marriage leaves him with no other alternative but the choice of a military career.

3. Shakespeare's Boys Turning Men

Shakespeare's comedies, too, feature youths who endeavour to assert or demonstrate their (newly acquired) masculinity either by marriage or by violence. What is interesting to note is that, among the various demonstrations of masculinity, as Shepard (2003:16) argues, violence provides both the "patriarchal codes of order" and the "alternative codes of manhood", the most explicit of which bespeaks rebellion, understood as "a culture of excess" and manifested in "youthful rioting, drinking, gambling and sexual prowess [...] largely performed for and validated by their peers".

The two Shakespearean plays chosen for discussion contain such demonstrations of masculinity. For example, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio proves his 'worthiness' by establishing a patriarchal marriage based on force. His main goal is "to wive and thrive" (Shakespeare 1996a:335; I, 2, 47). Since he inherited his father's fortune, he does not necessarily seek a sizeable dowry, but rather experience, stability and respectability. He wants to prove himself a husband by demonstrating his power to govern a woman whom other men, representatives of such other forms of authority as the father or the teacher, have failed to control.

By taming Kate and turning her into a submissive wife, Petruchio seeks to assert himself as a standard husband in a standard marriage. As he tells his bride, Petruchio will turn her “from a wild Kate to a Kate/ Comfortable as other household Kates” (Shakespeare 1996a:341, II, 1, 268-70). The choice of the word “comfortable” is very ironic since the taming process relies heavily on deprivation (food, clothing and consummation of the marriage), but at the same time, it suggests that Petruchio will only prove his worthiness if Kate becomes the obedient wife, always pleased and willing to carry out her lord’s wishes.

The couple’s kiss at the end not only announces Petruchio’s sexual satisfaction, but it also comes as another proof of his manhood, i.e. the assertion of his control over his wife’s body and will: “Why, there’s a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate. [...] Come, Kate, we’ll to bed. We three are married, but you two are sped.” (Shakespeare 1996a:358, V, 2) Kate’s readiness and happiness to comply with her husband’s orders during her sister’s wedding banquet bespeaks the success of Petruchio’s marriage (and, hence, of his manhood), which is made even more conspicuous, when compared with the two other (male) success stories: Lucentio marrying the good, obedient Bianca, and Vincentio marrying the widow. Yet unlike Petruchio, Lucentio and Vincentio allow themselves to be dominated by the women they have pursued, providing us with two examples of incomplete masculinities. While the newly-wedded Bianca and the widow refuse to do what their husbands have asked them, thus undermining Lucentio’s and Vincentio’s respectively variants of masculinity, Kate’s appearance and final speech show her contented submissiveness, which also emphasize Petruchio’s wholesome manhood.

Marriage is the final stage in a man’s evolution, so Petruchio’s determination to pursue Kate is triggered by a conviction that only a wedding can bring a gentleman’s consecration. Men in comedies often go on journeys to foreign countries or remote cities in order to find a wife, so travelling towards a wedding ceremony is the equivalent of a process of maturation. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the boys make a trip to Milan in order to gain enough experience and independence to become eligible bachelors, i.e. virile adults. Petruchio’s journey to Padua is described in similar terms:

“Such wind as scatters young men through the world,
To seek their fortunes farther than at home
Where small experience grows. But in a few,
Signior Hortensio, thus it stands with me:
Antonio, my father, is deceased;
And I have thrust myself into this maze,

Haply to wive and thrive as best I may:
Crowns in my purse I have and goods at home,
And so am come abroad to see the world.” (Shakespeare 1996a:335; I, 2, 48-56)

Though not a poor man technically speaking, Petruchio’s main goal in Padua is to “thrive”, whether this implies financial assets or only a psycho-social evolution. He is not desperately in need of Kate’s dowry promised by Baptista, but he accepts this marriage as a challenge. This stage in his life transforms the teenager, who does not benefit from the esteem of his peers, into a respectable citizen. Marriage is the final stage, after the successful fulfillment of professional or social duties: an apprenticeship period, life at the Court or as the companion of a powerful nobleman, the military period, etc. Only married men, for example, can aspire to even the most obscure of the local offices, such as a constable, a civil guard, a town councilor, etc. (Shepard 2003).

Furthermore, Juliet Dusinberre’s reminder (1993), that even Kate’s role was played, on the Elizabethan stage, by a boy, calls for a radical reconsideration of power relations and gender roles. Petruchio played by an adult, experienced actor (usually famous, since this is the leading part in the comedy) and Kate played by a young, inexperienced, still unknown and obscure actor come as a hypertextual demonstration of a generally received social fact: male teenagers are placed in similarly disempowered positions as females of all ages. This status was enough to cause serious inferiority complexes in young men, which often justified their acts of bravado. The bet launched by Petruchio for the other men – of various social ranks and marital conditions (the father of the bride, the teacher, the sister’s fiancé, or his own valet) – proves his hasty effort to display an entire arsenal of male domestic authority, which will hopefully be appreciated and admired.

On the other hand, Shakespeare’s comedy records a series of early modern economic and social transformations in women’s lives. Especially in the upper classes, mainly in the Protestant communities, women start to benefit from a better public perception from the 16th century onwards. The women who run households gain importance, this being the equivalent of a public office in terms of the qualifications implied, or the time and effort it requires (Korda 1996). The direct consequence is an increased self-confidence and more authority towards the circle of acquaintances – children, servants, tenants, neighbours, and kin. From now on, the woman who has met a minimal set of requirements (gave birth to at least one son, is a good hostess, supports her husband publicly, etc.) enjoys the family’s esteem and has many financial and social advantages. She has access to a number of informal (almost exclusively female) connections, which place

her advantageously within the sphere of the community's power relations, facilitating access to information and resources and contributing to the shaping of a hierarchy constructed on the model of patriarchy (Hufton 1995). From this viewpoint, Katherine's potential is immense: she is a strong, educated, rich woman, who finally understands that the price she has to pay for her subsequent independence is minimal, in comparison with her benefits. She has to obtain her husband's affection and trust and the community's appreciation. This gives her the reputation and respectability she will need to pursue the Protestant ideal of household economy and connections. The community, represented by the wedding guests, witnesses her speech, interpret it as a sign of good will and grant her, consequently, a new public image.

Comparatively, *Twelfth Night* features a number of 'boys' (read as incomplete men): Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who is stupid and irresponsible, Sebastian, who accepts gay Antonio's protection and purse, and Malvolio, the frustrated servant, who wants to demonstrate his power by marrying the lady of the house. All three of them try to achieve recognition as men by marrying the woman with the highest rank in the play.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek has the standard biography of an adolescent. His attitude is one of waste, foolish bravado: "I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing and bear-baiting!" (Shakespeare 1996c:643; I, 3). He plans to give Olivia a proof of his manhood, but between political influence and physical strength as first-hand male assets, Sir Andrew is persuaded to choose the latter:

FABIAN: [...] and you are now sailed into the north of my lady's opinion; where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard, unless you do redeem it by some laudable attempt either of valour or policy.

SIR ANDREW: An't be any way, it must be with valour; for policy I hate: I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician." (Shakespeare 1996c: 656, III, 2)

By challenging Cesario to a duel, Sir Andrew hopes to divert the lady's attention and show everybody that his manhood, proven in honourable combat, qualifies him as the right husband for the rich woman. Although Sir Andrew's initial behaviour in the company of Sir Toby signals him out as a representative of a "counter-code of manhood" (Shepard 2003:16) because of the excesses he has fallen victim to (drinking, overeating and gambling), the challenge positions him as the representative of patriarchal authority, who chooses violence as a form of both territorial demarcation and demonstration of male strength. Yet, as Olivia's alleged lover Cesario is just a boy, with a fragile body and inferior social position, a

mere page at Orsino's court, the duel loses all honourable and heroic connotations.

Unlike Sir Andrew, Malvolio is obsessed with authority and control, two things a marriage and an aristocratic title could offer. The following scene is permeated with elements that show Malvolio embodying the image of the patriarch: he imposes respect to servants and family who courtesy before him; he plays with jewelry to hide irritation and demonstrate self-control.

“To be Count Malvolio! [...]
There is example for't; the lady of the Strachy
married the yeoman of the wardrobe.
Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state, [...]
Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make
out for him [Toby]: I frown the while; and perchance wind
up watch, or play with my...some rich jewel. Toby
approaches; courtesies there to me, [...]
I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar
smile with an austere regard of control, [...]
Saying, 'Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on
your niece give me this prerogative of speech,' [...]
'You must amend your drunkenness.'” (Shakespeare 1996c:654, II, 5)

However, far from the right match for Olivia, who is a member of the upper class, while he is just her steward, Malvolio imagines himself beyond his social status and exceeds his attributions by scolding Olivia's noble yet drunkard of an uncle. It is only marriage to the rich Olivia that can grant him the power and authority over Sir Toby's youthful misrule. The only reason for which he seeks to assert his manhood is to flaunt it in the face of others who have failed to see in him the worthiness he himself sees.

Whereas Malvolio regards marriage as an opportunity to punish those who do not appreciate him at his true value, Sebastian accepts Olivia's marriage proposal, as a rare occasion he should not miss after Antonio's disappearance. He assesses the value of the bargain immediately: the house, the servants, and the lady's self-confidence, which is the result of the privileged status:

“For though my soul disputes well with my sense,
That this may be some error, but no madness,
Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes
And wrangle with my reason that persuades me
To any other trust but that I am mad

Or else the lady's mad; yet, if 'twere so,
She could not sway her house, command her followers,
Take and give back affairs and their dispatch
With such a smooth, discreet and stable bearing
As I perceive she does: there's something in't
That is deceiveable." (Shakespeare 1996c:664; IV, 3)

Finding the situation almost unbelievable, Sebastian tries to reason it out and convince himself that everything around him is real. He is both pleased and intrigued by Olivia's attitude to him. Although they have just met, the lady bestows precious gifts on him and wants to marry him. His initial impulse is to consider Olivia mad. However, madness would have made it impossible for her to manage such a large household. Sebastian associates control with sanity but he cannot figure out the deceit he senses in Olivia's attitude to him. His choice of marrying the rich young woman translates his understanding of the context he finds himself in. For him, marriage becomes the opportunity to assert his masculinity twofold: freeing himself of the eroticism of male bonds (suggested in his relationship with Antonio), Sebastian gets involved in a natural relationship, approved by society, and he will be the one in control of everything once the ceremony is over.

4. Conclusions

All the youths in both *The Taming of the Shrew* (Petruccio, Lucentio and Vincentio) and *Twelfth Night* (Sebastian, Malvolio and Sir Andrew) represent instances of manhood shaped by social practice, since they all demonstrate codes of order or counter-codes of disorder and excess. As we could see from the two comedies discussed above, theatre in general is an invaluable source for social history, while Elizabethan drama in particular provides us with a multitude of masculinities, enabling us to better understand early modern society and its imperatives. Furthermore, such plays help us grasp how masculinity was constructed, achieved and retained in early modernity, simultaneously showing that patriarchy is not monolithic. Contrasting the notions of sisterhood and brotherhood, early modern theatre shows that male codes varied more according to status and age than in the case of women.

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ART AS STATE OF MIND IN HENRY JAMES' *THE TRAGIC MUSE*

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Abstract: *Henry James was haunted by what he saw as the conflict between artistic integrity and the demands of the artist's audience. I shall propose that his novel *The Tragic Muse* can be interpreted as recommending the non-productive artistic consciousness as the purest form of artistry. Such an attitude anticipated the sense of artistic crisis and characteristic of the twentieth century.*

Keywords: *aestheticism, art, artistic production, Künstlerroman, resignation*

1. Introduction

The Tragic Muse is one of a number of Henry James' works which could be described by the term *Künstlerroman*, novels which focus on the personality and development of an artist. In the case of *The Tragic Muse* the novel follows the careers of four young people, two of whom are uncontroversially artists, and two others who have significant involvement in the arts. However, by the end of the novel, a sense of failure is pervasive: the two productive artists are producing, but in ways that seem compromised by commercial and social pressures; one of the cognoscenti has given up his interest altogether in favour of worldly concerns, while the other, who is also the novel's philosopher, has produced in the past, but has renounced the productive dimension of art – this though, already from before the beginning of the novel. I shall argue that the novel depends on James' view that artistry is primarily a quality of personality, and that art's first home is in the imagination; therefore that productivity is not the primary sign of the artistic personality, and that, in James' view, the purest artist may not produce at all. This aestheticist, almost religious, conception of art is expressed by one of the characters in the novel, but can also be found at work in throughout James' oeuvre, sometimes in works where the artistic theme is less overt than in *The Tragic Muse*. I shall suggest that *The Tragic Muse*, published in 1890, constitutes an early symptom of a mounting feeling of unease about the arts in the Western world, which culminates in the consciousness of full crisis expressed by many in the twentieth century.

2. Art as State of Mind

The plot of *The Tragic Muse*, though it is a long novel, is not complex: it follows the fortunes of two young cousins, Nick Dormer and Peter Sherringham, a young aspiring actress they meet early in the novel, Miriam Rooth, and the college friend of Nick's who introduces Miriam (and

her mother) to both cousins, Gabriel Nash. Nick is under pressure from his family to marry another, rich, cousin, Peter's sister, Julia, and become a member of parliament, like his late father, thus also rescuing the family fortunes. He wishes to become a portrait painter, is encouraged in this ambition by his friend and mentor Gabriel, initially however succumbs to family pressure and is elected a member of parliament with the help of Julia, whom he almost marries, only to revert to portrait painting, give up his seat, and lose Julia, and a significant inheritance which a political friend would have left him. Peter is an ambitious junior diplomat who has a passion for the theatre. He becomes Miriam's mentor, falls in love with her, but rejects the chance of a life involved with the theatre and married to her in order to dedicate himself to his career. Miriam moves from being a girl with an ambition to be an actress to being a successful and popular actress, and rejects Peter's proposal to marry him and give up acting. Gabriel is an elusive figure, almost a caricature of an aesthete, who cultivates his character and seeks refined experiences where they may be found. It is he who gives expression to artistic philosophy in the novel, and who is instrumental in persuading Nick to give up his political career in favour of art. I shall examine Henry James' attitudes to the achievements of these characters in more detail later in this paper, but I shall argue, against much of the criticism (for example, Winner 1979:46, 123, who sees Gabriel as a caricature, and believes that James is too 'socially responsible' to agree with his position), that Gabriel Nash, despite his somewhat exaggerated and almost comical presentation by James, nevertheless does represent James' voice more than the other characters, and achieves, according to James' principle, the most perfectly artistic life of the four, even if this life is largely unproductive in conventional works or art.

It is arguable that a number of James' works which are not obviously about art and artists deal with James' concept of an artistry which does not involve producing works of art in the conventional sense. I would like to illustrate the point with two of them here. *A Portrait of a Lady*, perhaps his most famous work, is a relatively early one of his novels, published in 1881, which features characters who are not obviously artists, of whom the heroine, Isabel Archer, a young and spirited American woman, who moves to Europe, is given a substantial sum of money by the semi-invalid Ralph Touchett, the only one of the three major male characters who does not try to marry her. It can be argued, and has been, in the famous article by Tony Tanner 'The Fearful Self' (1968), that the chief artistic personality of the novel is Ralph, who cannot live actively, but can observe and appreciate, and who in fact creates a situation in life to observe and appreciate by giving Isabel the financial means to make her way socially in

Europe, an experiment which, as it turns out, does not work well for Isabel. Here Ralph's passivity is symbolised, as well as caused, by his physical weakness, but he nevertheless goes beyond purely passive appreciation and manages to manipulate reality in order to create material to appreciate. A novel, which by contrast, is a later one, and also one of his least known, *The Sacred Fount*, published in 1901, shows some striking and interesting similarities. In this novel an unnamed character, who is narrator, and is also novelist, although this is in the background during the novel, is invited to a country house party, and on the journey as well as at the party develops a theory as to the relationships between some of other guests and the consequences of these relationships on these guests (based on the idea that one person in a close relationship can sacrifice some of his or her energy, or force of personality, for the other). The main character shares some of his speculations with yet other fellow guests, observes and talks to the guests he has been speculating on, to the extent that he creates something of an intrigue, although whether or not his initial observations were correct is never absolutely clear. This ambiguous novel, which is written in James' dense and inaccessible late style, seems to show the height of artistic fascination and pleasure coming from a game of observation of life, one which seems to go beyond just observation to actually creating situations of refined interest which can then be enjoyed. Once again the art shown is not the production of a work or art, and even if the main character is presented as a novelist, very little is made of this fact. The art of life takes precedence over works of art.

I shall now examine the four heroes of *The Tragic Muse* in more detail with respect to how James portrays their artistic careers. Nick Dormer is ostensibly the main hero of the novel's plot. His point of view predominates, there are many scenes in which he features and the other artistic characters do not, and his wavering between a political and artistic career, as well as the related question of his relationship with Julia, seem to be the central material of the story. If *The Tragic Muse* were a *Bildungsroman*, it would be Nick's *Bildung* which would seem to be the dominant theme. Nick starts the novel in Paris, with his family, on a visit to the annual exhibition of the Salon, and it is there that he meets his friend from Oxford days, Gabriel, as well as Peter, his cousin, working there at the embassy, and Miriam and her mother, who have attached themselves to Gabriel. The visit is interrupted by the news that a parliamentary seat in England has become vacant, and Nick immediately finds himself under pressure from his mother, one of his sisters, and Julia, his rich widowed cousin, who would like to marry him, to stand for the seat, he having already had a short spell as a member of parliament in the past. Meeting

Gabriel has however reminded him of his other ambition, that of becoming a painter, and in addition to this he is stimulated in an artistic direction by Paris, which 'had always had the virtue of quickening in him sensibly the life of reflexion and observation.' (27) Art is often talked of as if it were a religion in the novel, and Gabriel in Paris resolves to 'save' Nick ("We shall save him yet' Mr. Nash kept on easily to Biddy [Nick's sister] ..." 360), by which he means persuading him to give up politics in favour of the artistic calling which he believes has been discernable in Nick at least since his student days. Nick after yielding to family pressure and standing for the seat, winning it, and becoming engaged to Julia, then wavers, feeling his old artistic calling still alive, and is encouraged by a visit Gabriel makes to his London studio, but his decision to give up his seat in favour of a full time career as a portrait painter is to some extent provoked by circumstances rather than taken freely – Gabriel brings Miriam, beginning by this time to make a name for herself as an actress in London, to sit for Nick in his studio while Julia is out of town, and Julia returns unexpectedly to find Miriam sitting for Nick. It is Julia's subsequent breaking off of the engagement (saying that she recognises that Nick will always prefer art to politics, whereas Julia needs to be married to a politician) that precipitates Nick's change of career.

Nick's artistic career, once underway, seems to be presented in the novel as something of an anticlimax. He has doubts about whether he has made the right decision, which visiting the National Gallery, in search of inspiration, does nothing to assuage ('he found himself calling the whole exhibited art into question' 392), and his portraits of Miriam, work on one of which temporarily lifts him out of his gloom, later strike him as facile ('That they were wonderfully clever was just the detestable thing in them, so active had that cleverness been in making them seem better than they were' 450), and he feels tormented by a sense that he is liable to be tempted in the direction of easy and cheap success in the future, in a desire to please. Later, after Nick has experienced oscillating moods, Gabriel predicts to him that he will find himself engineered by Julia and his sister Biddy into painting society portraits in country houses, after he has painted Julia herself, an occupation which will be not so offensive to Julia's anti-aesthetic views as to preclude her marrying Nick after all ('You'll go about with her and do all her friends, all the bishops and ambassadors' 472). The prediction turns out roughly correct, with the elements in a different order. First Nick finds himself at a house party organised by Julia, sketching all the guests: next Biddy comes with Julia's proposal that he should paint her. In the epilogue-like final chapter it is recorded that at an exhibition 'general attention was attracted' to 'the noble portrait of a lady' (491), that is of Julia. In the final

sentence, it is delicately hinted that marriage between Nick and Julia may be forthcoming.

The last sentence recalls the way in which Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1982) ends with an ambiguous hint, requiring the reader's attention right up to the last word to interpret it, as to the hero Wilhelm's forthcoming marriage to Nathalie, but in that novel the hero gives up his youthful interest in art, in the shape of the theatre, in order to pursue practical matters. Ambiguous as *The Tragic Muse* is, the hint seems to be that the career of society portrait painting Nick appears destined for, one that even the highly anti-artistic Julia may be able to reconcile herself to in a husband, will be one with a somewhat diluted artistic content, one in which pleasing a superficial audience may predominate over inspiration.

Peter Sherringham, Nick's cousin, is a straightforward case, in that he is unable to put his fascination with the theatre above his worldly ambitions as a diplomat, and even falling in love with the actress, Miriam, is not enough to persuade him to change his fundamental loyalty to the worldly. It is in relation to Peter that Goethe's character Wilhelm Meister is explicitly mentioned in *The Tragic Muse*, as Philip Horne (1995:xvii) notes, and, as I have said above, Wilhelm also chooses the worldly over the artistic, although, in that case, with the apparent approval of the author. Even early in the novel Nick warns Peter not to treat talk of his theatrical hobby as an embarrassing sideshow: 'Don't be ashamed of it else it will be ashamed of you.' (62). In a novel in which art is presented in religious terms, and the individual must choose whether to serve God or Mammon, Peter cannot make his decision, as Miriam, much later in the novel, tells Nick ('He's trying to serve God and Mammon' 418). In terms of the plot, after repeatedly offering marriage to Miriam in return for her giving up the theatre, he eventually has himself posted to a Central American country, informing Miriam before he goes that he will consider giving up his diplomatic career and dedicating himself to the theatre, in return for her hand. In the event when he returns he finds her already married. In terms of his relationship to art, he seems meant to illustrate, in stark terms, the view that those who put worldly ambitions first cannot aspire to the artistic life. In his case the worldly life that tempts him is worldly in a way unmixed with artistic content, so his case is simpler than that of Nick and Miriam, for whom aiming at the artistic nevertheless draws in a considerable worldly element as a collateral result.

Miriam, the tragic muse of the title, apart from almost but not quite attracting Peter into a more serious dedication to the artistic sphere, is more importantly herself an aspiring artist. Miriam's progress parallels Nick's, in that she manages to adopt an artistic career, and even appears destined for

great success as an actress, having a genuine talent according to the novel's indications, something which is not unambiguously established in Nick's case, but, as in Nick's case, James intersperses his account of her apparently successful career with disillusioning elements, referring especially to the low quality of drama she spends much of her time acting, the repetitiveness of acting in a long run, denying her the possibility of exploring her abilities in a variety of parts, and to the lack of discernment of the bulk of the public she plays to (and Treitel 1996:55-8 even casts doubt on her artistic achievements, on the basis that they are presented from the point of view of positively biased witnesses, such as Peter). Her first professional play, which she spends much of the period of the latter part of the novel performing (almost a year, according to Nick, by the time she premieres a new part, 482), is repeatedly denigrated: according to Peter it is 'barbarous in form and false in feeling' (380). When she finally is able to perform as Juliet, at the premiere she is 'sublime' (498) but the sense of triumph evoked by this narratorial praise seems undermined by the description of her audience as 'The great childish audience...' (486) Part of what compromises the artistic qualities of Miriam's career is the catering to commercial necessities and unrefined tastes necessary for her to thrive in the London market. Gabriel forecasts that she will be a great star, but will be coarsened by the experience, implying that vulgarity is a product of the age (352-3), and Miriam's marriage to Basil Dashwood, a competent but uninspiring theatrical figure, who will be her manager, indicates the priorities which will direct her in the future. When Miriam admits to being a philistine, after Nick has accused both himself and her of this fault in comparison with Gabriel (466-7), while these accusations and admissions are made in a tone of badinage which makes it difficult to gauge to what extent a serious intention attaches, questions nonetheless arise as to another aspect in which Nick and Miriam's artistry is mixed rather than pure: the conversation is partly about Nick's isolated pursuit of his vocation in his studio, Miriam expressing relief that her calling does not demand such arduous seclusion. However, no less than Nick's, and perhaps more, Miriam's calling, James may be suggesting, is one which depends as much, if not more, on practical skill as on intellectual refinement, and the degree of intellectual refinement absolutely required may even be distinctly limited. The novel may hint that the highest levels of artistic refinement could be put to use in appreciating Miriam, rather than being needed to be her.

Gabriel is a slightly mysterious character, who follows Nick's career for most of the novel, but disappears before the end. Nick does not know where he lives, does not know when to expect him back during his absences. His occupation is the aesthetic life, or 'the spectacle of the world'

(119) and he moves around the world looking for aesthetic experiences. His whimsical manner can appear to indicate that he is not to be taken too seriously (as suggested by Tanner 1985: 68-9, who finds him insubstantial in comparison to Miriam), but, in fact, apart from being the source of most of the novel's explicit theorising (Putt 1966:213 notes that important commentaries on art come from Gabriel, and not Nick and Miriam), introducing the religious language to speak of art which is taken up by the other characters (for example: 'there are many gods and this [the venue of the Salon] is one of their temples' 30), he also controls the plot, almost like an author figure inside his own text: he introduces Nick and Peter to Miriam, induces Nick to give up his political career in favour of painting, and is an early sponsor of Miriam, without whom she might not have achieved her dream of becoming an actress. What is more his prophecies as to Nick and Miriam's careers seem to be accurate, as far as the novel shows us their careers' development. The fact that he strikes many other characters unfavourably, such as Peter, who initially finds him 'comic' (61) and thinks he deserves 'kicking' (63) is likely to be meant by James as a reflection of those characters' fundamentally philistine nature: the least philistine characters, comparatively speaking, after Gabriel himself, that is Nick and Miriam, take him most seriously. Gabriel has written a single book, which Nick qualifies as 'very clever' (31) and describes as 'A sort of novel' (31). Gabriel has however since then given up writing and explains why, first admitting to Nick that the observer needs categories, but adding that they are private, 'for his own convenience', and constitute 'one's style' (34-5). He continues:

But from the moment it's for the convenience of others the signs have to be grosser, the shades begin to go. That's a deplorable hour! Literature, you see, is for the convenience of others. It requires the most abject concessions. It plays such mischief with one's style that really I've had to give it up. (35)

This statement is made with a certain amount of provocative bravado, but the point is serious and recurrent in the novel, that is, that producing a work of art for others compromises the purity of the artistic vision. A qualification, though, needs to be made: the occasional reference is made in the novel to the age as being a particularly vulgarising age, as we have seen above, and indeed a hint that this factor is relevant occurs earlier in the conversation during which Gabriel's book is mentioned. Gabriel claims, 'I don't live in the nineteenth century. *Jamais de la vie!*' (29) In common with many theorists on art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Gabriel, and, I would argue, through him, Henry James, propose that there is something

about the modern era peculiarly hostile to the artistic temperament and vision, something which the novel does not go to great lengths to theorise, but often labels 'philistine'. It would appear that the utilitarian character of the age forces the most artistic of artistic temperaments to withdraw from the world altogether, renouncing production, and leading a life on the outside, observing and appreciating whatever offers any possibilities of aesthetic pleasure to the observer.

If Gabriel is James' spokesman in the novel, the question arises as to why a writer as prolifically productive as James should seem to be recommending resignation and non-production. It might be argued that Nick and Miriam are more similar to James himself, as they are ready to make the compromises necessary to produce and communicate. However, apart from cases in other novels I have discussed above where James has shown a supremely artistic character being artistic in ways other than producing works of art, it is also worth noting that in James' own career a development towards a notoriously inaccessible style of writing occurred, such that it is arguable that the late James was trying to minimise the compromises to his artistic vision implied by writing for an audience (Putt 1966:215 sees James as having an obsession with artistic failure and the unreliable public). James may have been expressing his own troubled artistic conscience through a character such as Gabriel even before his difficult late style emerged. However, the presentation of Gabriel as a creator of the world he then admires, by manipulating the fates of others, as Ralph Touchett does in *The Portrait of a Lady* and the protagonist of *The Sacred Fount* also does, suggests a further dimension, which is nonetheless ambiguous. These characters can be taken as representing James the author's creation of his fictional worlds, and his power over his fictional characters' fates. Whether James is also recommending that the artistic personality, in addition to appreciating the 'spectacle of the world', should also attempt to manipulate it to improve its potential to entertain, or whether rather he is warning against the temptation to do so, seems undecidable from the texts I have discussed, although hints of a troubled conscience in the protagonist are discernible in *The Sacred Fount*.

3. Conclusion

The Tragic Muse carries the ironical implication that its own author is not living the purest possible artistic life, just by virtue of being its author: nor can the author imagine that the majority of its readers will be practising or even aspiring to such a life. It raises, through its use of religious and moral language in relation to art, the question of whether a life of pure aestheticism is moral, and for whom, but seems equivocal as to answers,

avoiding commitment to any definitive position. What does emerge clearly is that the artist, particularly and increasingly in the age in which James is writing, faces, according to James, a tension between his or her own artistic aspirations and an inimical society, a tension which endangers artistic production: thus an artistic malaise is diagnosed and a coming artistic crisis anticipated.

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SELVES ON THE MOVE – ALEKSANDAR HEMON'S *LAZARUS PROJECT*

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Abstract: *The paper deals with literary production of immigrant identity in the works of Aleksandar Hemon, particularly his latest novel Lazarus Project, in relation to the Balkans and the Eastern European cultural space. By exploring the circumstances that led to a tragic death of a Moldovan Jewish immigrant, Lazarus Averbuch, in Chicago at the beginning of the 20th century, the protagonist of the novel Lazarus Project creates a story within the story, taking place a hundred years later, thus exposing the universals belonging to immigrant identity regardless of time or space.*

Keywords: *Aleksandar Hemon, identity, Lazarus Project (book), migration literature*

1. Introduction

I keep telling this story – different people, different places, different times - but always you, always me, always this story, because a story is a tightrope between two worlds. (Winterson 2001:119)

In the present paper I examine the metaphor of the story as “a tightrope between two worlds” from the perspective of SEE migration taking place over the past twenty years, with a focus on the work of Aleksandar Hemon, a writer of Ukrainian descent, born and raised in Yugoslavia, in Sarajevo, now Bosnia, currently living in Chicago and writing his fiction in English. I believe it would also shed some light on the works of other SEE writers and their perceptions of the process of migration and the processes which are presumably leading to the conceptualization of “world literature”, emphasizing the play and exchange between host and source cultures and the resulting relativization of essentialized images of cultures as proposed by David Damrosch (2003).

Jeanette Winterson's story, *night screen*, is a literary text which presents the story as a tightrope between two worlds (119) in a context of electronic mediation, rather than migration. However, it is the concept that this metaphor represents, which for a long time served as a matrix for the interpretation of the literary production of immigrant population. Cultures of migration are often perceived through the stories about people on the move, whatever the reasons, from one cultural and geographical area defined as *home* to another where they become a diaspora. Although the conceptual paradigm once may have served its purpose, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to apply since the globalization processes have introduced

irreversible changes rendering the rhetorical conceit of “between two worlds” historically obsolete. Therefore, shifting perspective towards more inclusive patterns, contemporary thinking about migration focuses on belonging, community and civic recognition, rejecting the idea that immigrants move between two worlds that are considered to be distinct and coherent, as well as mutually exclusive. In addition, literary traditions and literary systems migrants either bring with them or enter in constant flux and can no longer be considered unique or local. Therefore, literary classification – positioning of one’s writing, depends much more on the “future of the book” (Walkowitz 2006:534) rather than on the past of its writer. Furthermore, Mardorossian (Mardorossian 2002:15-33) associates migrant literature with an aesthetic program, rather than with an origin or topic, which involves rejecting the opposition between the modern and the traditional, between the country of origin and the country of destination (Cf. 21). Accordingly, nonimmigrant writers who are engaged intellectually with the movement of people and objects across geographies and cultures, and who articulate in their work a “cosmopolitan, transnational, and hybrid vision of social life,” could be producers of immigrant fiction. Finally, Soren Frank, in his study *Migration and Literature* (2008), introduces migrant as the 20th century main protagonist allowing for the renegotiation of the concepts of belonging, of identity and of home. He labels “migration literature” as a literature written in the age of migration, dealing with processes and cultural implications brought about by migration or at least reflecting upon it, which does not require its writers to be migrants themselves. Frank proposes a change of terminology from ‘migrant literature’, which focuses too strongly on the role of the author, to the more inclusive term ‘migration literature’, which implicates social processes and intertextual features of migration in novels. Migration, therefore, will be observed as a synthesizer – creating a network of differences without the “totalizing” effect – embracing differences rather than creating “sameness”.

In the case of Aleksandar Hemon’s work, exploration of the ways in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of “otherness”(Cf. Bhabha 1994:12), involves the interactions between the South Eastern Europe, which is culturally and politically Europe’s “other”, and the core of the first world, the urban USA, with the perspectives shifting both in time and in space. For Hemon, his position of a writer

... is not defined by national or cultural frameworks, which in themselves rely on rigid insurmountable differences. I stand between cultures, which does not imply empty space, but the areas of contact and overlapping where odd and unpredictable events take place, where experiences far apart become united and new and more

fluid identities come to life. (translation of the author)
<http://www.nb.rs/events/event.php?id=12175>

However, his literary production is by all means heavily influenced by his position as an observer and the participant in the migration and globalization processes taking place in both of the geographical spaces he belongs to. Hemon came to Chicago in 1992, on what should have been a month-long exchange program. The war in Bosnia broke out, and he stayed, experiencing his new environment and reevaluating his cultural literacy, training himself to write in English while managing a list of odd jobs including teaching English to immigrants and canvassing for Greenpeace (Hemon 2001:170) rearticulating a century long Eastern European immigrant experience. However, the times of his arrival, differed to a great extent from the times past, as did the experiences shaping him as a writer. He arrived into the expanding world of the Internet and the information flow which facilitated his two worlds to come into contact. Hemon's connections to his country of origin are very much active – he writes a column for *BH Dani*, a Sarajevo newspaper, travels frequently to Bosnia and is in contact with his family and friends, as well as with his ever wider readership in the former Yugoslavia exactly by writing in the English language. Looking into the problems of historical reference and identity formation, his writing examines the areas in which his two worlds touch and intersect.

2. The Lazarus Project

For beauty and violence, in Hemon's universe, are far from mutually exclusive.
(from *Washington Post*, a review by David Leavitt)

Aleksandar Hemon's literary career took off in 2000 with the publication of the collection of stories *The Question of Bruno*, followed by *Nowhere Man* in 2002. In 2004 he was the laureate of the MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant, which enabled him take a journey to Moldova and Ukraine, and then to Bosnia; the result of which was his first novel *Lazarus Project*. As his other two major works, *Lazarus Project* introduces a hero who is to an extent Hemon's alter ego; he grew up in Sarajevo, came to Chicago for a short visit and stayed there because of the war in Bosnia, struggling to figure out his place in the world. However, although this novel may be considered the extension of the postmodern immigrant environment already presented in his previous work, *Lazarus* adds a peculiar twist to it. Vladimir Brik, its protagonist, although still sharing some of the hope and belief in the New World and in the land of opportunities, already has acquired an amount of experience which tunes in to disillusionment in his

ongoing ventures; one of the most striking images from the novel being the misread words on the can of fish:

I spotted a can in the corner whose red label read SADNESS. Was there so much of it they could can it and sell it? A bolt of pain went through my intestines before I realized that it was not SADNESS but SARDINES. (*LP* 73)

Struggling with the rigid boundaries of his “first world” assigned immigrant identity, not coping well with the loss of his homeland and the frame of reference, at the beginning of the novel Brik seems lost in the swirl of events, people and places which appear as a vicious circle of intertwined memories, dreams and stuporous states. Hemon here works with clear and distinct language to balance the lack of focus, emphasizing all the numerous layers which prevent his hero from accessing the domain of what he believes to be real life, though, not always against his will. Searching for an anchor, a commitment that would enable him to reconfigure his own moral self, he decides to start writing a book about someone else’s hopes, fears, memories and lost dreams, and thus he focuses on the figure of Lazarus Averbuch. As Brik’s project advances, the focus of the story shifts. His (re)search project spans a century in time and half the world across, reconstructing the character of another Chicago immigrant, Lazarus Averbuch, who came from Moldova in 1903. Averbuch is a historical figure, though the documented materials offer little or no insight into his life and circumstances. It is established that he arrived at the house of the Chicago chief of police on March 2, 1908; an unfortunate event took place, and the young man was shot and killed. In the aftermath of Haymarket riots, threatened by the expected reaction to the suppression of anarchist gatherings, Averbuch was declared to be an anarchist assassin, although there was no evidence that he really had any contact with the anarchist movement other than being an Eastern European immigrant himself. Hemon cleverly uses the lack of information to develop a story about the profiling as a construct in this particular context exposing “otherness” both of Vladimir Brik, on a personal introspective level, and of Lazarus Averbuch, whose “otherness” is perceived from the outside, in the first place in his name, in his language and his religion (Lazarus is Jewish), and to a great extent in his social status with the referential figure of Emma Goldman in the background. However, the shift of the focus in the story will occur with the reconstructing of the characters against the SEE framework of reference, through the journey which is a symbol in itself. Although on the American soil Brick and Averbuch inevitably belong to the same framework defining

their identities, relocating of the story eastwards will bring about a disturbance in the state of affairs.

It is consistent with Hemon's belief "in the inherent ability of literature to provide access to the knowledge of human experience that is not otherwise explored" (Reyn 2010), his story is telling the readers about lives of human beings, their personal histories which would remain unnoticed in a course of events that have been documented in history of mankind. Yet their histories do not necessarily require validation stronger than the human belief:

The one thing I remembered and missed from before-the-war Sarajevo was a kind of unspoken belief that everyone could be whatever they claimed they were – each life, however imaginary, could be validated by its rightful, sovereign owner, from the inside...You could choose to trust his stories because they were good. (*LP* 20)

Brik's trip towards himself starts with the ghost chase in Moldova and Romania where together with Lazarus emerging as a person in what is to become Lazarus' story, which we, as readers may chose to believe because it is good, Brik appears as a very different character. Here, he becomes an American defined by his Samsonite suitcase and his American passport and dollar bills kept in his shirt breast pocket.

Moving through the crowd at the bus station in Chernivtsi, I realized that my center had shifted – it used to be in my stomach, but now it was in my breast pocket, where I kept my American passport and a wad of cash. I pushed this bounty of American bounty through space; I was presently assembled around it and needed to protect me from the people around me. (*LP* 177)

Yet, Hemon does not allow his character to fall flat against the black and white background. It may be difficult for a non-Eastern-European reader (critics included) to see past the gruesomeness and squalor of Moldovan dodgy hotels infested with the corrupt floor attendants, or *babas*, teenage prostitutes and human traffickers. Those are the images, which although undoubtedly realistic, do not fall out of the stereotypical perceptions of the East seen from the West through the eyes of the media. That too is incorporated in Brik's Americanness and Hemon is forcing him to deal with

it by intentionally and awkwardly assuming a role of a savior even if only for a moment. In the episode involving the beating up of a bad guy in a public toilet in Bucharest, staged to fit the generic scripts, Hemon makes Brik remain very much self-conscious, desiring the role of an all-American hero to validate himself in his own American and in his American wife's eyes:

I remained outside like an experienced accomplice and a bodyguard (except for my Samsonite on wheels) and listened, with acute indecent pleasure, to the sounds of smacking and whimpering and toilet flushing...I wished Mary could have seen me at that moment, the lethal combination of wrath and good intentions. (*LP* 263-264)

Still, together with the satirical encounter of what it means to be an American in the East, Hemon confirms the thesis that migration is a one way trip and that there is no "home" as a place where one entirely belongs, to go back to (Cf. Hall 1988: 44-46). Displaced in the USA for not being able to break free from the nightmares of his past, Brik is as much entangled in his present, rendering him hopelessly displaced among the people and the things he cannot recognize as his own:

My Samsonite suitcase looked ridiculously out of place amidst buckets and boxes and checkered-nylon tote bags turgid with cheap stuff. Apparently everyone in Eastern Europe, including *my country*, received one of those bags in compensation for the abolition of social infrastructure. I was as conspicuous as an iceberg in a pool. (*LP* 176)

Therefore, the notion of "home" Hemon at one point explicitly defines as "a place where someone might notice your absence" (*LP* 204), allowing it to exist devoid of culture, geography or spatiality. It is mobile and fluid as migrants it belongs to. Brik's story does not end in Sarajevo at the end of the journey. Perhaps somewhat naively he realizes that he as a person, holds a position in a complex space-time continuum and that his story, although it may not be a linear narrative, or a perfect whole with a

distinctive beginning, middle and ending, still is a story worth of being told and written allowing him to become whoever he decides he should become, because the story will be a good one.

3. Conclusion

Hemon, speaking about his novel, points out that one of his aims was to point out the continuity of human experience in the processes of migration (Cf. Reyn 2010). In his treatment of history, he joins the host of contemporary American writers by proposing that the relationship between literature and History with a capital H relies on the change of scope – while one may record significant events and great men, the other conveys “the incredible infinite complicatedness of an individual human life, the multitude of details that constitute human life” (Reyn 2010) or everything else that does not qualify for greatness which entering History may require. Hemon also sees literature as a means to extend ourselves through language and imagination, into other human beings, allowing us to feel empathy, making us humans.

By placing Hemon’s work within the framework of world literature, the thesis of David Damrosch about a “double refraction point” finds one of its best fitted writings.

[D]ouble refraction can be described through the figure of the ellipse with the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which the work lives as world literature connected to both cultures circumscribed by neither alone (Damrosch 2003: 283)

Through the medium of the English language, Hemon’s writing is received into the space of foreign culture. Through its cultural references *Lazarus* evokes American traditions and most definitely represents a locus of negotiation between the American and the Eastern-European cultures, together with presenting radical otherness of its protagonists providing a clearer and a stronger image of the home culture. Hemon, as he himself and

his works testify, is the author connected to both cultures, yet circumscribed by neither alone.

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MONKS AND WORLDLY WAYS

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Abstract: This paper foregrounds the figures of three monks as they appear in three of Robert Browning’s dramatic monologues and discusses the dimensions of the poet’s art and his potential for analysis in the representation of the disparity between appearance and reality, religiousness and mundanity.

Keywords: condition of the artist, human sin, profane, Renaissance representation, sacred, self-definition

1. Introduction

Robert Browning’s remarkable contribution to English and world literature are his dramatic monologues, which he called in different ways such as dramatic lyrics or dramatic romances. His dramatic monologues consist essentially of a narrative spoken by a single character and amplified by his comments on his story and the circumstances (usually dramatic, of crisis) in which he is speaking. From his own knowledge of the historical or other events described, or else by inference from the poem itself, the reader is eventually enabled to assess the intelligence and honesty of the narrator and the value of the views he expresses. His main goal is to project a certain kind of personality, a certain temperament, a way of looking at life, a type of distorted psychology, even a self-revealed moment of history with the dedication of a psychologist.

2. Browning’s Monks

The three personalities of monks this paper concentrates on are taken from the world of convents but, as it will be seen further on, the poet’s view often extends beyond the walls of the convent and church to the everyday world of common ways of life, of human pettiness, vanities, vices, but also to that of representation and art inspired by this kind of double existence.

The first of the three dramatic monologues of our interest is ‘Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister’, published in *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), a dramatic monologue of the soliloquy type – as its name anticipates – that concentrates on ‘the contrast between Christian preaching and pagan practice’ (Turner 1989:46); it is a poem about jealousy, envy and pride that haunt religious life.

Now the speaker is a monk who displays less devout feelings of love for his neighbour and utterly envies and loathes his fellow, Brother

Lawrence, for being what he cannot be: a pious, loving and warm-hearted monk. The speaker, working in the garden of a monastery (the Spanish cloister of the title) expresses in his monologue, all the frustrations and petty jealousies arising from years of confinement in the company of the envied and hated Brother Lawrence.

G-r-r-r – there go, my heart’s abhorrence!
Water your damn flowerpots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God’s blood, would not mine, kill you!
What? your myrtle bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims –
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames! (Browning 2005:108)

The poem is a shrine containing canned hatred – one has to remark the very curious animal growl it starts with – and a catalogue of vices used by the speaker as arguments against his fellow monk, vices that can lead without fail to eternal damnation. But they serve merely to convict the speaker of the crimes he lays at Brother Lawrence’s doorstep. For instance: his description of brown Dolores and her lustrous, blue-black tresses reflects, not Lawrence’s wandering eye, but his own; his rebuke of Lawrence’s ‘impious’ table manners illustrates the showy nature of his own faith; his wild accusations of heresy ought to draw the Inquisitor’s attention, not to Lawrence, but to himself. The malicious catalogue of vices goes on; the *reductio ad absurdum* is reached when the speaker plans to corrupt the good Lawrence by tempting him with his own copy of a lewd French novel and then has the nerve to accuse the latter of the sin of Lust!

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On grey paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial’s gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip in it? (Browning 2005:110)

In this poem, as Hawlin argues (2002:152), the ironic discourse of the speaker brings about a reversal of values and images: the speaker insists that he himself is pious and good whereas Brother Lawrence has to be thought of as decadent and bad, but after the readers’ mind have reversed

this scale the speaker emerges as decadent and bad whereas Brother Lawrence is revealed as pious and good.

‘The Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister’ also displays Robert Browning’s remarkable technical skills. His mastery of handling the speaking voice is forward and absolute: this monologue is perfectly rhymed and perfectly metrical, yet it does not seem at all artificial or unnatural. The poem is wonderfully rich in verbal texture and psychological argumentation.

A similar debate on the condition of the monks as clerics and humans and the relation between the sacred and the worldly takes place in ‘The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed’s Church’, the second dramatic monologue of our discussion, originally included in *Dramatic Lyrics and Romances* (1849), then republished in *Men and Women* (1863). The pretext of the monologue is anticipated in the title – feeling his end near, the Bishop summons his nephews at his death-bed to discuss with them the details of his sepulchre.

Although the speaker in this poem is an imaginary bishop, the church of Santa Prassede (Basilica di Santa Prassede all’Esquilino) really exists in Rome, as ancient titular church and basilica, located near the papal basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, according to *Wikipedia* (2010). The Bishop is another ecclesiastical figure who, like the monk in the preceding text, is more interested in worldly affairs than in a Christian way of life and of dying. Feeling his end near, the Bishop summons his (illegitimate) sons to his bed with a mind to leave them his possessions and give them orders about how they should build his tomb:

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews – sons mine... ah God, I know not! Well –
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What’s done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world’s a dream. (Browning 2005:147)

But, instead of preparing his soul for the great passage, and driven by vanity – in spite of the words quoted in the first line – by greed, megalomania and resentment against Gandolf, his rival in the courting of his children’s mother, he plans a tomb that should be, at all costs, more resplendent and more impressive than that of Gandolf.

And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And ’neath my tabernacle take my rest,

With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
– Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize! (Browning 2005:148)

He does not realise that the result will be a snobbish and eclectic flamboyant baroque, a mixture of pagan and Christian motifs without much artistic value. The cornerstone in the relationship with his sons, who in their covetousness are no better than him, is a big (probably ill-gotten) lump of *lapis lazuli* that they would all like to have but which he does not want to bequeath to them but would like to be placed in the tomb with him.

But just as in the case of the preceding poem, the expected devout perspective turns out to be a mere shroud hiding worldly human sins and vices: the Bishop's nephews are his illegitimate sons the fruit of illicit carnal relation, he himself is a snob, a haughty pride incarnate devoured by envy at his fellow-monk Gandolf. The tomb that he plans is to be a stately, magnificent and impressive one, actually a grotesque monument of vanities piled up on each other, devised to amaze and, as Armstrong (1993:287) remarks, from the perspective of someone *lying* on it and not of someone to be buried in it.

The third of the three dramatic monologues to be discussed in this paper is 'Fra Lippo Lippi' which narrates the life of the Renaissance painter monk Fra Lippo Lippi who lived in Florence in the fifteenth century and was mentioned in Giorgio Vassari's book *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*.

The speaker of this long monologue is the painter monk Fra Lippo Lippi himself. As the poem unfolds, the readers, while penetrating the self-definition, the identity of this man, may infer that he is not only a monk as he is also a man with a keen eye for the beauty of the opposite sex. In fact, at the beginning of the poem he is caught by the Florence watchmen as he sneaks out of a house of 'sportive ladies' after curfew time. The poem is thus the monologue that he utters in his defence and as an answer to the rhetorical question 'Who am I?' meant both to define him as a man, monk and artist, educated and trained from an early age to perceive the craft of painting.

As a consequence, the monologue becomes a statement of his way of observing and exercising the craft of painting. For him, the beautiful human body of children, men and women alike, with its fleshy forms, provides a model to be painted, instead of the ascetic formless shapes that appeared in

established religious paintings. This is, actually, one of the innovative techniques of painting that set the movement of the Renaissance against the medieval religious dogma of ascetic painting of the soul and disregarding the beauties of the human body, considered as a mere receptacle of perishable flesh.

This also happens in the case of Fra Lippo Lippi, the painter – his way of painting cannot be accepted by the church elders who try to discipline the stray painter by telling him:

Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men –
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke... no, it's not ...
It's vapour done up like a new-born babe –
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It's ... well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising – why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head
With wonder at lines, colours, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms! (Browning 2005:178)

It is against such counsels that he 'fiendishly' devises his future painting of the church of Saint Ambrogio where he plans to paint real people in the figures of the saints but also himself surging from behind the saintly figures, drawing the onlookers' attention to himself and marking himself with the inscription *Iste perfecit opus!*

Well, all these
Secured at their devotion, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I! –
Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck – I'm the man!
Back I shrink – what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company! (Browning 2005:183)

This is a moment of 'disruption and desecration of a religious order' (Day 1991:162); his presence on the artistic canvas illustrates the way in which a

work of art becomes a materialisation of the mental process of composition. But the paradox is that his disappearance from the painting's frame:

Thus I scuttle off...
And so all's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained (Browning 2005:183)

a gesture which removes the disruptive material element capable of creating religious disorder and impurity implies, as Day (1991:163) remarks, the seclusion of the artist from the work of art he has created.

Therefore, one facet of this poem is the account of the life and work of a Florentine painter monk, less drawn by holy orders but more readily associated with common life, less drawn by the holy World and representations but rather by human shapes and bodies. But more than that, the poem turns into a debate about the sacred and the profane, clerics and laymen, devout and worldly practices, art and religion or, as Hawlin (2002: 180) underlines, about what is meant by Christian art or the extent to which religion can co-exist with (true) art.

3. Conclusion

The departure from the expected religious norms underlined in the presentation above is undoubtedly condemnable in the case of the speaker of the 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister' whose vice is objectless and almost paranoid but less so in the case of the Bishop the result of whose vanity, his tomb, might still take the test of time and least of all in the case of Fra Lippo Lippi whose worldly ways enhance creativity and generate artistic value.

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THE URBAN GOTHIC AS A BORSALINO HAT IN GREGORY DAVID ROBERT'S *SHANTARAM*

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Abstract: *Gothic as a genre has suffered numerous metamorphoses through its history, much like a Borsalino hat that has to pass certain tests in order to prove its genuine nature. The present paper aims at rendering the contemporary colours and shapes of Urban Gothic in the novel "Shantaram". Its characters and setting "betray" the geographical and ideological boundaries of the Western world and introduce the readers to the underworld of Bombay.*

Keywords: *contemporary, doubles, gothic, Indian, urban*

1. Introduction:

'Do you know the Borsalino hat test?'

'The what?'

'The Borsalino hat test. It is the test that reveals whether a hat is a genuine Borsalino, or an inferior imitator. [...]

'Just a hat? Oh, no, my friend! The Borsalino is more than just a hat. The Borsalino is a work of art! It is brushed ten thousand times, by hand, before it is sold. It was the style expression of first choice by discerning French and Italian gangsters in Milan and Marseilles for many decades. The very name of Borsalino became a *synonyme* for gangsters. The wild young men of the underworld of Milano and Marseilles were called *Borsalinos*. Those were the days when the gangsters had some style. They understood that if you were to live as an outlaw and steal and shoot people for a living, you had a responsibility to dress with some elegance. Isn't it so?' (Roberts 2003:83)

Thus spoke Didier, one of the characters in *Shantaram* and the present study aims at drawing its substance from the comparison between recent events in the protagonist's life and the Borsalino hat test. Focusing on a novel written by an Australian, but one "acclimatised" in India (the author spent there ten years), this study suggests its appraisal from a Gothic perspective, hopefully a meaning-enhancing strategy. Very much like the wearers of the Borsalino hat, the Gothic genre has been disparaged since its very emergence. From 'Terrorist Novel Writing' (Anonymous 1797:227) to "nothing more than the bric-a-brac of pre-Romanticism, possessing, at most, a mere curiosity-value for a modern reader" (Sage 1990:8) and other less than appreciative remarks, the Gothic genre seems to have generated fiery criticism, at best condescending observations. One of the reasons may be that the Gothic topoi, especially those defining the Walpole extraction-Gothic, can be easily recognized, having become mass-culture. They cover *settings* such as castles, monasteries, dungeons, crypts, passages, winding

maze-like tracts, all generally placed in sublime mountainous landscapes. The *characters* are also stock-like, with exaggerated villains and their intended victims (the villains usually men and the victims usually female), nuns, ghosts, supernatural-seeming beings, vampires, wicked feudals, licentious Muslim caliphs (see *Vathek*). As for the *themes* of such ‘terrorist’ writings, they are always centred around murder, black magic, incest, unresolved passions, with *plots* that oppose good to evil in a most – to some – naive manner, “all within a pleasurable cycle for the reader of *loss* followed by *restitution*.” (Lloyd-Smith 2004:133). The *mood* and the *mode* play on anxiety, threat, paranoia, and darkness, transitory feelings turning, as the plot unfolds, into *states* of mind which then become *frames* of mind. In the nineteenth century, to some of these early Gothic conventions new ones have been added with castles co-existing with and then gradually replaced by old, decayed houses, malevolent aristocrats started enjoying the company of scientists, fathers, husbands, criminals, madmen, and monstrous doubles symbolizing the evil nature and the duplicity of men. When discussing Gothic and attempting to analyse the survival of a genre which was not supposed to be born in the first place, at least according to its most fervent detractors, coming from the area of literary *realism*, its endless capacity for metamorphosis and adaptation should be considered in the first place. A careful perusal of Gothic novels *per se* or of those informed with a more subtle type of Gothicism points out that since the publication of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, contemporary Gothic theory and Gothicism as a genre were never static nor unified. Rather, Gothic in literature and not only, seems to be the product of a continual state of evolution and flux, reviving itself through a particular concern with the influence of *gender*, *race*, *class*, and *politics*. Such influences can be best noticed in a special setting, which in the present study will be considered as probably the most productive of Gothic metamorphosis, as it tackles with reality and its discontents on domestic yet disturbing terrain. *The Urban Gothic*, as defined by Lloyd-Smith, is:

A form in which the windings of the labyrinthine city substitute for the castle dungeons or monastery crypts of earlier Gothic, as in Poe’s detective stories and in “The Man of the Crowd”, or George Lippard’s *The Quaker City*. This has become a dominant form of Gothic in recent work, through *noir* thrillers to *Blade Runner*, and is frequently the origin of a subtle Gothicism in otherwise more realistic fiction (176).

Robert’s *Shantaram* cannot be labelled as a Gothic novel, at least not in the traditional sense. However, it does focus on the *urban* as a most terrifying background and setting against which the protagonists’ lives unfold.

Moreover, as it expands the frontiers of the *urban* towards the East, dwells on the *horrors* (imaginary or real) of a metropolis like Bombay, a discussion of the novel will also aim at depicting the manner in which the author may be said to allow for conventions of Urban Gothic to permeate his text (albeit in an adapted manner).

2. Shantaram – An Outlook

The protagonist of *Shantaram* is the young man who leaves home not because of an overwhelming desire to know the world, but because of his circumstances. Following a painful divorce and the even more painful loss of custody of his daughter, he looks for mental and physical solace in the world of drugs, becomes a heroin addict and commits numerous armed robberies to support his vice. After years of imprisonment he manages to escape from an Australian maximum-security prison, goes to India and lives for a while in a Bombay slum. There he learns Hindi and Marathi, establishes a free health clinic, and falls prey to the evil manoeuvrings of a brothel owner and becomes re-acquainted with life in prison, this time an Indian prison. After his miraculous release, he joins the local mafia and adds to the list of his felonies money laundering, forging and working as street soldier for one of the powerful mafia dons. For a short while, he also acts in Bollywood films, and gets to fight against the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan, only to seemingly end his Indian adventures amidst loving friends and expectations of a better future.

2.1.Setting

As most of the protagonist's adventures take place in Bombay, the image of the city occupies a central space in the narrative. Known as the Island City, Bombay bedazzles the hero with its ambivalent exoticism and poverty from the first glimpse:

Like brown and black dunes , the acres of slums rolled away from the roadside and met the horizon with dirty heat-haze mirages. The miserable shelters were patched together from rags, scraps of plastic and paper, reed mats and bamboo sticks. They slumped together, attached one to another, and with narrow lanes winding between them (...) My first impression was that some catastrophe had taken place, and that the slums were refugee camps for the shambling survivors (Roberts 2009:7)

The protagonist's first impression of the city evokes a powerful familiarity with the *abject*, in the sense in which Kristeva employs the term, i.e. that of a culture which needs to represent as abject any experiences which compromise the 'norm'. As a new-comer to the exotic and putrid of

Bombay, Lin, the protagonist, first adopts a Western standard in assessing the urban East. Thus, he expects a certain degree of sophistication, both architectural and financial, to be found in the immediate vicinity of an international airport. However, Bombay contradicts the norm and penetrates the possible complacency of a Western liberal. Such is the effect of novelty that this initial and brutal intervention on the mental landscape of the perceiver, introduces the readers to another type of *city*, its squalor theoretically ascribing it to the *underground*, its very physical existence reclaiming the space of the 'norm', i.e. visible, touchable and threateningly close. The product of a Frankenstein-type architecture, the depiction of the Bombay slums signals a nightmarish world of poverty, dejection and darkness, where hope is but a memory and the labyrinth of wretched huts signifies a way of being for fellow-humans. Nevertheless, in the tradition of Gothic binary oppositions *dark vs. light, life vs. death, good vs. evil*, the initial pessimistic mood and mode of description, presently metamorphosizes into its very opposite. The protagonist starts *seeing* beyond the misery. Thus, a woman brushing "the black satin psalm of her hair", yet another one bathing her children "with water from a copper dish", men engaged in different routine activities, such as leading "three goats with red ribbons tied to the collars at their throats" and shaving "in a cracked mirror", children playing, laughing and smiling faces everywhere (Roberts 2009:8) are instances of life being carried on under the most tragic (to a Western eye!) of circumstances. A different type of *sublime* can be discerned in this incipient description of Bombay. If, according to Botting, in the eighteenth century, "craggy, mountainous landscapes, the Alps in particular, stimulated powerful emotions of terror and wonder in the viewer", "intimations of a metaphysical force beyond rational knowledge and human comprehension" (1996:8), in the 21st century the setting changes, the *natural sublime* is replaced with the *urban sublime*, so that the fascination with the object of gaze is preserved. Similarly, as the Gothic traditionally incited "emotional effects on its readers rather than developing a rational or properly cultivated response" (Botting 1996:4), Bombay read as an Oriental version of Urban Gothic requires an emotional response and a vision of the heart rather than a socio-political appraisal. Which is not to say that such appraisals are completely absent, as the protagonist wonders "What kind of a government (...) what kind of a system allows suffering like this?" (Davis 2003:7). However, the paradigm of approaching this type of exoticism is mostly sustained by the play of feelings and emotions, as well as the willing silencing of individual or general political mores.

Apart for the slums, Bombay is layered into many other settings, the "islands within the islands" (Roberts 2010:13), all of them representative for

different categories of its inhabitants. Leopold's Beer Bar is the meeting point of the underground diaspora, men and women trapped in a network of illegal activities. The construction towers in the centre of Prabaker's slum resemble Vathek's tower in that they entrap the workers who are forced to eat, sleep and labour up in the sky, on the newly-erected floors of buildings which "with no flash or reflection or trim to relieve the grey massiveness of the structures, (...) swallowed light into themselves, extinguished it, and became silos for storing shadows." (Roberts 2009:251). Madame Zhou's Palace brings to memory the Satis mansion in *Great Expectations*; it is a building whose "street windows were barred with wrought-iron curlicues beaten into the shape of acanthus leaves"; once inside, there is a "long corridor, darker than the sunlit street but softly illuminated by lily-shaped lamps of fluted glass", and the "eerie, padded silence of rooms" surround the protagonist and Karla when they embark on a rescue-mission. (Roberts 2009:276-277).

Definitely the most disheartening and isolated of all the islands that make up Bombay-the Island City is Arthur Road Prison. Its name is not to be read literally, for the Indian prison is not indicative of Purgatory with the hope for a road to Salvation, but Hell itself. A fellow-prisoner succinctly describes it: "This is not a living place, Lin. We are all dead men here." (Roberts 2009:417). The tunnel entrance is guarded by "two lines of convicted killers, who'd become guards themselves" (Roberts 2004:415), delighted at the thought of the pain they are going to inflict on the newcomers. The protagonist, a human fly trapped in the diabolical net of Madam Zhou, is thus 'welcomed' in this realm of pain and suffering and is made to atone not only for his own transgressions, but for the sins of the colonisers. As the Gothic genre repeatedly claims throughout its avatars, the issues of *race*, *class* and *gender* are among the means and the aims of its survival. In *Shantaram* the hero's plight gains momentum because he is *white* and believed to be *British*, so that in reality, India's colonial past demands expiation:

'British built this jail in the time of the Raj,' he hissed at me, showing teeth. 'They did chain Indian men here, whip them here, hang them there, until dead. Now we run the jail, and you are a prisoner here.' (Roberts 2009:413)

The hero's denial of his nationality (he is from New Zealand according to his false documents and an Australian convict in reality) falls on deaf ears and triggers more manifestations of formerly-colonised rage:

‘You are *British!*’ he screamed, spraying my face with his saliva (...) ‘Yes! You are British! All *British!*’ he replied, the snarl moving outward to a malignant smile once more. ‘You are *British*, and we run the jail. You go through *that* way!’ (Roberts 2004:414)

Undoubtedly what makes the prison experience truly terrifying is its ability to throw the protagonist, Lin, into the most intense exile experience. Generally an outcast striving to survive and keep his true identity well-hidden, the hero nevertheless managed to establish a sense of community while embedded in the slum life. However, this temporary relief is viciously interrupted by the months in prison. Thus, Arthur Road, as Davis himself confessed, is meant to stand:

(...) for all the senses of exile that are connected to our intimate senses of ourselves. Lin is reduced to half of his body weight, covered in parasites, tortured and forced to wear leg-irons: he is gradually exiled from anything that had given him a sense of personal, physical identity. Lin was already exiled from his family, friends, nation and name. In the prison, he becomes exiled from his own skin and flesh. (Roberts 2010:15)

In terms of settings, *Shantaram* employs the typical Gothic binary oppositions *good vs. evil*, *dark vs. light*, *rationality vs. irrationality*, *order vs. chaos*, etc. The experiencing of the city of Bombay as mostly a site of murder, betrayal, corruption, revenge and poverty is balanced by the soothing images of an Indian village, whose inhabitants belong to perpetuity and perfect communion with nature and its doings. Thus, the village in Maharashtra, where Lin is taken by his first Indian friend, Prabu, represents the antidote to *exile*, the utopian but yet real world that can alleviate any suffering, a sort of Eldorado for the spirit. The villagers, unlike the uprooted crowds in the city of Bombay are perfectly aware of their place of origin and belonging, which, oppositely from the origins of the city-dwellers, are not perceived as emblems of a journey through the world under the sign of exile, but as a soothing, calm respite, only to merge one day with the final one. When Lin, the outsider, expresses his fears that the village might be drowned under the flooding river, the villagers laugh his fears away and calmly expose him to the eternal truths of their *being* for thousands of years:

“We are here a long time; Lin. Sunder village has been in this place for two thousands of years. The next village, Natinkerra, has been there for much longer, about three thousands of years. In some other places – not near to here – the people do have a bad experiences with the floods, in monsoon time. But not here. Not in Sunder. Our river has never come this far, even so old Deepakbhai says it will. Everybody knows where the river will stop, Lin.” (Roberts 2009:135)

In *Shantaram*, Roberts opposes *city* and *village*, perhaps in the same manner in which Mrs. Radcliffe opposed the *corruptions of society* in *Mysteries of Udolpho*, luring Valancourt away from his positive essence, to the *simplicity of country life*, as a secure site for ensuring domestic happiness. The protagonist of *Shantaram* confesses that “there was a sense of certainty, in the village, that no city I’ve ever known provides”, whereas “cities are centres of constant and irreversible change”, where “the definitive sound” is the “rattlesnake chatter of a jackhammer – the warning sound you hear as the business reptile strikes.”(Roberts 2004:132) The reptile imaginary here is characteristic of nature out of control, in the gloomy, ungodly urban conglomerates that humans created for themselves, mesmerized by the myth of progress and acquisitions, but in reality, pledging their lives to Greed for eternity.

2.2. Characters and Plot

According to Varma, “the Gothic mind loves to brood over the hallowed glory of the past” (1957:18), so that:

It is much like the concern of the saint who tries to touch the still centre of intersection of the timeless with time. And when the Gothic novelist attempts to do the same he remembers the grand design of the cathedrals, and tries to blend into his novel the same volatile ingredients of fear and sorrow, wonder and joy, the nothingness and infinitude of man. The reader is terror-stricken and lost; carried away and redeemed, found and made whole in the same manner. The Gothic novel is a conception as vast and complex as a Gothic cathedral. One finds in them the same sinister overtones and the same solemn grandeur. (Varma 1964:16)

Roberts seems to have suggested comparison between his imagination and that of a self-declared or perceived as such, Gothic author when he provided the readers with a very detailed analysis of *Shantaram* entitled *The Architecture of the Novel*. Carefully perused, the twenty-seven page-long study confesses to a very well-structured narrative, touching upon various constitutive elements such as *the theme of the trilogy and its sub-themes, plot formation, character building, colouring and imagery, usage of the doubles, etc.* They are, in fact, the succinct explanations of narrative techniques which come to excellency in the novel itself. Such explanations and suggestions for interpretation, especially when acknowledged by the very writer and not speculated upon by critics of different formations, sustain a complex and awesome composition, comparable, on aesthetic terms, to that of a Gothic cathedral. Moreover, after perusing *Shantaram*, the readers grasp the fact that not only they, as witnesses have been “terror-stricken and lost, carried away and redeemed, found and made whole in the

same manner” (in Varma’s words, quoted above), but that the protagonist himself, via his interactions with other characters, has undergone the same range of experiences, all in an authentic Gothic manner.

Undoubtedly the most relevant interaction is the one between Lin and Karla. The beautiful Swiss-American woman, with striking green eyes and a dubious circle of expatriate friends fires the protagonist’s imagination and desire, so that, to a certain extent, his obsession with her may be said to give the book its central tension. Lin’s love for Karla and her mysterious inability to love in return is explored throughout the novel. Karla is no typical Gothic heroine, if one opts for the *damsel in distress* as *the archetype of femininity* within the genre; rather, she can be read as a “female character” who begins “to stir and come to life”:

No longer cast as emblems of the Persecuted Maiden or other archetypes, their textual histories begin to be noted, the ways in which they, too, have been carefully schooled in their roles discussed, and the reality of their textual dangers acknowledged. (Masse 2001: 237)

All throughout the novel, Karla inhabits the protagonist’s mind with a persistence that only the Gothic ghosts from afar showed in pursuing their victims. She is at the same time, rescuer and victim, guide and instrument, source of all evil and of all good, the intricate fabric of her character demanding a multiplicity for interpretations and applications of Urban Gothic. Karla *betrays* the protagonist in more ways than one, the ambivalence of the character sustained by her evading stereotypes in a most surprising manner. The hand of destiny for Lin, she will be the one to ‘select’ his services for the benefit of the Bombay mafia father-figure, and she will also discover within her a most unexpected domesticity, ironically, next to another man. Karla is only one of the many characters to whose *betrayal* the protagonist will be exposed. As mentioned by Roberts, the black circle made by the *betrayal* instigators and their respective victims makes the very plot of the novel:

Lin’s betrayal of his true nature, through drug addiction of crime in Australia, is what leads to his exile in Bombay. The first cause betrayal, so to speak, is echoed throughout the book by other betrayals: Karla’s betrayal of Lin, Abdel Khader’s betrayal of Lin, Khaled’s betrayal of Habib, Madame Zhou’s betrayal of Karla, Ulla’s betrayal of Modena, Maurizio’s betrayal of Modena, Abdul Ghani’s betrayal of Khader Khan and so on. The link between all of these betrayals, from Lin’s first cause betrayal of his true nature to Karla’s final betrayal of Lin (by marrying Jeet) at the novel’s end, is the action-intention dialectic of the novel: the plot works in and through the chain of betrayals, and the unfolding revelations of motives for those betrayals. (Roberts 2010:27)

Anyone interested in Gothic novels and the conventions that make the genre, paradoxically reinforced by their unquenchable capacity for metamorphosis would recognize *betrayal* as one of the major themes of Gothic. Starting with *The Castle of Otranto* and Manfred's grandfather's betrayal of his master, the rightful owner of Otranto and continuing with Frankenstein's betrayal of family ties in exchange for the dubious rewards brought on by the efforts of the over/ever-searching scientific mind, *betrayal* as the dark propensity of the human spirit has demanded plenty of literary victims. *Shantaram*, in the present reading, is merely a case in point. As *betrayal* implies a kind of *duality*, a *duplicity* between the impulse to adhere to the laws of morality overcome by the even more powerful impulse to survive and even prosper at the cost of the others and sometimes *self*, the author of *Shantaram* often recurs to another Gothic device, that of *mirrored events and characters*. Major events in the novel occur twice and this repetitiveness, far from boring and contextual, actually confesses to the accumulation of experiences and emotions. The taxi accident with Prabaker at the beginning of the novel, when the protagonist helplessly watches the Indian mob almost lynching the driver, will be repeated in another accident, involving Hassan Obikwa, only this time Lin will be able to take a firm stand. The village flood, whose natural laws are perfectly understood by the peasants, but completely confuse Lin, is mirrored by the Taj Mahal Hotel flood, when he manages to rescue Karla in Vinod's boat. Prabaker has his face "amputated" in a taxi accident, Maurizio "amputates" his friend's face, in an authentically *horror* sequence, the journey to the village becomes the counterpart of the journey to Afghanistan, the protagonist's ordeal in prison foreshadows his struggle to stay off heroine (cold turkey), etc.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Gothic's use of *doubling* is a clear indication of the internalization of "evil", which becomes so powerful that it threatens to take over the personality of the "host", forced to succumb to its darker side. For Freud, writing decades later, the double suggests that the self is haunted by repressed feelings which threaten to disrupt commonplace notions of everyday reality. Therefore, one can argue that since *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the Gothic novel has moved into the "view of the double as a harbinger of death, as a liberator from censorship, and as a mode of repression." (Smith 2007:95) The *döppelgänger* stays in the 20th and 21st century, maintaining its psychological implications and reinforcing the *good vs. evil* dichotomy, albeit allowing for successive juxtapositions. In *Shantaram*, the most important characters conflict with their doubles and create an atmosphere of painful ambivalence, a state of mental fuzziness, a labyrinth of extremes that

both inhabit the protagonist's troubled psyche, and constantly test and influence his allegiances and decisions. Prabaker, the small man with a large smile is Lin's brother of light, at odds with Abdullah, the equally appealing brother of dark. The *father-figure* is split into the "black" and all-powerful Abdel Khader Khan, the Bombay mafia don, charismatic but dangerous, ruling with an iron fist and employing murder, blackmail and rape to maintain his domination, and his "white" counterpart, Qasim Ali Hussein, the slums "master", exercising not power and ruthlessness but merely guidance and integrity.

Ulla is the mirror character of Khaled, the Palestinian, because both have sold themselves, body and soul, to survive in a broken world: Khaled has a scar from cheek to jaw, and Maurizio cuts Ulla with a knife, from cheek to jaw (...) Maurizio is the mirror character for Abdul Ghani, Karla is the mirror character for Lisa Carter, Modena is the mirror character for Nazeer, Didier is the mirror character for Vikram, and so on, through all of the characters. (Roberts 2010:20)

Roberts' purpose in using the doubles, or what he calls the "technique of mirroring events and characters" is "to enrich the world of the novel through self-referential reinforcements, which should act in a not-conscious manner to make that world seem familiar (despite its potentially "exotic" otherness) (...)" (2010:20). The above confession seems to resonate with the Freudian *heimlich-unheimlich* failed distinction, suggestive of the impossibility of clean-cut categorizations. As noticed by Allan Lloyd-Smith, Freud's the "Uncanny" is "an effect incapable of precise definition" which:

(...) could be produced by a sense of strange in the familiar; by what should have been hidden but nevertheless comes to light, as in "the return of the repressed"; and by atavistic feelings about death, against which the double was once a defence; coincidence; repetitions, and so on. (Smith 2004:176)

However, the author of *Shantaram* reverses Freud's explanations of the "uncanny" and attempts to create the sense of the "familiar" in his readers, via the usage of doubles and mirror-imagery, while admitting that the "potentially "exotic" otherness" lies within the text, inviting recognition.

3. Conclusion:

As mentioned by Punter in the Introduction to *A Companion to the Gothic* "it needs at once to be said that the notion of what constitutes Gothic writing is a contested site." (Punter 2001:viii). Whereas there is little debate regarding the classic Gothic texts such as those belonging to Walpole, Racliffe, and Lewis and their value of foundational stones of Gothic, the

more one comes closer to our present era, the more confusion seems to reign supreme. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, Gothic reclaims more and more names of writers and works, because of its extreme capacity for metamorphosis and its ability to *lie dormant and quietly penetrate* the substance of works which clearly cannot be sub summated to the category of classical Gothic texts.

Shantaram is a case in point. Although resplendent with Gothic imagery at the level of plot, characters, and setting, the author himself in his almost autobiographical study concentrating on the architecture of the novel, does not declare it to be informed by the Gothic genre. Other affiliations are confirmed, Campbell's *hero with a thousand faces*, the most obvious one. However, when the author himself claims *alienation and exile* (including the worst type, that of an *inner exile*) to be the themes of his novel, when *doubles* haunt the world of the characters, and when *settings of darkness and horror* envelop the novelistic substance, Gothic can be said to have reclaimed yet another victim.

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“WHEN BEGGARS DIE, THERE ARE NO COMETS SEEN”: THE ROLE OF PROPHECY IN SHAKESPEARE’S *JULIUS CAESAR*

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Abstract: Unusual and menacing events, natural catastrophes, or irregularities such as tempests and miscarriages are frequently read by Shakespearean characters as *signs* of current political evils or *signals* of forthcoming historical change. This essay is especially concerned to illustrate the relation between prophecy and the contemporary political issues in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*.

Keywords: *Julius Caesar, prophecy, supernatural, politics, W. Shakespeare*

1. Introduction

Traditionally, scholarship on *Julius Caesar* has discussed its disparate ideologies and has helped us to see the play and the political world of early modern England as a puzzling, uncertain and self-contradictory arena. Like so many of Shakespeare's tragedies, *Julius Caesar* shows its relevance to contemporary issues (Bevington 1968) concerning the tension between tyranny and personal freedom. In the 1590s, when Shakespeare was first writing poetry and drama for performance and publication, questions of the constitution, political rights and representation assumed an increasing importance:

Writers became fascinated in and after 1591 by the themes of kingship, authority, and the acquisition of and retention of power, particularly in relation to humanist-classical definitions of ‘virtue’ in its civic and military aspects. The role of ‘counsel’ and ‘counselling’ in monarchies and republics, and the endemic problems of corruption and dissimulation, were put under the lens. The aim was to explain how ‘vice’, ‘flattery’ and ‘ambition’ had come to supersede the traditional values of ‘wisdom’, ‘service’ and *respublica*. (Hadfield 2004: 22)

The changing and uncertain political and social climate of late-sixteenth century was for many people a state of affairs in which *monsters* could be expected to appear (Lunger Knoppers and Landes eds. 2004, Céard 1977, Park and Daston 1981). Long established habits of analogical thought had formed an integral part of the early modern discourse of man, state, and religion, inscribing a signifying chain of correspondences between the

natural world and the social and political *scenario*. On the other hand, the new confidence in the potential of scientific forms of explanation and the Reformation itself had denounced much of the supernaturalism of the medieval church as superstition (Woodbridge 1994). Nonetheless, the people of late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries England were far from living in a ‘disenchanted’ world bereft of magical and supernatural intervention. Belief in portents has been considered to be widespread among early modern Europeans: as Keith Thomas wrote in her *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971: 90): ‘From the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the Revolution of 1688 there was scarcely any important event which educated men did not believe to have been presaged by some occurrence in the natural world.’ And the greatest fear was that the spreading of bad tidings announcing the overthrow or death of a ruler might become impetus for a revolt (Thornton 2006, Dobin 1990, McLaren 1997).

In this paper I am going to take into consideration the relevance of these ideas for a thorough understanding of the play which can be read as a response to the political anxieties of the time. This view has been previously attested by many other critics. Among them, Andrew Hadfield clearly states that “*Julius Caesar* is best read [...] in terms of the fears prevalent in late Elizabethan society. [...] Like other works produced at the *fin de siècle*, [it] exudes a resigned gloom at the impending fate of the nation” (2004: 148). More precisely, it is my intention to discuss the supernatural in *Julius Caesar* as a significant prophetic element that is closely correlated with the emerging political awareness of late Elizabethan England. Historians have variously stated that the seventeenth century placed Western political thought on a path increasingly concerned with determining the legitimacy of an individual, parliamentary or popular sovereign. Significantly, as early as Shakespeare, a parallel literary tradition serves not to systematise, but to problematize the discourses used to assert the legitimacy with which control over law and government is exercised. Julius Caesar is not only the most well-known figure in Roman history, but he is also one of the most difficult to understand. In fact, since his assassination in 44 B.C. Caesar has played an important role in the treatment of political legitimacy, succession, tyranny, and revolution, often producing contrary views (Miola 1985: 271-289).

Safely removed in time and space from Elizabethan England, the story of Roman rebellion permitted Shakespeare to gain perspective on “the drama of power politics and personal conscience” that he had previously explored in the English history plays (Rosen and Rosen 1998: lxiv). As Paulina Kewes argues the play dramatizes “the widespread fear that the

queen's government would be overthrown and that the country would be plunged into the sort of civil and religious war that was tearing France and the Netherlands apart" (2002: 155).

Julius Caesar not only tells the story of the end of an era at the very point in which the Elizabethan age is approaching its conclusion, but also seems to represent a turning point in Shakespeare's dramatic career, telescoping the drama of continuous disintegration and the inevitable progress of power found in the second English tetralogy and pointing ahead to the great tragedies (Yoder 1973). Notably, the play he had just completed in the summer of 1599, *Henry V*, celebrates an ideal king in heroic actions blessed by God: yet he is a king caught in casuistic politics, whose famous victories ended in civil war. In *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare, to quote Miola, "transformed a confused welter of historical fact and legend into taut, balanced, and supremely *ambivalent* drama" (1985: 273, my emphasis).

However, as a preliminary consideration, indispensable to introduce my argument, it is necessary to call attention to Shakespeare's treatment of much of the supernatural material found in his plays. Despite the heterogeneous nature of the occult on the Shakespearean stage, the great traditional machinery of the supernatural – a celestial and an infernal hierarchy impelling men to good and to evil – is absent entirely from his world. Conversely, the influence of the supernatural on individuals is seen to emphasise and assist, but never to initiate or alter, a course of action. To borrow Shakespeare's words, supernatural power can only marshal men the way that they are going. In his view, the supernatural has no objective existence and no independent meaning, nor does it even appear as a primary motivating force. As background and allegory, it serves only to emphasize the conflicting actualities of the time. Ghosts, witches, and other *unnatural* apparitions do intervene in human action, but their interventions frequently have political significance for the persons and thus trigger sequences of political actions. In presenting the supernatural powers onstage, Shakespeare did more than acknowledge the existence of these forces. Rather, as Victor L. Cahn (2001: 315) writes, "he imbued them with personalities and motives, allowing other characters to react to them and thereby reveal their own values and morals. Thus the presence of supernatural forces non only offers opportunity for bold technical effects, [...] but also leads to intriguing thematic revelation." Unusual and menacing events, natural catastrophes, or irregularities such as tempests and miscarriages are frequently read by Shakespearean characters as *signs* of current political evils or *signals* of forthcoming historical change, conveying the playwright's tragic vision as strictly historical (Serpieri 2007: xliv-xlv).

In this perspective, the manifold supernatural manifestations in *Julius Caesar*, taken together, constitute a symbolic system, historically and culturally distinct, that Shakespeare's characters ambiguously or erroneously interpret. To sum up, it is a play about people who make mistakes – costly ones, for themselves and their country.

2. Prophecy and Politics in *Julius Caesar*

Despite his mocking at drunken and astrological prophecies, Shakespeare introduces into his histories and tragedies an important prophetic component with every intention of making functional use of it. These prophetic and apocalyptic elements are, very simply, an aspect of the artist's relationship to his own times. It was a commonly held belief in the Elizabethan Age that political order on earth (or the microcosm) was a reflection of cosmic order (or macrocosm). People believed that the state was meant to be the harmonizing link between the universe and man; all three planes, however, were supposed to work in close harmony with each other, for any violation of order or degree in one plane would affect the other two. They believed that disruptions of any sort, in any of the three planes, corrupted the entire scale of creation and would have disastrous consequences. Most Elizabethans found all of these disparate phenomena as diverse as monstrous births, storms, armies marching across the sky, and the aurora borealis, to carry commentaries on human affairs.

As William E. Burns writes, "These events were claimed to be signs of God's wrath with the existing order and presages of impending disaster such as civil war or plague. This body of interpretation of prodigies was one aspect of the providentialism that saturated early modern thought." This tradition which figured in classical and Christian writings, Burns argues, "survived the Reformation and was used by Elizabethan Protestant propagandists such as Stephen Batman and John Foxe" (1995: 238).

In the Shakespearean universe, we can see that the physical order itself is disrupted prior to some terrible moral crime. For instance, the playwright conveys this in *Macbeth*: on the Tuesday before Duncan's murder his horses turn wild in the night, "contending against obedience" and almost seeking to "make war with mankind" (Shakespeare 2004: 2.4.17-18). The night of the murder he is disturbed by "lamenting heard i' the air, strange screams of death,/ And prophesying, with accents terrible,/ of dire combustion and confused events/ New-hatched to the woeful time

[...]” and the sky remains dark long after the day should have begun (Shakespeare 2004: 2.3.51-54). Drawing on the customary bond of connection which has been established between the natural and human worlds, Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar* “depicts a cosmological as well as a political struggle” (Buhler 1996: 313). Notably, the night preceding Caesar’s death is convulsed by reports of frightful horrors of nature: the main characters are shadowed by the portents, dreams and visits from Caesar’s ghost.

Most of Renaissance prophecies with their distinctly political hue and cryptic wording were seen to threaten the dominant order. Keith Thomas, in fact, shows how widespread the interest in prophecies was in the sixteenth century, particularly those with political applications; and the more the interest, the harder government tried to suppress them, and sophisticated intellectuals to discredit them. Henry Howard’s *A defensive against the poison of supposed Prophecies* (1583), later drawn on by Shakespeare for *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Macbeth*, may be taken as representative. Howard’s title page makes clear the political motivation in denouncing such prophecies as “cause of great disorder in the common wealth”. Some twenty years before Elizabeth’s death, for him:

the most pestilent and bitter root, from where the prophecies have drawn their head, and received, as it were, their life and soul is curiosity to search and hunt for deeper knowledge of the future causes and affaires of the Commonwealth, then it please God to discover and reveal by ordinary means: As how long the Prince shall reign? Who shall succeed and by what mean? What houses shall recover or decay? (in Dobin 1990:110)

In early modern England the link between a certain use of language and rebellion is particularly marked in the riddling form of the prophetic discourse. As Janette Dillon (1998: 198) writes “the riddling language of prophecy [...] though it has a long tradition reaching back to the twelfth century in England, becomes subject to a shift in use that constructs it as an incitement to rebellion. [...] prophecies are no longer framed by scholars within the safe boundaries of Latin texts, but appropriated as authorities that offer to legitimise resistance to the authority of the Tudor state.” The instrumental use of superstition in numerous prodigy tracts and compilations, mostly on the side of the Parliament continued to be issued during the Civil War period and in the early Restoration, and took a strongly pro-Dissenter, anti-government line (Durstun 1987, Friedman 1993, Rusche 1969). The historical significance of prophecies becomes fully apparent

when we take into account the legislation of Tudor monarchs and the act of 1542 which made prophecy a felony without benefit of clergy. This act was repealed in 1547 but replaced by a new law in 1550, which was then repealed on the accession of Mary in 1553 and reinstated by Elizabeth in 1563. As Rupert Taylor notes, this last statute (5 Elizabeth I, c.15) is interesting for the comment it passes on the causes of its own making:

Forasmuch as sithence the expiration and ending of the statute made in the time of King Edward the Sixth intituled - An Act against fond and fantastic prophecies, divers evil disposed persons, inclined to the stirring and moving of factions, seditions and rebellions within this realm, have been more bold to attempt the like practise, in feigning, imagining, inventing and publishing of such fond and fantastical prophesies, as well concerning the Queen's Majesty as divers honourable personages, gentlemen and others of this realm, as was used and practised before the making of the said statute, to the great disquiet, trouble and peril of the Queen's Majesty and of this her realm. (in Taylor 1911:105-6)

Finally, "in 1581 Parliament made it a statutory felony to erect figures, cast nativities, or calculate by prophecy how long the Queen would live or who would succeed her" (Thomas 1971: 408).

As against such a sustained attack on the delusiveness of prophecy, supported by a full apparatus of Biblical and classical citations, in the Elizabethan theatre predictions, omens, dreams virtually always come true. What is more, in the theatre, unlike in treatises such as Howards's, those who *disbelieve* in prophecy are almost always discredited. Omens, prophecies, dreams may be *mis*interpreted – they are often constructed specifically to that end – but they become sure sign of the onward shape of the action, and those sceptics who dismiss them as nonsense do so at their peril. It is in this spirit that Shakespeare makes use of the prophecies of future events recorded in his sources. Most of the premonitions Shakespeare found in Plutarch, but a comparison with the source shows us how deliberately Shakespeare shapes this material, supplements it and even alters it in part, so that the preparatory and dramatic function of these omens may be intensified and brought to bear directly on the characters; sometimes the omens even seem to mark the point at which the different reactions and spiritual conflicts of the individual characters harden and take shape.

The supernatural machinery plays an important role in *Julius Caesar*, beginning with portents preceding the assassination and ending with Caesar's Ghost before the decisive struggle at Philippi. Early in the play, the soothsayer warns Caesar to "Beware the Ides of March" (Shakespeare 2007: 1.2.18) and his wife Calpurnia desperately tries to

prevent his leaving the house with “The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes” (2.2.30). Shakespeare employs these supernatural phenomena purposefully to influence characters and deprive them of political certainty. In the play everyone is engaged in trying to decipher *reality*, from Brutus labouring to assess Caesar as tyrant, to Caesar, Calpurnia and Decius solving contrarily the riddle of a dream; from Portia needing to interpret Brutus’ disturbance at home, to Cassius on the battlefield fatally misunderstanding the shouts around his friend and fellow-officer Titinius. Unnatural phenomena of weather, such as quakes, storms or fire were recognizable both by their presence and by the remarks on them as omens that unnatural events in the world would occur. In Act 1, Scene 3, Casca reports upon a tempest greater than any other tempest he has experienced. He tells Cicero:

[...] O Cicero,
I have seen *tempests* when the *scolding winds*
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
The *ambitious ocean* swell and rage and foam
To be exalted with the *threatening clouds*,
But never till tonight, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest *dropping fire*.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world too saucy with the gods
Incenses them to send destruction. (4-13, my emphasis)

He further says:

A common slave- you know him well by sight –
Held up his left hand, which did *flame* and *burn*
Like twenty torches joined, and yet his hand
Not sensible of fire remained unscorched.
Besides – I ha' not since put up my sword –
Against the *Capitol I met a lion*,
Who glazed upon me and went surly by

Without annoying me. And there were drawn
Upon a heap a hundred *ghastly women*
Transformed with their *fear*, who swore they saw
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
And yesterday the *bird of night* did sit
Even at noonday upon the marketplace,
Howling and shrieking. When these *prodigies*
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say
"These are their reasons; they are natural":
For I believe they are *portentous things*
Unto the *climate* that they point upon. (15-32, my emphasis)

To Casca this is a time of great disturbance. Its cause is either upheaval in the heavens or else destruction on earth for the harm that men do. Cicero agrees it is a strange occurrence of events but is the one who formulates the sceptical attitude clearly in the answer. To him, men interpret things in their own way, quite differently from their real significance (1.3.33-34). In fact, the symbolism of the storm is differently read by Cassius. Contradicting a previous assertion that portents are relatively meaningless to men of will, Cassius enumerates once more the prophetic phenomena and uses the portents for his own purposes, concluding with a misinterpretation of foretelling events. He interprets the gods wrath as a sign that Caesar is wicked and must be stopped:

[...] But if you would consider the true cause
Why all these *fires*, why all these *gliding ghosts*,
Why *birds* and *beasts* from quality and kind,
Why *old men*, *fools*, and children calculate,
Why all these things *change from their ordinance*,
Their natures, and preformed faculties
To *monstrous quality*, why, you shall find
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits
To make them instruments of *fear* and *warning*
Unto some *monstrous state*.
Now could I, Casca, name to thee a *man*
Most like this *dreadful night*,

That *thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars*
As doth the *lion in the Capitol*,
A man no mightier than thyself or me
In personal action, yet *prodigious* grown
And *fearful*, as these *strange eruptions* are.

(1.3. 62-78, my emphasis)

The pattern of misjudgement seems to be the structural principle in this play and is evident in other characters throughout the action. The conflicting responses to various portents emphasize that they read omens according to their hopes and fears (Palmer 1970). The storm and its portents indicate the evil of Caesar's tyranny in the body politic of Rome, or the conspiracy to kill him: blood and fire are purging or civil strife. Further, everything interlocks: "To Calphurnia the storm and its portents point to the murder of Caesar...the same storm in which Casca and Cassius have actually plotted his death" (Charney 1961: 46).

3. Conclusion

In a play that dramatizes a political reality perceived as complex, problem-ridden, overburdened and even chaotic, it is not surprising that alliances are formed and dismantled, plans are considered and discarded, conjectures about the future actions of partners and opponents are hazarded, suspicion and fear, trust and miscalculations alternate with one another and again direct the attention of the characters and of the audience to the future. This constant turmoil in the political sphere generates a profoundly disturbing readjustment of one's sense of time and place: characters are unable to find a fixed locus of commitment in the enduring present, and so are forced to vacillate continually between future and past, anticipation and memory. Seen in this light, the problem of prophetic interpretation in the play can be understood as the necessity of making a choice that is simultaneously intellectual, spiritual and political. The consideration of the portents and the stars, analogues for the events of this drama, enforces the interpretation that *Julius Caesar* is a tragedy of political action as well as a personal tragedy of error, of misread purposes and ideals. As David Daniell beautifully explains, the characters' rhetoric, "which at first seems full of certainties, four-square like a marble building, on a second glance shows fissures widening as if the ground were moving. The solidity of the city dissolves, to reveal metaphysical experiences; a presence of omens,

superstitions, mysteries, delusion and doubtful reports, the senses turning wholly fallible, all making the finding of any truth impossible” (1998: 2). In *Julius Caesar*, the events and action are too contradictory to offer a clear moral lesson. The play does, however, carry the marks of the political fractures – and openness – of its historical moment. Such a way of reading it may us see the text as a dynamic political work that gives us a glimpse of the English commonwealth in debate and on the move.

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